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

Subject: Re: Many Thanks
Posted by BillEpstein on Sun, 13 Mar 2005 22:59:33 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Never knew about these, have to put them on order. Whenever I thought of "Country" music it was either from 'Bob's Country Bunker'..."we got both kinds of music, Country and Western..." or the over-produced stuff you mentioned.Then I saw 'Oh Brother' and bought the Soundtrack and rented the Down From the Mountain concert and now it's a favorite. How fortunate we are to have people to keep this music alive.

Subject: Re: Today's Recommendation: Country
Posted by Manualblock on Sun, 13 Mar 2005 23:03:59 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

Contemporary country isn't even really country it's pop songs sung with a twang.Thats a good recommendation E; may I add for those interested the Smithsonian Collection called Anthology of American Folk Music, collected by Harry Smith. Lots of recognisable songs shared amongst the artists. The Harp-Guitar; is that an autoharp?

Subject: Re: Today's Recommendation: Country
Posted by elektratig on Sun, 13 Mar 2005 23:25:43 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

MB,I love and would recommend the Harry Smith Smithsonian Anthology to anyone. I decided to recommend the Bristol Sessions discs because (a) they're less well known, and (b) they're only two discs, so it's less of investment, so people might be more likely to try them. For those interested, the Harry Smith Collection is linked below.As for the "harp-guitar" . . . you've got me!
Smithsonian Anthology of American Folk Music (Edited by Harry Smith)

Subject: O Brother
Posted by elektratig on Sun, 13 Mar 2005 23:49:23 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

I think O Brother did a real service by exposing people to different music. I know of at least two people -- including my brother-in-law -- who began exploring as a result.

Subject: Re: Today's Recommendation: Country
Posted by Manualblock on Mon, 14 Mar 2005 01:23:04 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

You have a point the Harry Smith is 60$. I haven't listened to much of it, just some songs I copied from a friend but one of these days soon I must get the whole thing.Have you tried anything from the Yazoo lable? It's mostly delta and piedmont style blues but some very good choices of cuts on the compilations.Some of those instruments these guys played were of their own invention. Robert Johnson started with a length of bailing wire nailed to a broom handle with a cigar box on the body.

Subject: Re: Today's Recommendation: Country
Posted by elektratig on Mon, 14 Mar 2005 02:01:47 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

MB,Yazoo is a great label. I'm trying to decide which of that label's discs to recommend in an upcoming post.

Subject: Another Country Recommendation
Posted by GarMan on Mon, 14 Mar 2005 19:53:41 GMT
View Forum Message <> Reply to Message

One of my favorite CD's is VH1's Storyteller live recording of Willie Nelson & Johnny Cash. One of the best live recordings I've heard and content to match. This was the CD made me realize the talent of Cash as a song writer and Nelson as a singer.