

Russia on Sexton's travel wish list

By Jae-Ha Kim
Tribune Content Agency

Charlie Sexton started playing the guitar when he was 4 years old. Family friend Stevie Ray Vaughan babysat him, introducing him to Jimi Hendrix's music. By 11, Sexton was performing with Vaughan's brother, Jimmie.

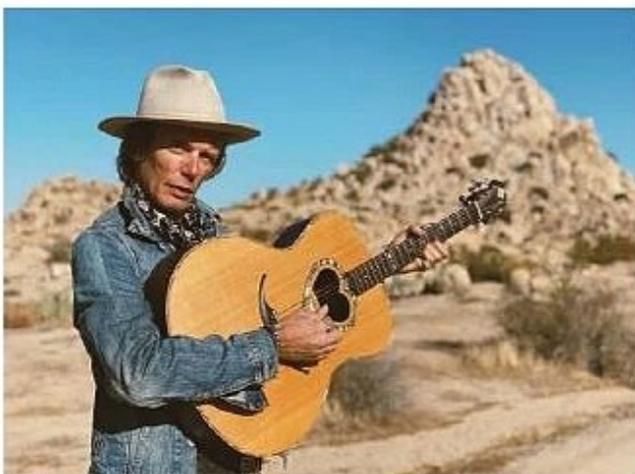
Two years later, Joe Ely picked him to play lead guitar. At 15, he toured with the Clash. And at 16, he moved by himself from Austin to LA to record his debut album, "Pictures for Pleasure." Before Sexton reached 20, he was sharing the stage with David Bowie and recording with artists like Keith Richards and Bob Dylan.

"When you put it that way, I guess it's kind of incredible that I've been doing this for more than four decades," the singer-guitarist-songwriter-producer said, chuckling. "It has been such an incredible privilege."

This interview with Sexton has been edited for clarity and length.

Q: Does the music you hear in other countries inspire your own songs?

A: Sometimes. When you travel, you bring back what you've heard and you also take with you what you know. There's this amazing Chinese instrument (sanxian) with a long neck and a little snakeskin body. It's a three-string instrument and I'm obsessed with it. I've heard it being played on the street in various parts of the world, and it has the most beautiful, haunting sound.



Charlie Sexton has been touring since he was a teenager, and he wouldn't have it any other way. **MOLLY LEARY**

Q: Where haven't you performed yet?

A: I haven't played Russia. I'd like to get there some day, though that's not really on the books at the moment. I've never been anywhere in Africa. I really love some of the music that comes out of (there). Never played in Thailand. I spent some time in South Korea, though. I was in Bob's (Dylan) band on that tour.

Q: Did you enjoy the food?

A: Yes! I love spicy food and Korean barbecue. I can't eat before a show, especially when everyone's having these massive dinners. So I always look for somewhere to eat afterwards, which can be tricky in Japan unless you're in Tokyo. But the thing that's open no matter where you are is Korean barbecue. This has happened literally all over the world. (Laughs) I'm kind of a thin person, so everyone is always surprised when they see me devour everything on the table. And I just absolutely love it.

Q: Where are some of your favorite places?

A: I spent a long time in Australia, because I had some friends that I worked with. I love Australia. When most people were in high school, I spent a lot of time in Japan doing press and shows. So I have an affinity for Japan, too. And in the U.S., I like touring throughout the West. The landscape is really beautiful. I always feel a bit out

of sorts on the East Coast. I really like Philly a lot and I like being in New York for a bit. But I need to see the sky.

Q: What is your most memorable vacation?

A: It's funny, because vacations are such an oddity for me, because they're not something that ever really happened when I was a kid, right? But (my girlfriend) Molly and I took a holiday in France a couple years ago for our anniversary. We went to Provence and Paris, saw friends, had amazing meals. ... That was a great trip.

Q: How long did you live in LA before moving back to Austin?

A: Five years. I moved there to make a record and then didn't leave for a while. But when I moved back to Austin, suddenly I had an extra five hours every day, because it didn't take two hours to get to the grocery store. (Laughs)

Q: What do you accidentally leave behind when you're touring?

A: I'm pretty methodical about luggage and don't unpack certain parts of the suitcase. My passport always stays in the exact same pocket. My pens are here, my aspirin is over there. But the main thing I always lose are chargers. I've also lost some great scarves, actually.

For more from the reporter, visit www.jaehakim.com.

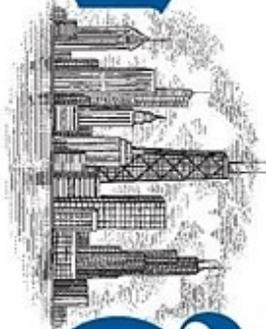


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