Subject: Today's Recommendation: Country
Posted by elektratig on Sun, 13 Mar 2005 20:42:31 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

"'These recordings in Bristol in 1927 are the single most important event in the history of country music.' Johnny Cash"The Johnny Cash quote, which appears on the cover of the cd in question, says it all.For two weeks during the summer of 1927, engineers from the Victor Talking Machine Company set up a temporary recording studio in Bristol, Tennessee, on the border with Virginia, and invited anyone who cared to come in and record. They wound up compiling a collection of country music recordings that remains unsurpassed to this day.Some of the performers had recorded before and were moderately well known at the time, such as Ernest Stoneman; others walked in in response to a newspaper advertisement and were never heard from again despite turning out incredible performances; and yet others became famous as a result of their recordings at Bristol – incredibly, both the Carter Family ("Mr. and Mrs. Carter from Maces Springs") and Jimmy Rodgers made their first recordings at these sessions, and they were "discovered" as a result.The two-disc set, "The Bristol Sessions: Historic Recordings from Bristol, Tennessee, featuring The First Recordings By The Carter Family, Jimmy Rodgers and Twenty-One Additional Artists" (County Music Foundation CMF-011-D) contains thirty-five of the seventy-six performances recorded, including at least one performance by each artist.The quality and variety of the songs are astonishing, from fiddle tunes to blues, from traditional ballads to gospel, from sentimental and pathetic to rollicking to humorous (such as a song about a bride who discovers on her wedding day that her widower groom has six children who need tending). I won't go on at tedious length to review individual cuts, but I'd note, for example, the beautiful, ringing voice of one Alfred Kearns, a Kentucky preacher who accompanies himself on "harp-guitar". I also can't resist noting another song, "The Longest Train I Ever Saw", performed by the Tenneva Ramblers, which (despite many differences) is clearly the same song recorded by Leadbelly under the title "In The Pines" and by Long John Baldry as "Black Girl".The sound of the recordings is amazingly good for 1927. Surface noise has clearly been reduced, without, to my ear, submerging the vocals and music.I don't like a lot of contemporary country music because it's too sophisticated and processed. If you have any desire at all to hear what "real" country music sounds like, this is a fantastic place to start.
The Bristol Sessions