

**CELEBRITY TRAVEL**

# Musician guided by questions in travels

By Jae-Ha Kim  
Tribune Content Agency

"I was raised amongst an odd amalgamation of folks," said singer-songwriter Henry J. Star, the stage name of Devin Badgett, 26. "As a result of this bizarre hodge-podge, I was introduced to many perspectives on art and culture that I likely wouldn't have discovered on my own otherwise. I read my first manga in middle school, thanks to my brother, and also got fed all kinds of beautiful Southern literature via the elders in my family. I followed my curiosity in these things like a string. I'm incredibly grateful to have grown up around such a wide range of interests and to have received endless encouragement in my creative pursuits as a child and an adult."

Star's debut album, "The Soft Apocalypse," features introspective songs that he wrote to "understand and heal."

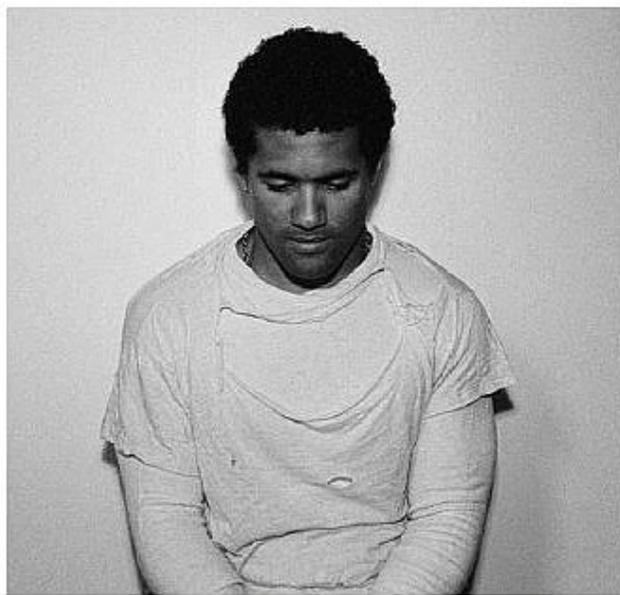
This interview with Star has been edited for clarity and length.

**Q: How did growing up in Tennessee affect your sensibilities as an artist?**

**A:** Growing up in the American South as a mixed-race person made me acutely aware of the complexities of prejudice. This had a deep impact on my perspectives from a very young age. It has informed my creative voice in more ways than one.

**Q: Does the music you hear in a particular setting inspire your own work?**

**A:** I have really been enjoying a lot of the music by Danish artists recently.



Singer-songwriter Henry J. Star is looking forward to visiting Japan this year. **TYLER KRIPPAEHNE**

The perspectives and sonic expression of artists like ML Buch have left a mark on my most recent work. While making "The Soft Apocalypse," I was fully enamored by the contemplative nature of Japanese ambient music — Hiroshi Yoshimura's "Green" and Chihei Hatakeyama's "Late Spring." These are artists I discovered by way of a deep dive into Brian Eno's discography.

**Q: Have you worked on any songs while you were on the road?**

**A:** Writing on the road seems magical ... (but) I don't. I'd love to come out of that shell!

**Q: What is your bucket-list venue that you would love to perform in?**

**A:** The Bijou Theatre in Knoxville. I saw some of the most important shows of my life in that room. It would be an honor to get to play there one day.

**Q: What is your favorite vacation destination?**

**A:** I am obsessed with the desert. Moab, Utah, is one of my favorite places to visit. There is something so compelling about seeing so much land that is as vast as it is uninhabitable.

**Q: What untapped destination should people know about?**

**A:** I can't say I'm an author-

ity on the subject, but I think that Utrecht is cooler than Amsterdam. Many folks only hit Amsterdam if they are lucky enough to hit (the Netherlands).

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

**A:** Let questions be your guide. Find a local at a coffee shop and spark up a conversation. Leave time for side quests.

**Q: Do you have a knack for picking up new languages?**

**A:** I'm not so sure, but my wife is convinced that it is a gift of mine. I do love language learning, sounds and patterns. I was lucky enough to take Mandarin in high school and have had an ear and mind for it ever since. We are planning a Japan trip for the summer of '26, and I've been taking a deep dive into Japanese in preparation.

**Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?**

**A:** Osaka!

**Q: When you go away, what are some of your must-have items?**

**A:** My laptop (for music creation), headphones, journal, a book, a sturdy backpack and my favorite pair of jeans.

For more from the reporter, visit [www.jaehakim.com](http://www.jaehakim.com).

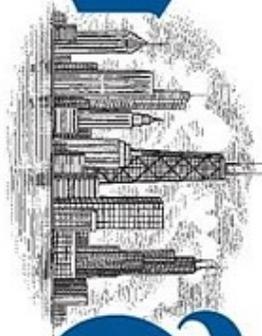


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