



Unwavering Dreamer

A SINGER-SONGWRITER REFLECTS ON WRITING AND
PERFORMING UNFORGETTABLE SONGS



Rock Me Gently

Words and Music by
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2018 Canada's Walk of Fame Inductee: Andy Kim

He's sold over 30 million records and has seen songs like *Rock Me Gently* hit number one and *Sugar, Sugar* recognized as one of Billboard's Songs of All Time. He's heard the world's greatest musicians, including Tina Turner, Bob Marley and Tom Jones, perform his songs. He's toured the world and lived through countless unforgettable experiences, like staying up all night playing for and talking to an audience in Berlin after the wall fell. Today Andy Kim is still living in the moment, deep within the dream he's always had.

"You can build your life around a dream, and even as a kid, I saw that every time I took a step, the dream started coming alive," Kim says. "I've always found a way to bring dreams to reality, no matter what the winds of change said to do."

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Kim was born in Montreal, the youngest of four sons. His parents had fled Lebanon, choosing to live in Canada because, he says, his father decided it's "the best place on earth to raise a family." Growing up, Kim's brothers played music's greats for him, including Elvis, Buddy Holiday and Roy Orbison. When he saw The Beatles on *The Ed Sullivan Show*, he realized that's what he wanted to do.

"I didn't come from a musical family, but I dreamed about that life. That dream became a reality the first time I went to New York City," Kim says. "I still remember walking down the street asking for directions." He was just 16 years old.

In New York City, Kim met producer and songwriter Jeff Barry, with whom he co-wrote *Sugar, Sugar*. He also took up residency in the famed Brill Building, where most of the hits of the '60s were written, recorded and produced, and avidly collaborated there in a collegial community.

Then times changed. Many of Kim's contemporaries moved to Los Angeles and began pursuing more solitary work. Kim wrote a song he thought was the best record he'd ever made, even after his early success with *Baby I Love You* and songs he wrote for The Monkeys. But the new song, *Rock Me Gently*, didn't sell—at least not at first. Kim moved back home to Montreal and decided to produce it himself. "What do you do when the terms are against you, well, you find a way," he says. "Your dreams have to survive those moments of loneliness, of anxiety, of confusion. The dream makes you safe."

Kim pressed about 200 records and sent them to radio stations in Detroit, where it was discovered by a Capitol Records agent: "It was a Wednesday when he called me and he said, 'You need 20,000 units in Detroit by Monday,'" Kim recalls. He sent the master recording and says "the record hit Billboard like a bullet." It proved to be one of his top-selling songs.

"Whatever detour I needed to take or whenever I hit a roadblock, it was just that my better moments were about to happen," Kim says.

Kim remains active in music, collaborating with other musicians, including Ed Robertson from Barenaked Ladies and Ron Sexsmith. His most recent album, *It's Decided* (with Kevin Drew), was released in 2015 on the Arts & Crafts label.

Although Kim is the recipient of many awards and is already an Inductee into the Hit Parade Hall of Fame and the Songwriters Hall of Fame, he says his induction into Canada's Walk of Fame carries special meaning. "What this award has made me do is look back," he says. "I'm so blessed to know there will be a moment in time after I'm gone when my music will inspire someone," he says.