

THE BALLAD OF JOHNNY AND JUNE

ENRICHMENT GUIDE



The Citadel Theatre presents The La Jolla Playhouse Production of ***THE BALLAD OF JOHNNY AND JUNE***

Book by Robert Cary and Des McAnuff

Music and Lyrics by Johnny Cash, June Carter Cash and others

Directed by Des McAnuff

We wish to acknowledge that the land on which we gather is Treaty No. 6 territory and a traditional meeting ground and home of the First Nations, including both the treaty signatories – Cree, Saulteaux, Nakota Sioux, Stony and Cree-Iroquois – as well as other Indigenous peoples, such as the Blackfoot and Métis, who occupied this land. We extend our appreciation for the opportunity to live, create and perform on this territory.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Theatre Etiquette	Page 3
Synopsis	Page 4
Musical Numbers	Page 4
Terms at a Glance	Page 7
Themes	Page 9
A Story We Think We Know Through A New Perspective: John Carter Cash	Page 9
Production Elements	Page 10
Proscenium Stage	Page 10
Interview with Ron Melrose: Music Supervision, Arrangements, and Orchestrations for <i>The Ballad of Johnny and June</i>	Page 11
History & Context	Page 12
Johnny and June Carter Cash	Page 12
Curriculum Alignment	Page 14
References	Page 15
Further Reading & Resources	Page 15
Government and Foundation Funders	Page 16

THEATRE ETIQUETTE

Going to the theatre is an engaging and interactive experience. We want you to be an active participant when you see our shows; laugh when it's funny, cry when it's sad, gasp when it's shocking, and enjoy the experience as much as possible. But we want you to do this in the most respectful way possible, for both the performers and your fellow audience members. To ensure the most positive experience, please review the following information prior to arriving.

THE FOLLOWING ITEMS ARE NOT ALLOWED IN THE THEATRE:

- No outside food or beverages. Only beverages purchased in the lobby and placed in a Citadel Sippy and bottled water will be allowed in the theatre. Unwrapped ice cream bars may be taken into the theatre. Please enjoy all other snacks in the lobby.
- Cameras and other recording devices (please note that taking photographs or other recordings in the theatre is strictly prohibited by law).

BASIC COURTESY:

- Please turn OFF and put away all electronic devices such as cell phones, video game systems, etc. prior to entering the theatre.
- Do not place your feet on the seat in front of you.
- The actors onstage can see and hear the audience during the performance – it is important that audience members not talk, move around, or fidget during the performance, as this can be distracting for the actors, as well as fellow audience members.
- There is no dress code at the Citadel Theatre, but we respectfully request that patrons refrain from wearing hats in the theatre.
- For the safety of those with allergies, please refrain from using perfumes or scented products before coming to the theatre.
- Please do not place backpacks or other bags in the aisle in front of your feet, as this may impair the ability of persons to exit the row in an emergency.

INAPPROPRIATE BEHAVIOUR:

Citadel Theatre representatives watch carefully during performances for inappropriate behaviour, especially behaviour that could endanger an actor or audience member.

Inappropriate behaviour includes, but is not limited to:

- Talking in the audience
- The use of laser pointers or other light or sound-emitting devices
- Interfering with an actor or the performance (tripping, throwing items on or near the stage, etc.)

Audience members identified as engaging in this type of behaviour will be removed from the theatre during the performance or at intermission.

SYNOPSIS

A brand new musical exploring the life and careers of country music legends Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash, told through the eyes of their son John Carter Cash. From their first meeting in 1956 at the Grand Ole Opry to fame, life on the road, controversy and family. This re-telling of their iconic love story is complete with hits like: "I Walk The Line," "Ring of Fire," and many more.

MUSICAL NUMBERS

The musical numbers are listed order of appearance in the production.

PROLOGUE

Living in the Country (instrumental)

Written by Pete Seeger

Railroad Bill (instrumental)

Traditional

Freight Train (instrumental)

Traditional

Wabash Cannonball (instrumental)

Traditional

Blue Yodel #9 (instrumental)

Written by Jimmie Rodgers

Ghost Riders in the Sky (instrumental)

Written by Stan Jones

ACT 1

Jackson

Written by Billy Edd Wheeler & Jerry Leiber

The Ballad of Johnny & June

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

I've Loved and Lost Again (instrumental)

Written by Patsy Cline

The Ballad of Johnny & June (Reprise)

