

# LIVE NATION TV

## KIP MOORE IS NOT YOUR AVERAGE COUNTRY STAR

On 'Wild Ones,' the Nashville singer continues to push the envelope.

Country music and kickflips—two great tastes that, well, don't come together very often. Not that country music has no association with action sports—Alan Jackson definitely shreds the water skiing in that "Chattahoochee" music video. But skateboarding is a bit of an outlier, just like Kip Moore, who recently announced



that his Comeback Kid Foundation would be building skate parks in inner cities across America.

Moore may have had a monster hit with "Somethin' 'Bout A Truck," but he is far from middle of the road. He exists in a liminal world, part of the pack that is pushing country into new territory while still being welcomed by the major radio set. That he'll trade in his cowboy boots for a pair of chukkas and rip a ramp every once in awhile should come as no surprise. And it will be even less surprising once you wrap your ears around his new album, *Wild Ones*.

*Wild Ones* is one of the hippest things happening in country this fall. On it, Moore sets his sites on rousing the hearts and souls of a Middle America bogged down by everyday bullshit. He sprinkles a little late-night Bonnaroo magic into his stadium-sized sing-alongs and forges a sound that's made to be witnessed live. This fall, Moore hits the road for a nationwide (and nearly sold-out) headlining tour. We caught up with the singer during his summer outing alongside Dierks Bentley to talk about

performance, perseverance and the magic of live music.

What was the first live show you ever saw?

The first live show I ever saw was the Allman Brothers with Dicky Betts. It was pretty awesome, ya know? I wanna say I was around ten years old, maybe and a buddy of mine's dad, his family took us. I was so captivated at such an early age. That was my first one.

What do you remember about it?

I remember having to stand on the chairs. I was, first of all, so blind—I couldn't see anything. But I couldn't take my eyes off of Dickey Betts for some reason. I thought everything about him was so cool. There was so much swagger on stage, the sound that was coming out of his guitar was great, so polarizing to me. That's how I remember it.

That sounds like a pretty epic show for a ten-year-old. When did you start playing?

You know, it's hard to think of exactly when. I had a buddy named Andrew who was playing in bands and was a really excellent musician; I'd been writing a lot of lyrics, but nobody knew that I could sing, and I would go over to his house and he would play and I would sing the songs with him, show him some of my lyrics. By the time I played my first real gig, I had already played houses and that sort of thing. But my first real show was at Mellow Mushroom, which was kind of the spot for live music in Valdosta, Georgia. My first experience playing live music was there with my friend and his band. I was 20-years-old and I played every Wednesday, Thursday, Friday, and Saturday for the next few years, in a little small town in Georgia.

What was the most difficult thing about doing live shows when you're that young?

You're learning how to hold an audience. You can get very insecure in your own skin and begin to lose an audience. Those years were all about learning how to run an audience. Every now and then I would try to sneak in my original songs into these sets of covers; that's when people stopped paying attention. That's what you deal with in those college bars—they come to hear the songs they know. When I got older and I started travelling around the country in a van playing my original music, my thing was that we weren't going to play covers. And, man, that's a tough thing to do, to stick to your guns when you're first playing places. It built slowly, little by little. Then all of a sudden I had a record deal and a big hit and we already had a groundswell of support. We cut our teeth for a long time and that's what it teaches you the most—when nobody knows your songs, how to captivate an audience.

What kept you going through those years?

I'm fucking crazy. [Laughs] Man, I've always been stubborn. I was determined to make something of myself. I know how my mind is, and I knew I would be a very unhappy person if I didn't get to play music for a living. People are always talking about backup plans, but it was never that way for me. It was always, 'This is the only thing.' I think that will was really the thing that got us through.