

Japan, moon on bucket list for Moore

By Jae-Ha Kim
Tribune Content Agency

Thurston Moore is best known as the singer-songwriter-guitarist for the rock band Sonic Youth. But he's also an acclaimed author, whose "Sonic Life: A Memoir" documented his life and time in the group. Touring is part of the job, but it was his travels with his family that he vividly remembers.

"When I was a wee child, my family took a trip to Key West and we climbed up to the top of some old lighthouse," he recalled. "The perimeter of it had a chain-link fence around it prohibiting people from falling off the edge. I thought that was rather controlling. I climbed over it and prowled around the edge until my father spotted me and yelled for me to come back, and I did. I was wondering why he was so angry. I climbed back over to the safe side and got a bit of a wallop."

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

Q: What's the most important thing you've learned from your travels?

A: That your job as an artist is to bring intrigue, joy and respect to the people paying money to see you and hear what you've created.

Q: Where haven't you been yet that you'd like to visit?

A: I have some interest in South Africa. I'd like to explore the nonurban areas of Japan as well. The moon would be a cool trip.

Q: What are your favorite



Musician Thurston Moore hopes to further explore the nonurban areas of Japan. **VERA MARMELO**

cities?

A: Tokyo, Paris, New York City, Chicago, London, Stockholm.

Q: What is the best thing you did on a trip?

A: When my London band went to tour in Japan years back, it was the first time my wife, Eva, had been there and she had always dreamed of going. I booked an extra week where the two of us explored all these cool places — cemeteries, parks, neighborhoods, cafes, restaurants serving one style of dish, record stores, bookstores — places I never got to explore myself through the years as it was always just soundcheck, gig, interview, repeat, then off to the next country. It was a magical week and I hated to leave. We can't wait to return. And we will!

Q: What do you remember about the first and last Sonic Youth shows?

A: The first show using the name Sonic Youth was at White Columns gallery in downtown New York City. It was part of a nine-day festival of experimental music I had curated by invitation of the gallery. My recollection was that since establishing that name, the ineffable quality that would become our band was born anew. We had gigged round under various names — Male Bonding, Red Milk, The Arcadians — and I felt the

band becoming fractious as a couple of the founding members were questioning the future value of the group. I basically took over and named whatever was going to happen next as Sonic Youth. I had been the instigator from the beginning anyway, but it was always in the context of the band functioning as a sonic democracy. The final gig we played was some festival on a rainy stage in South America in front of thousands. It was fairly uneventful though, and we thought we might just be taking a break while our personal lives shifted, but we have not returned as a group since.

Q: What was it like living in New York's Lower East Side in the 1970s?

A: It was simply impoverished, which turned it into a somewhat lawless playground of both mirth and danger. In retrospect, I wouldn't want a child of mine to live in that environment, but I survived, many did not.

Q: Is there a place you didn't think anyone would recognize you, but they asked if you were Thurston Moore?

A: That happens too much. "Are you who I think you are?" "Do I know you?" Yes, my name is Ludwig Beethoven, what's yours?

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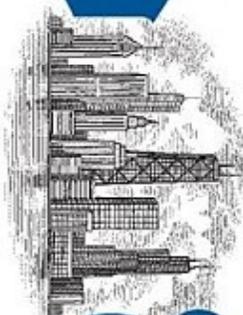


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