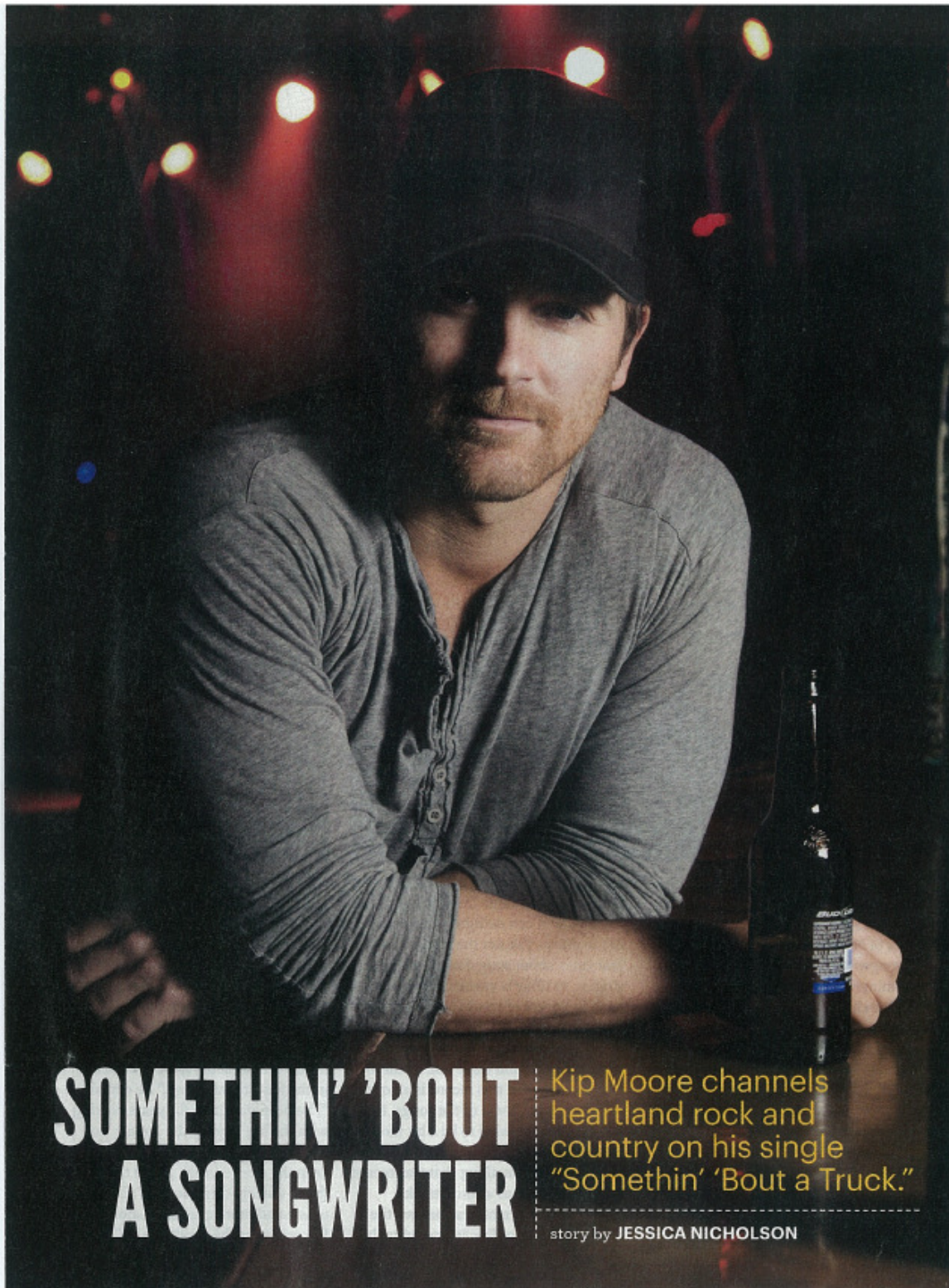


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SOMETHIN' 'BOUT A SONGWRITER

Kip Moore channels heartland rock and country on his single "Somethin' 'Bout a Truck."

story by JESSICA NICHOLSON

Inside Nashville club 12th & Porter, newcomer Kip Moore sidles up to the bar, taking a sip of beer before pausing as the camera flashes. Though hard at work for a photo shoot at one of Nashville's favorite live music venues, the easygoing Kip seems instantly at ease surrounded by the large stage, dim lighting and smoky club atmosphere, having performed at 12th & Porter numerous times before earning his record deal with MCA Records Nashville. The Tifton, Ga., native's career path has been one of constant evolution and self-discovery. He learned his love of music from a devout piano-playing mother with an affinity for country music and a rock 'n' roll-loving father. At one point, Kip spent several months living in a "little hut" in Hawaii, picking up odd jobs and indulging in two of his passions, music and surfing, before making the trip to Nashville to pursue his dream of being a singer/songwriter.