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

Keep on the Sunny Side

Written by Ada Blenkhorn & J. Howard Entwisle

Will the Circle Be Unbroken

Traditional, public domain

I Was There When It Happened

Written by Fern Jones

Hey Porter

Written by Johnny Cash

The Carter Family Tree

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

Cry Cry Cry

Written by Johnny Cash

No Swallerin' Place

Written by June Carter Cash & Frank Loesser

I Walk the Line

Written by Johnny Cash

Get Rhythm

Written by Johnny Cash

The Ballad of Johnny & June (Reprise)

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

There You Go (instrumental)

Written by Johnny Cash

Guess Things Happen That Way

Written by Jack Clement

Country Girl

Written by June Carter Cash

Country Boy

Written by Johnny Cash

The Ballad of Johnny & June (Reprise)

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

Ring of Fire

Written by June Carter Cash & Merle Kilgore

We'll Meet Again Written by Vera Lynn

The Ballad of Johnny & June (Reprise)

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

If I Were a Carpenter

Written by Tim Hardin

Jackson (Reprise)

Written by Billy Edd Wheeler & Jerry Leiber

ACT 2

The Ballad of Johnny & June (Reprise)

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

Folsom Prison Blues

Written by Johnny Cash

A Boy Named Sue

Written by Shel Silverstein

Baby Ride Easy

Written by Richard Dobson

Sunday Mornin' Comin' Down

Written by Kris Kristofferson

The Ballad of Johnny & June (Reprise)

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

Solid Gone (Cannonball Blues)

Written by A.P. Carter

Hurt

Written by Trent Reznor

Ain't No Grave

Written by Claude Ely

I've Been Everywhere

Written by Geoff Mack, North American version adapted by Hank Snow

Keep on the Sunny Side (Reprise)

Written by Ada Blenkhorn & J. Howard Entwisle

Gone Girl

Written by Jack Clement

Wildwood Flower

Traditional, popularized by The Carter Family

A Singer of Songs

Written by Tim O'Connell

Always on My Mind

Written by Wayne Carson, Johnny Christopher & Mark James

The Ballad of Johnny & June (Reprise)

Written by Robert Cary, Des McAnuff & Ron Melrose

Ring of Fire (Reprise)

Written by June Carter Cash & Merle Kilgore

TERMS AT A GLANCE

This section defines and offers context for some of the vocabulary and terms used throughout the production.

Arraignment: A formal reading of a criminal charging document in the presence of the defendant, to inform them of the criminal charges against them.

Betty Ford: The Betty Ford Centre specializes in comprehensive addiction rehab, integrated care for co-occurring mental health conditions, recovery support and coaching.

Billy Graham: An American evangelist whose large-scale preaching missions and friendship with numerous US presidents brought him to international prominence.

Border Radio: The term "border radio" refers to the American broadcasting industry that sprang up on Mexico's northern border in the early 1930s and flourished for half a century. High-powered radio transmitters on Mexican soil, beyond the reach of U.S. regulators, blanketed North America with unique programming.

Carter Family: The Carter Family was a traditional American folk music group that recorded between 1927 and 1956. Considered "The First Family of Country Music", the original group consisted of Sara Carter, her husband A.P. Carter, and her sister-in-law Maybelle Carter. June Carter was one of Maybelle's daughters.

Chippendale: Chippendale furniture is an American design originating in the 16th century.

Chivalry: An honorable and polite way of behaving.

Clinch Mountain: A mountain ridge in the U.S. states of Tennessee and Virginia, lying in the ridge-and-valley section of the Appalachian Mountains.

Dixie: Also known as Dixieland or Dixie's Land, is a nickname for all or part of the Southern United States.

Dyess: A United States Air Force (USAF) base located about 7 miles (11 km) southwest of downtown Abilene, Texas, and 150 miles (240 km) west of Fort Worth, Texas.

Elizabethan poem: Elizabethan poetry is notable for many features, including the sonnet form, blank verse, and the use of classical material. The Elizabethan era is the epoch in the Tudor period of the history of England during the reign of Queen Elizabeth I (1558–1603).

Hearse: A vehicle for conveying the coffin at a funeral.

Holston River: A 136-mile (219 km) river that flows from Kingsport, Tennessee, to Knoxville, Tennessee.

Hustler: An enterprising person determined to succeed.

Jackson: "Jackson" is a song written in 1963 by Billy Edd Wheeler and Jerry Leiber. There has been much speculation regarding which city of Jackson the song is about (Jackson Mississippi? Jackson, Tennessee?), but co-writer Wheeler said: "Actually, I didn't have a specific Jackson in mind. I just liked the sharp consonant sound, as opposed to soft-sounding words like Nashville."

Jimmie Rodgers: An American singer-songwriter and musician who rose to popularity in the late 1920s. Widely regarded as the "Father of Country Music", he is best known for his distinctive yodeling.

