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Friday, Nov. 21, 2008

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# Visiting 'Johnny Cash's America'

'Johnny Cash's America,' Documentary (Columbia/Legacy,

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This late October release premiered Oct. 23 on the Biography Channel and explores how Johnny Cash was the voice of those without a voice. He was the Man in Black, but there was a lot of red, white and blue about him as well. This DVD/CD package explores many issues, like patriotism, faith, love and others; then tells how Cash negotiated them during his often-turbulent life. Many famous people offer their opinions on the impact of Johnny Cash on music and life: John Mellencamp, Snoop Dogg, longtime bassist Marshall Grant, Steve Earle, Sheryl Crow, Bob Dylan, Al Gore, John's son and daughters John Carter, Cindy and Rosanne Cash, other family members and longtime friend Kris Kristofferson, among others.

There's a lot of good music here: "Come Along and Ride This Train," "Five Feet High and Rising," "Don't Take Your Guns to Town," "Ragged Old Flag," and many more songs.

Grab this one if you're a fan of the Man in Black; it should be available at local stores or online at [www.legacyrecordings.com](http://www.legacyrecordings.com)

'Live Through the '70's,' Johnny Winter (MVDvisual,

• HHHH

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This Nov. 11 DVD release reminds me of one of the favorite albums of my youth, "Johnny Winter And Live."

Johnny Winter And was the name of Johnny's band at the time, which included Rick Derringer (whose biggest solo hit was Johnny's "Rock & Roll Hoochie Koo") and powerhouse drummer Bobby Caldwell (who is featured on some songs here). This wonderful live document featured Johnny's driving blues/rock and classic rock 'n' roll, Rick's driving oldies medley, and the most rhythmically complex drumming ever. The DVD features lots of archival TV footage from eras before and after that one, minus Derringer but with loads of other players, including Johnny's brother Edgar Winter.

Highlights include an early version of Edgar's big hit "Frankenstein" with no synthesizers and more double drumming. Johnny's evolution, an early romp through "Hoochie Koo" playful interviews, and many more blues-based blazers that show what a vital guitar hero he was. Grab this one at local audio/video stores or online at [www.mvdb2b.com](http://www.mvdb2b.com)

'Live at The Variety Playhouse,' Shawn Mullins (MVDvisual,

• HHHH

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This Oct. 28 release presents the Atlanta singer/songwriter at his storytelling best, playing six songs solo and nine songs with his band, before an enthusiastic hometown crowd. The set list includes his biggest hit, the falsetto-driven "Lullaby," plus many other songs.

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