

# JOHN PRINE IN PERSON & ON STAGE

Some four decades since his remarkable debut, John Prine has stayed at the top of his game, both as a performer and songwriter. Recently honored at the Library of Congress by US Poet Laureate Ted Kooser, he's been elevated from the annals of songwriters into the realm of bonafide American treasures.

Long considered a "songwriter's songwriter," John Prine is a rare talent who writes the songs other songwriters would sell their souls for. Evidence of this is the long list of songwriters who have recorded gems from his extensive catalog, including Johnny Cash, Bonnie Raitt, the Everly Brothers, John Denver, Kris Kristofferson, Carly Simon, Ben Harper, Joan Baez, and many others.

"He's so good, we're gonna have to break his fingers," Kris Kristofferson once said after being justifiably stunned by a Prine performance. Bob Dylan remarked, "Beautiful songs... Nobody but Prine could write like that."

And now he's back with a brand new live album, *In Person & On Stage*, which is perfectly balanced between classic hits and new treasures from his Grammy Award-winning *Fair & Square*. It's a culmination of his last few years touring and features duet renditions of some of early songs such as "Angel From Montgomery" (here in a breathtaking duet with Emmylou Harris) as well as later ones like "Unwed Fathers" (with Iris DeMent) and one of the most poignant songs ever from a husband to a wife, "She Is My Everything."

The album hits stores on May 25 on Oh Boy Records, Prine's own independent label which he started with long-time manager Al Bunetta, and whose initial release was in 1981. Hand-picked from hundreds of recent concerts, these recordings represent Prine's most memorable live album to date. If his biggest fans had a collective voice, it's no doubt these would be the recordings they chose.

From "Long Monday" to "Saddle In The Rain" and "The Late John Garfield Blues (with Sara Watkins)," Prine's songs are so hauntingly evocative of the laughter and tears inherent in the human condition, so purely precise and finely etched, that lines from them linger in our hearts and minds like dreams, separate from the songs.

Always seeking to strike a balance in his work, Prine said he wrote funny songs so as to get back to the tragic ones. The fan-favorite and whimsical "In Spite Of Ourselves" is a highlight on the record, thanks to the juxtaposition of Prine's vocals with those of his longtime-collaborator Iris DeMent.

Then on the deeply touching "Mexican Home," Prine shares the microphone with the immensely-talented Josh Ritter, who often shows flashes of Prine brilliance in his own writing. And the track is rounded off with great electric guitar and bass work from longtime Prine bandmates Jason Wilber and Dave Jacques.

With his moving performances on *In Person & On Stage*, John Prine has melded his staggering penchant for detail, his proclivity to be both hilarious and deeply serious (and often in the same song), with a visceral embrace of roots music. This new album is further evidence that the passion and poignancy instilled in his songs is unmatched.

For a free preview of the live album, please visit [ohboy.com/freetrack](http://ohboy.com/freetrack) and download "She Is My Everything."

*Words by Paul Zollo.*