Louisiana Hayride: A radio and later television country music show broadcast from the Shreveport Municipal Memorial Auditorium in Shreveport, Louisiana, that during its heyday from 1948 to 1960 helped to launch the careers of some of the greatest names in American country and western music.

Mariachi: Mariachi is an ensemble of musicians that typically play ranchera, the regional Mexican music dating back to at least the 18th century, evolving over time in the countryside of various regions of western Mexico.

Mason Dixon Line: The Mason Dixon line is a demarcation line separating four U.S. states: Pennsylvania, Maryland, Delaware and West Virginia.

Ojai: A small city in Ventura County, California, northwest of Los Angeles.

Pastor: A minister in charge of a Christian church or congregation.

Ryman: An historic 2,362-seat live-performance venue and museum located in the downtown core of Nashville, Tennessee. It is best known as the home of the Grand Ole Opry from 1943 to 1974.

Sun Records: Sun Records is an American independent record label founded by producer Sam Phillips in Memphis, Tennessee on February 1, 1952. Sun was the first label to Johnny Cash.

Swoon: If you swoon, you are strongly affected by your feelings for someone you love or admire very much.

Temperance: Moderation or self-restraint in action, statement, etc.; self-control.

Venial sin: According to Catholicism, a venial sin is a lesser sin that does not result in a complete separation from God and eternal damnation in Hell as an unrepented mortal sin would.

WDIA: WDIA (1070 AM) is a radio station based in Memphis, Tennessee. Active since 1947, it became the first radio station in the United States that was programmed entirely for Black listeners.

THEMES

A Story We Think We Know Through A New Perspective: John Carter Cash

“But that’s the fun part, see? I get to do that! Connect things, move ‘em around a little. We all do that, don’t we? We don’t remember things exactly the way they went down. We remember ‘em the way we want to..” –John Carter, *The Ballad of Johnny and June*

Johnny and June Carter Cash became the torch-bearers of deep, passionate love – country-music style. But the lovebirds navigated rough waters leading up to and during their 35-year marriage which produced one son, multiple hit songs about heartache, adoration and redemption, and ended when they took their final mortal bows within four months of each other.

The Ballad of Johnny and June is a new musical that tells the classic love story we think we know about Johnny and June through the eyes of their only son, John Carter Cash, who is the only character who breaks the fourth wall and speaks directly to the audience.



John Carter Cash with his parents John and June Carter Cash in the late 1970's

Image credit: Globe Photos/Zuma

In *The Ballad of Johnny and June*, John Carter Cash is able to step out from the action and guide the audience’s experience through what he wants to remember as the Narrator. Narration is a convention where a character or Narrator explicitly recounts events or provides background information to the audience. It can be a vital tool for setting the stage and clarifying complex plot. In *The Ballad of Johnny and June*, John Carter Cash explicitly tells the audience that these are his memories and the beauty of memory is that we can remember events the way we want to.

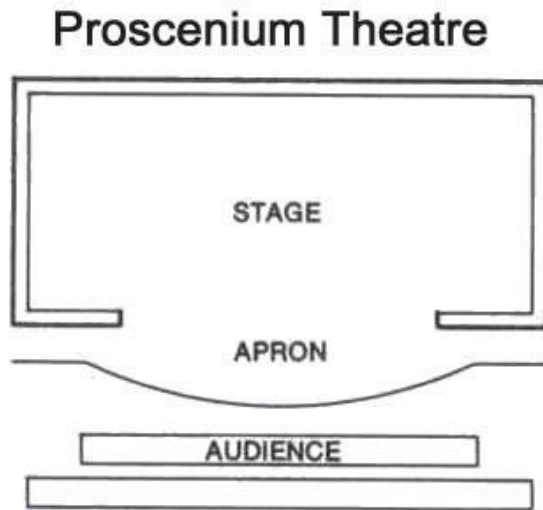
There are many different types of love stories, but John Carter Cash shares his perspective of what his parents’ love story means to him: “It’s not about staying together and waiting for the happy ending. It’s that staying together is the happy ending. Loving somebody enough to know you can’t save them and you can’t change them. All you can do is love them as they are, and let them do the same for you.”

PRODUCTION ELEMENTS

PROSCENIUM STAGE

A proscenium theatre is a specific style of theatre. Several features define a proscenium theatre, and this particular theatre layout is extremely common; if you have ever been to see a live performance, especially in a high school auditorium, chances are high that you have seen a proscenium theatre. In addition to proscenium style theatres, it is also possible to find black box theatres, theatres with thrust stages, theatres in the round, and numerous other configurations of stage and audience.

