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## America's Music Legacy: Country & Western

Score: **80%**  
 Rating: **Not Rated**  
 Publisher: **MVD Entertainment Group**  
 Region: **A**  
 Media: **DVD/1**  
 Running Time: **120 Mins.**  
 Genre: **Live Performance/Independent/Family**  
 Audio: **Dolby Stereo**

### Features:

- Artist Bios

When I lived in Richmond, Virginia, I had my radio dial tuned constantly to WXGI, listening to Country music legends like Merle Haggard, Patti Page, Ricky Skaggs, and Del McCoury. Many fans of traditional "mountain" music have conflicted emotions about the convergence of Country and Rock; on one hand, it has helped to sustain interest in Country music, but it can smack of style over substance. In reality, Country stars have long been accustomed to making a spectacle of themselves, as this showcase titled **America's Music Legacy: Country & Western** demonstrates. During two hours of music, we get to see laid-back performers like Eddie Dean on the same stage as electric showmen like Jerry Lee Lewis. The takeaway is that what we call Country is actually a diverse jumble of musical styles and influences, drawing from rock, jazz, folk, and gospel.

Gene Weed hosts the show, introducing each performer with a short bio. There are extended text bios on the DVD, which is a nice but unnecessary touch in the age of Wikipedia.

Colorful stage backdrops are dated, and short film clips inserted during the live performances are mostly just embarrassing. Music videos have come a long way in the last twenty years... The stage performances hold up quite well, even in cases where performers like Jerry Lee Lewis have aged considerably. Sure, the Lewis of **America's Music Legacy** isn't the ferocious Lewis we see in older footage, but even as an older man he looks like he's about to take a bite out of the keyboard. Other artists like Patti Page seem timeless, decked out in a flowing white gown like some stage angel, and singing classic songs like "On the Road Again," "Release Me," and "Tennessee Waltz." More contemporary artists like Sylvia, Razyzy Bailey, and Doug Kershaw make for a nice contrast, and show how Country easily assimilated rock and pop influences. In the case of Kershaw, we almost see a punk aesthetic at work, if not some type of glam rock!

**America's Music Legacy: Country & Western** isn't a documentary or study of Country music, just a snapshot of some great artists performing songs they wrote or made famous. It's not hard to understand how artists like Jerry Lee Lewis were an influence for rock groups like The Rolling Stones and David Bowie. Country has such strong, driving rhythm and narrative focus, albeit with a strong bias toward traditional values and culture. Just as Country borrowed liberally from other forms (listen to Razyzy Bailey singing the blues on "Nightlife", or Lewis singing "I'm Rockin' My Life Away") the hit-making ability of these artists was a huge influence on modern pop, rock, and rhythm-and-blues performers. We can listen to **America's Music Legacy: Country & Western** today and hear nostalgia, but it's important to remember that most of these artists were true innovators, or at least pace-setters. Historical context aside, there's two hours of great music here, especially for fans of Country music.



-Fridtjof, GameVortex Communications  
 AKA Matt Paddock

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**America's Music Legacy: Country & Western** at MVD Online

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