Kip's soulful voice draws more than a few comparisons to Ryan Bingham (*Crazy Heart*). His latest single, "Somethin' 'Bout a Truck," was co-written with Dan Cough. "We had already written a song the day we wrote 'Truck,'" Kip recalls. "The day was over with and he was about to leave. I started getting on that [guitar] groove and he came back in and we started talking about this particular girl I had been going after in high school."

After a few tries, the girl finally agreed to date him, Kip recalls. "I had an old Isuzu Stylus, a tiny little car," says Kip. "But I'd drive to meet her in my dad's '80s Silverado, and when I picked her up in that Silverado, it's like I picked up a whole new woman. I was only 16 and she was 15 at the time and she was excited about that truck," he recalls. "She was driving the dang thing by the end of the day." Kip, whose father was a golf professional, thought spending time near a pond on the local golf course at night would make for the perfect date. "We put the tailgate down, put a blanket down in the back, laid back and hung out. That truck was good to me," remembers Kip. "After that date, I came

back, tossed my dad the truck keys and said, 'There must be something 'bout a truck, Pop.' Dan and I thought that was a good hook for a song."

Though both the truck and the girl are long gone, Kip says the experiences in that truck helped steep him in the sounds of country and heartland rock. "My dad sold the Silverado and had other trucks, but that one was my favorite by far. My dad and I would go fishing at the Gulf, about two hours away, maybe once a month. We'd go trout fishing in that truck and I remember him turning me on to Bob Seger, Jackson Browne, Willie Nelson. I feel like that truck built a lot of my life."

For the photo shoot, Kip borrowed a nearly identical truck from a publisher

friend. "It's a mirror image of the truck that inspired 'Somethin' 'Bout a Truck,'" notes Kip.

There's something about a concert, too—especially a concert by Bruce Springsteen, George Strait or Garth Brooks. "I'm a concert junkie," says Kip. "I'm a student more than anything. I've been to five of Springsteen's shows. The guy has no props, no big lights, just a rock 'n' roll band onstage. If you can entertain 15,000 fans with no props and lighting, it's all about the music. His show is the most impressive just for that fact alone. George Strait's shows are a lot like that. I gotta throw Garth Brooks in there, too."

Kip attended his first Garth concert in Nashville in 2010. "That guy owned the crowd unlike anyone I've



Kip brings his hybrid of rock and country to a music festival in Roanoke Rapids, N.C.

PHOTO BY CHRIS HOLLOMAN/MOTORMANIA.COM; STYLING BY JASON MOORE



KIP MOORE CONTINUED

ever seen. He played almost half his set with just an acoustic guitar in that huge arena. All those guys are pretty inspiring."

Kip, 31, aims to expand that musical education in 2012 when he opens for fellow Georgian Billy Currington's first headlining tour. "Anytime I go out with somebody on tour, I go watch their show. I want to see what grooves work and what the crowd's into and what they are responding to." Clearly the tour seems to be a long-awaited chance for Kip. "I'm looking forward to getting out with a full band. We've only done a few full-band shows. I've done all these acoustic shows, and I'm ready to cut loose because my show is a rock show. It's got that country thing and the rock thing intertwined into one." Like his creative heroes, Kip doesn't adhere to a rigid set list, preferring to let the audience vibe dictate much of his performance. "My band knows to be on their toes when they are playing with me, 'cause I'll change

the set list throughout the night," says Kip, "whatever I feel like doing. Sometimes I'll look at the band and pull out a Tom Petty song, a Johnny Cash song or a Springsteen cover. I'll call out the key and they just have to be ready."

By the time the tour kicks off, Kip's debut album, *Drive Me Crazy*, will have been released. Many of Kip's followers are already familiar

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with the album's songs, such as the inspirational "Faith When I Fall" or the romantic ballad "Hey Pretty Girl." "Right now, a relationship just isn't in the cards for me because I'm focused on music," admits Kip, "but the song is about how I desire to feel one day." Much like his live performances, Kip says fans can expect a few surprises on the album. "I'm a songwriter at heart," he says. "Some artists get into it more than others, but that's what I love, first and foremost. I've been writing a lot and I'm excited about a couple of new songs I've written, so we might put a few of those songs on the album, mixing some things up and adding things here and there."

Kip hopes to be the latest in a long line of recent successes from his home state. "It's me and Luke and Aldean and Currington. We're all from about an hour away from each other. It's all kind of poppin' at the same time and I hope I don't break the chain, you know?" There must be somethin' about Georgia. **CW**