The classically defining feature of a proscenium theatre is the proscenium arch, which frames the stage for the audience. In addition, the audience faces the stage directly, with no audience on the sides of the stage, and the stage in a proscenium theatre is typically raised, allowing the audience to see more clearly. Modern proscenium theatres sometimes lack the proscenium arch, but they are still called “proscenium theatres” because they retain the other characteristics of this style of theatre.



Proscenium theatres originated in the 1600s, and became immensely popular by the 1700s. There are certain advantages of a proscenium theatre, such as the fact that the stage doesn't have to be as open, allowing people to conceal props, sets, and orchestras in the wings or near the stage without having these things visible to the audience. A proscenium theatre also creates a sense of staged grandeur, with the proscenium arch acting almost like a picture frame, giving the audience the sense that they are looking into a scene.

INTERVIEW WITH RON MELROSE: MUSIC SUPERVISION, ARRANGEMENTS, AND ORCHESTRATIONS FOR *THE BALLAD OF JOHNNY AND JUNE*

1. *How did you first become involved with *The Ballad of Johnny and June*?*

Over the years, I have done several shows with director Des McAnuff, including several projects which required some aspects of the music to strongly resemble the original source material: from the recordings of Frank Sinatra for a project at Radio City Music Hall, to the music of the Four Seasons for *Jersey Boys*, to the psychedelic art-rock of the Flaming Lips for “Yoshimi Battles the Pink Robots,” to the synthesizer-driven disco music of *Summer: A Donna Summer Musical*, to the powerful guitar-centered rock of The Who’s *Tommy*. It has been a pleasure to perform similar tasks for Des again, this time exploring the diverse recording careers of Johnny Cash and June Carter.



Ron Melrose
Image credit: Alexandra Melrose

2. *Your job titles are Music Supervision, Arrangements, and Orchestrations. What do those jobs entail?*

Music Supervision is, to me, administrative. It primarily involves making sure that every aspect of the music department runs smoothly, serving the specifics of script and score, the staging needs of the director and the choreographer, the acoustic needs of the sound designer, and making sure that both the cast and the band are fully rehearsed and ready to perform. By contrast, I find arranging and orchestrating to be more “artistic” tasks, allowing me (and my orchestration collaborator, Joe Payne) a certain degree of creative input into the details of how the singers and band members blend their voices and instruments into a cohesive whole that helps to tell the story.

3. *How did you create arrangements and orchestrations for *The Ballad of Johnny and June* within a musical theatre context while honouring and drawing inspiration from the original songs?*

That’s a terrific question, as it recognizes the fact that releasing a song on a record and including a song in a musical theatre journey are two very different animals. Perhaps the original Johnny Cash recording of a certain song may have ended on a “repeat and fade” (a fairly common recording device) – but the show needs the number to lead to a big applause-inviting “button.” Or the show might need to place a short acting scene between two stanzas of a song that was continuous in its original recording – how exactly do we “open it up” to receive the extra material? Or, to illustrate Johnny and June becoming closer, how can we literally combine his song “Country Boy” and her song “Country Girl” into a functional duet? We want to honour the integrity and intentions of the original recordings, but we never want to simply duplicate them, especially when the creative use of arranging and orchestrating adjustments can lead to a more seamless interplay between the songs and the story.

HISTORY & CONTEXT

JOHNNY AND JUNE CARTER CASH

Johnny Cash was a recording artist once considered an outlaw and rebel for his antics on-stage and off.

Johnny Cash signed with Sam Phillip's Sun Records in the 1950s, where he had a string of hits, including his chart-topping hit, "Folsom Prison Blues." When Cash signed on with Sun Records, he was fresh out of the Air Force and married to Viviane Liberto, with whom he had four daughters: Rosanne, Kathy, Cindy, and Tara Cash.



Johnny and June Carter Cash

Image credit: George Stroud/Daily Express/Hulton Archive/Getty Images

June Carter was country music royalty, the daughter of Maybelle Carter, and a member of the musical Carter Family.

June Carter had been performing on stage with her family since she was ten. In the 1940s, June, her mother, and her sisters took to the road as Mother Maybelle and the Carter Sisters. The group played around the country and even joined the Grand Ole Opry, where June met her first husband, honky-tonk singer Carl Smith. June and Carl had a daughter, Carlene.

Johnny Cash and June Carter first crossed paths in 1956, when Cash performed at the Grand Ole Opry. Carter's then-husband, Carl Smith, introduced Cash to the world on stage at the Opry, but not before introducing the rebellious young artist to his wife backstage.

