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Final

Musician eyes trip to New Zealand



Andy Koh is celebrating the release of his aptly titled album "Taking the Long Way." **RACHEL KOH**

By Jae-Ha Kim
TRIBUNE CONTENT AGENCY

For Andy Koh, his October debut album "Taking the Long Way" has been four decades in the making.

Though he'd been writing songs and singing since his college days at Harvard University, his music took a back seat to his family and career as a pediatric oncologist.

Koh, who recently celebrated his 60th birthday and 30th wedding anniversary, said, "2026 has been a year of milestones. Early in my (medical) career, it was extremely difficult to find time for music. Now that I'm an established physician and scientist, and my sons are young adults, music has become increasingly important again. Music is the only thing that helps me reset. Focusing on music can stop me from replaying the loss of a patient or worrying about why an experiment didn't work in the lab. It clears my mind and helps me come back the next day with more focus and energy."

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

Q: When did you find time to work on "Taking the Long Way"?
A: At night, on weekends and during vacations. I was also lucky to surround myself with extraordinary musicians and engineers who helped me turn my songs into the records I had been hearing in my head for decades. I've become more focused as I've gotten older. Family, medicine and music. That's all I do. I have no social life.

Q: Do your patients or their parents know about your music?
A: For the most part, no. I have always tried to keep those worlds separate. But lately my worlds are colliding. Medical colleagues and even patients' families are starting to discover this other part of my life, largely through social media. The most common reaction has been some version of being dumbfounded in a very kind and positive way. It has been very touching and a little surreal.

Q: What venue is on your bucket list?
A: Royal Albert Hall. I've attended a few concerts there, including Elvis Costello doing a solo acoustic set. It has that perfect blend of intimacy and grandeur. It feels big without feeling cold or alienating.

Q: Do you have any upcoming trips planned?
A: Mexico City in December. My sons are major foodies, so we have a running list of cities and countries we want to visit largely for the cuisine. We're interested in everything from street food to Michelin-starred restaurants. Mexico City has been high on the list for a long time.

Q: What childhood trip has stood out?
A: My first trip to South Korea (was) my first time outside the U.S. I was six years old and traveled with my family to Seoul and Busan to visit my parents' relatives. It was an overwhelming visual, cultural, emotional and sensory experience. Most of it was amazing, particularly the food and being surrounded by Korean language and culture. Other parts were difficult to process, including the poverty and encountering bathrooms that were definitely not what I was accustomed to.

Q: Where would you like to go that you have never been to before?
A: New Zealand. I've never been to that part of the world. And full disclosure, our whole family is full of "The Lord of the Rings" nerds. So yes, we would love to see some of the places where the movies were filmed. The landscape is insanely beautiful.

Q: What is your best and worst vacation memory?
A: Best was a family trip to Japan and South Korea to celebrate my sons' college and high school graduations. My sons designed most of the itinerary and I forced myself to put aside my micromanaging tendencies and let them be in charge. It turned out to be wonderful. Worst was a trip to the Azores that never happened. We were supposed to go with my wife's family, but our flight was canceled because of wildfire-related travel disruptions. The next available flight was several days later. So we canceled the trip and flew back to Dallas for an staycation.

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