

Johnny Cash – The Legend Of Johnny Cash (2005)



1 –Johnny Cash *Cry! Cry! Cry!* 2 –Johnny Cash *Hey Porter* 3 –Johnny Cash *Folsom Prison Blues* 4 –Johnny Cash *I Walk The Line* 5 –Johnny Cash *Get Rhythm* 6 –Johnny Cash *Big River* 7 –Johnny Cash *Guess Things Happen That Way* 8 –Johnny Cash *Ring Of Fire* 9 –Johnny Cash *Jackson Vocals [Duet With] – June Carter* 10 –Johnny Cash *A Boy Named Sue (Live)* 11 –Johnny Cash *Sunday Morning Coming Down* 12 –Johnny Cash *Man In Black* 13 –Johnny Cash *One Piece At A Time* 14 –Johnny Cash *Highwayman Vocals [With] – Kris Kristofferson, Waylon Jennings, Willie Nelson* 15 –U2 *Starring Johnny Cash The Wanderer* 16 –Johnny Cash *Delia's Gone* 17 –Johnny Cash *Rusty Cage* 18 –Johnny Cash *I've Been Everywhere* 19 –Johnny Cash *Give My Love To Rose* 20 –Johnny Cash *The Man Comes Around (Early Take)* 21 –Johnny Cash *Hurt*
Johnny Cash – vocals, guitar, harmonica, piano, production

America likes its heroes to bleed of-the-dirt "authenticity"-- to carry a bible and have spent time in jail, to struggle with fidelity and caw about murder and remorse. Consequently, the box set section of most American record stores currently boasts a big, black mess of Johnny Cash-themed cubes. Posthumous marketing is particularly vicious: The Original Sun Albums, Unearthed, Man in Black, and now the four-disc The Legend bang corners, demanding further canonization, tapping persistently at our shoulders and wallets.

Still, the diversity of the Cash shopping spectrum is oddly apt: Both in-store and out, there are loads of different Cash archetypes to choose from. Check Outlaw Cash, with his middle finger shooting heavenward, face scrunched into anti-authoritarian glee, invading prison yards and calmly bellowing, "I shot a man in Reno/ Just to watch him die." Conjure Country Cash, standing alongside Jimmie Rodgers and Hank Williams, eyes hard, shaking his head at Nashville's pop-evolution. Note Family Cash, devoutly religious, wanting to record gospel songs with Sam Phillips, curling into June, and praying to be faithful. Or watch Neo-Cash lock arms with Rick Rubin, inadvertently charming the PBR-and-Pumas set with loads of quasi-ironic covers.

It's only logical, then, that The Legend is all-Cash in all forms. It's the most comprehensive Cash box released to date, covering nearly a half-century (1955-2002) of song, parsing his discography into four logically-titled discs: "Win, Place and Show: The Hits", which gathers radio favorites, "Old Favorites and New", all classic Cash, "The Great American Songbook", which sees Cash tackling traditional cuts, and "Family and Friends", two dozen collaborative cuts. The Legend is being released by Columbia, and unsurprisingly, focuses more heavily on Cash's Columbia work than his early Sun recordings. Regardless, its four discs expertly showcase the astonishing scope of Cash's talent: ranging from goofy, 1950s teen dance-pop ("Ballad of a Teenage Queen", "Guess Things Happen That Way") to gospel ("Were You There (When They Crucified My Lord)", with the Carter Family) to traditional Americana standards ("I've Been Working on the Railroad", "Streets of Laredo"). The breadth of Cash's songbook almost justifies the dozens of roles he's been hustled into over the last 50 years-- and with seven previously unreleased songs, dug up from tapes in a backroom at the House of Cash, devotees are sure to start rethinking all other boxes crowding their shelves. ---Amanda Petrusich, pitchfork.com

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