It's been reported that their first interaction included Cash admitting to Carter that he always wanted to meet her, and Carter responded: "I feel like I know you already."

By the early 1960s, Johnny and June began touring together. June had divorced her first husband and had remarried Edwin Nix, a police officer and father to her second daughter, Rosie.

Time together touring was no fairytale for the country music musicians, however. Johnny Cash was battling addictions to drugs and alcohol, causing him to cancel or entirely miss out on shows and concerts. Cash was arrested numerous times for offenses related to drugs or alcohol, further cementing his "bad boy" rebel image.

Carter later told Rolling Stone: "It was not a convenient time for me to fall in love with him, and it wasn't a convenient time for him to fall in love with me. ...I was frightened of his way of life. I thought, I can't fall in love with this man, but it's just like a ring of fire."

These thoughts inspired Carter to pen the song "Ring of Fire," which she co-wrote with Merle Kilgore during these tumultuous touring days.

Cash's marriage to Viviane was on the rocks due to his addictions and reported infidelities; she filed for divorce in 1966.

That same year, Carter's second marriage to Edwin Nix also ended.

Two years later, Johnny Cash proposed to June Carter in front of a live audience on stage in London, Ontario. The duo married just a few weeks later, in Franklin, Kentucky, and went on to have a child together: John Carter Cash, born in 1970.

Johnny credited June with helping him get sober, and the hard-partying, rebellious country crooner was transformed into a distinguished and passionate Man in Black.



Johnny and June Carter Cash on 20/20 in 1983

Image credit: Unknown

"There's unconditional love there. You hear that phrase a lot, but it's real with me and her. She loves me in spite of everything, in spite of myself. She has saved my life more than once. She's always been there with her love, and it has certainly made me forget the pain for a long time, many times."

After their marriage and the birth of their son, Johnny and June continued to perform together on music stages and TV screens. The couple hosted *The Johnny Cash Show* on TV and shared Grammy awards.

Cash found redemption in religion and activism, campaigning for prison reform and Indigenous-American issues. The couple continued to perform and innovate over the years.

For her 65th birthday, Johnny wrote to June:

"You still fascinate and inspire me. You influence me for the better. You're the object of my desire, the #1 Earthly reason for my existence. We got old and got used to each other. We think alike. We read each other's minds. We know what the other wants without asking. Sometimes we irritate each other a little bit. Maybe sometimes we take each other for granted. But once in a while, like today, I meditate on it and realize how lucky I am to share my life with the greatest woman I ever met."

June Carter Cash passed away in May 2003 at the age of 73.

Less than four months later, Johnny Cash joined her, dying at the age of 71.

CURRICULUM ALIGNMENT

Participation as an audience member at the Citadel Theatre aligns with the Alberta Education Curriculum.

Drama (Junior High)

GOAL I- To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Strengthen their powers of concentration.
- Extend the ability to think imaginatively and creatively.
- Extend the ability to explore, control and express emotions.
- Extend the ability to explore meaning through abstract concepts.
- Develop the ability to offer and accept constructive criticism.

GOAL II- To develop an appreciation for drama and theatre as a process and art form.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Develop awareness of various conventions of theatre.
- Develop awareness of drama and theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Develop the ability to analyze and assess the process and the art.
- Develop recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.

Drama (10-20-30)

GOAL I- To acquire knowledge of self and others through participation in and reflection on dramatic experience.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Extend their ability to concentrate.
- Extend understanding of, acceptance of, and empathy for others.
- Demonstrate respect for others — their rights, ideas, abilities and differences.
- Demonstrate the ability to offer, accept, and reflect upon constructive criticism.

GOAL II- To develop competency in communication skills through participation in and exploration of various dramatic disciplines.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Demonstrate understanding of integration of disciplines to enrich a theatrical presentation.

GOAL III- To develop an appreciation of drama and theatre as a process and art form.

Objectives- The Student will:

- Explore various conventions and traditions of theatre.
- Broaden knowledge of theatre by viewing as great a variety of theatrical presentations as possible.
- Demonstrate the ability to critically assess the process of art.
- Demonstrate recognition of and respect for excellence in drama and theatre.
- Develop an awareness of aesthetics in visual and performing arts.

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FURTHER READING & RESOURCES

[What it's like playing Johnny Cash and June Carter Cash in The Ballad of Johnny and June?](#)

[Johnny Cash, June Carter Cash - Jackson \(The Best Of The Johnny Cash TV Show\)](#)

[The Love Story of Johnny Cash and June Carter](#)

[The Carter Family's Role in Country Music](#)

[A Conversation with John Carter Cash](#)

GOVERNMENT AND FOUNDATION FUNDERS

