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## MUSIC

### Kip Moore Brings Heartland Rock, Country Roots to New York City

With Jon Pardi and Runaway June, Moore Serves Up an Arena-Sized Sound at Terminal 5

by **jim allen** 12/2/2016

NEW YORK CITY — Kip Moore's Thursday night (Dec. 1) show here at Terminal 5 underlined both the singer-songwriter's country roots and his rock 'n' roll heart.

Jon Pardi and female trio Runaway June filled out the bill. And Pardi's recent turn toward a more organic, old-school approach than is common in country these days showed that there's still room for classic country verities in 2016.

At this point in time, taking the stage with a fiddler and a pedal steel guitarist in tow is a statement in itself, and whether Pardi was busting out the blue-collar rocker "Paycheck," the

slinky, bluesy “What I Can’t Put Down” or his first-ever No. 1 hit, the honky-tonking love song “Head Over Boots,” he made his mark on the evening despite the brevity of his set.

It’s not insignificant that the first words out of Moore’s mouth as he kicked things off with the grinding rocker “Lipstick” were, “Nashville country nights, Detroit Rock City lights.” Those lines perfectly encapsulate the musical duality that is Moore’s modus operandi. Though he ostensibly falls under the country banner, his sonic fingerprints are as rock ‘n’ roll as anything else.

Taking the stage in bandana and muscle T-shirt, he struck a figure more reminiscent of vintage Bruce Springsteen than anything currently coming out of Nashville, and the rough-edged pipes Moore employs to deliver his country-rocking tunes follow suit.

Moore’s not the type to pepper his set with ballads just for the sake of stylistic contrast. His set didn’t even really approach anything like a slowdown until at least halfway through. The first half of the set found the Georgia boy blazing through the title track from 2015’s *Wild Ones*, his 2012 Gold single “Beer Money,” Top 40 single “I’m to Blame” and even a raucous cover of alt-rockers Jimmy Eat World’s 2001 hit “The Middle,” among others.

After slowing things down just a smidge with the romantic *Wild Ones* tune “Heart’s Desire,” Moore ratcheted the energy level right back up again with the nice ‘n’ greasy Southern rock-flavored feel of “That’s Alright with Me.” And a couple of tunes later, he showed that he had more on his mind than sticking to a set list.

Moore announced he was inserting an unplanned request into the show because the couple that asked for it “said it saved their marriage.” He introduced an affecting solo version of “Complicated,” a tune about the travails of long-term love, by saying, “This is for all the complicated relationships in the crowd tonight.”

While his band was still offstage, Moore took advantage of the opportunity to underline the Nashville side of his musical makeup in an intimate way. Declaring, “I felt like playing a couple of my country influences,” he lit into a medley of the 1994 David Lee Murphy tune “Dust on the Bottle” and Mel McDaniel’s 1981 hit “Louisiana Saturday Night.” At that point, anybody wondering how much country inspiration lurked beneath Moore’s rocking exterior had their answer.

Once his band rejoined him, Moore closed out the set with the one-two punch of his 2011 No. 1 hit “Somethin’ ‘Bout a Truck” and *Wild Ones*’ “Magic,” whose cinematic atmosphere evoked nothing so much as the idea of a country-rock incarnation of U2.

After coming back onstage to croon the sultry “Hey Pretty Girl” for an encore, Moore found himself the recipient of a bra thrown at him from the audience. He good-naturedly slung the undergarment around his arm, carefully noting the size, before kicking into the evening’s final song, rabble-rousing kiss-off tune “Fly Again” from 2012’s *Up All Night*. In the midst of the

rocking anthem about overcoming a breakup, Moore paused to address the crowd, observing that there are three stages of heartbreak: sad, angry, and “you simply do not give a shit no more.”

Embracing the spirit of that final stage, Moore rode the tune home with gusto, putting a cap on a show that gave the crowd at the 3,000-capacity venue an arena-rock sized experience that still managed to maintain a steady toehold in country.