

Yee touts history, beauty of Kyoto

By Jae-Ha Kim
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Born in San Francisco and raised in Millbrae, California, and Las Vegas, singer-songwriter Travis Yee now calls Nashville, Tennessee, home.

"Each place shaped me differently," said Yee, whose latest singles are "Neon Light Year" and "Prove Em Wrong." "Growing up in the Bay Area exposed me to a lot of different cultures and perspectives. Las Vegas taught me that entertainment is both an art and a business. Nashville challenged me to take songwriting and country music seriously. Being an Asian American artist in country music isn't something I saw much growing up, so all of those experiences have influenced the stories I tell and the perspective I bring to my music."

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

Q: What do you remember about your first professional gig?

A: It was July of 2020, when I was invited to be on a Fox television show called "I Can See Your Voice." Talk about just throwing myself into the middle of it all. It was scary, but I gained a lot of experience quickly from it.

Q: How do your travels inspire your songwriting?

A: Ideas rarely show up when I'm sitting at my desk trying to force them. Most of my ideas come from conversations, observations and experiences while traveling. I'll record voice notes, save lyric ideas on



Country singer Travis Yee has his eyes set on performing at the Grand Ole Opry one day. **TRAVIS YEE**

my phone or write down random phrases that catch my attention.

Travel has taught me that people are more similar than different. Whether I'm in Tennessee, California, South Carolina or somewhere else entirely, people experience the same things — love, heartbreak, self-doubt, family struggles and perseverance. Those shared experiences often find their way into my songs.

Q: Did you enjoy country music the most growing up?

A: I didn't grow up listening to country music. I grew up listening to a lot of pop and R&B because that's what my parents listened to. I was a kid during the Usher and Christina Aguilera era, so that's the music that was constantly around me. Shout out to both of them for providing the soundtrack to a good chunk of my childhood. The funny thing is that country music didn't really enter my life until about 10 years ago.

Q: What is your favorite vacation destination?

A: Tokyo. I visited for the first time in April 2026 and it was also my first time traveling outside of North America. The culture, the food, the people — everything felt completely different from what I was used to. I probably gained five pounds while I was there and have zero regrets. The food quality was incredible, the prices were surprisingly affordable and even in the busiest parts of the city

there was a sense of order and calmness that I really admired. It's one of the few places I've visited where I was already thinking about my return trip before I left.

Q: What is your bucket-list venue that you have yet to perform in?

A: The Grand Ole Opry. As a country artist, that's one of the most iconic stages in the world. It's a place that represents the history and tradition of country music and stepping onto that stage would be an incredible milestone.

Q: What untapped destination should people know about?

A: Kyoto. Tokyo gets most of the attention, but Kyoto felt special in a completely different way. It's beautiful, peaceful and full of history. Also, if you're someone who takes way too many photos on vacation, Kyoto will absolutely destroy your phone's storage capacity.

Q: What is your best or worst vacation memory?

A: When I was a kid visiting the Winchester Mystery House in San Jose, I accidentally got separated from my family and got lost inside. For a kid, a giant mansion with endless rooms and hallways is basically a real-life horror movie. My parents found me after a few minutes, but at the time it felt like I had been lost for three business days.

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