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Johnny Cash At San Quentin – Speakers Corner Records

by [Audiophile Audition](#) | Dec 16, 2022 | [Pop/Rock/World CD Reviews](#), [SACD & Other Hi-Res Reviews](#) | [0 comments](#)



A re-mastered vinyl of an important moment in country music

Johnny Cash At San Quentin –



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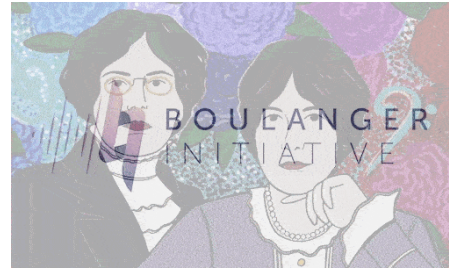
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Columbia Records CS 9827 (1969)/Speakers Corner Records (2022) 180-gram stereo vinyl, 34:04 ****1/2:

(Johnny Cash – guitar, vocals, harmonica; June Carter – vocals; Carter Family – vocals, autoharp, acoustic guitar; Marshall Grant – bass; W.S. Holland – drums; Carl Perkins – lead guitar, vocals;; Bob Woolton – lead guitar)

Country music significantly influenced rock and roll. The inclusion of guitars and drums contributed to the instrumental format. Sun Records famously signed rockabilly artists, including Carl Perkins, Bill Haley, Elvis Presley and Johnny Cash. “The Man In Black’ (one of Cash’s monikers) was attuned to gospel music and never made a full transition to the burgeoning commercial phenomenon that swept the nation and the world. He embraced his country roots and became an outlaw figure in the country world, before it became fashionable. His mid 1950’s hits “Folsom Prison Blues” and “I Walk The Line” made him a bona fide country star. In the 60’s Cash became an advocate for Native Americans, and recorded songs about their plight. This sensibility of civil rights and his personal demons shaped his musical vision. In 1968, Cash played two concerts at Folsom Prison. With little support from his label, *Johnny Cash At Folsom Prison* captivated audiences. The following year, *Johnny Cash At San Quentin* launched him to crossover stardom (including a *Grammy*). He sustained this stardom for nearly 40 years.



Vintage guitarshop

Speakers Corner Records has released a re-mastered

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180-gram vinyl of *Johnny Cash At San Quentin*. Backed by his band (including June Carter) and Carl Perkins, Cash delivers a knockout performance (his second live and 31st overall album). This was recorded as part of a television program, so the music and documentary became a highly significant cultural event. As the baritone opens the set, he invokes the name of Bob Dylan his co-writer on “Wanted Man”. With medium country swing, backed by gospel backup, Cash humorously tells a narrative of being wanted by various women (“...I got sidetracked in El Paso, stopped to get a map. Went to Pleura with Juanita in my lap...”). The audience roars their approval. Shifting to the familiar country train imagery, “Wreck Of The Old 97” is a high-energy performance with a fateful narrative. Cash innately connects with his audience and he is deferential to them with requests and anecdotal remarks. The crowd amps up more when “I Walk The Line” is announced. Cash’s rumbling vocals and the rockabilly instrumental back up are magnetic. He even throws in an off color joke that endears him even further. Continuing his repartee, Cash brings June Carter on stage to deliver a crowd-pleasing cover of John Sebastian’s “Darling Companion”. June sings harmony and occasionally exchanges on the chorus. The genial vibe feels like Cash is bringing the Grand ‘Ol Opry” to San Quentin. In keeping with the “jail” context, Cash relates his one night incarceration on “Starkville City Jail”. It is humorous and political, rendered in a stripped-down solo presentation. That balance of matter-of-fact storytelling and social messaging is quintessential to this unique musician.

Side 2 has two versions of his “new” tune “San Quentin”. It is uncompromising (“...San Quentin, I hate every inch of you...”). His ability to distill the plight of institutional confinement in visceral terms and create a communal vibe is uncanny. The second cover has a more deliberate pace, but is also effective. And of course, there is the big finish. “A Boy Named Sue” was Cash’s biggest hit single. This unlikely talking blues story intermingles violent imagery with comical observations. In the hands of another performer, this might not work. With Cash, it is revelatory. On the last song, “Folsom Prison Blues” the singer intones “...Hello I’m Johnny



Jazz Dispensary – Haunted High – Craft Recordings

Dec 1, 2022

This is another fine Jazz Dispensary anthology, just in time for Record Store Day 2022.



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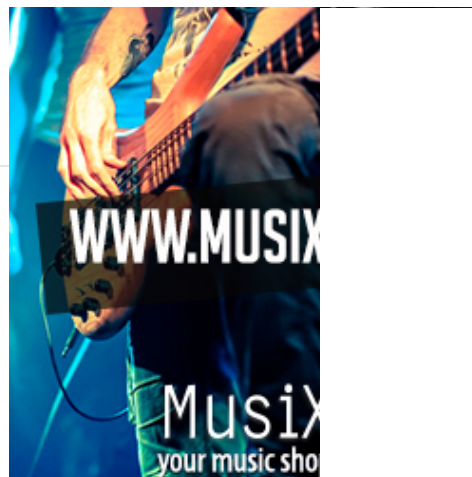
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Cash...". His tale of murder, prison, lonesome whistle and blues is timeless and is arranged in a hard-rocking arrangement.



Vintage guitarshop

Speakers Corner Records has done its customary job in re-mastering *Johnny Cash At San Quentin* to 180-gram vinyl. The raw acoustics have not been smoothed out in the new mix. Even occasional out-of-tune guitar or pitch slides are rendered as is. It reflects the reality of a performance like this.

TrackList:

Side 1: Wanted Man; Wreck Of The Old 97; I Walk The Line; Darling Companion; Starkville City Jail
Side 2: San Quentin; San Quentin; A Boy Named Sue; Folsom Prison Blues.

—Robbie Gerson

More info at [Acoustic Sounds:](#)



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