

Front Row: 'Ring of Fire' brings Cash's music to life

Andy Metzger, News Journal correspondent 8 a.m. CDT June 12, 2015



This year marks the 12th that the University of Alabama's SummerTide Theatre has presented a musical at the George C. Meyer Performing Arts Center in Gulf Shores, Ala. I've had the pleasure of reviewing past shows presented as part of this program, and I've always been impressed by the quality of the work.

This year's production is "Ring of Fire," and it was great to see that the quality has not wavered. "Ring of Fire" is a musical revue that focuses on the songs and life of Johnny Cash, and the ten-member student cast from the University of Alabama's Department of Theatre and Dance is very entertaining.

Cast members include Loui Clagett, Craig First, Matt Gabbard, Anthony Haselbauer, Kaylee MacKnight, Terry Moore, Zachary Swanner, Miranda Therkelsen, Harrison Wallace and Mary Catherine Waltman. The production is directed and choreographed by Stacy Alley, with Terry Moore as music director.

(Photo: Michael Schennum / The Republic)



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(<http://www.pnj.com/story/entertainment/2015/06/05/front-row-sondheim-showcase-packed-great-voices/28413361/>)

There are several elements to "Ring of Fire" that one might not anticipate going in.

First of all, no one cast member is designated to sing or portray the role of Johnny Cash. Everyone gets to step forward and shine in interpreting the music of this legendary artist.

Second, audiences won't just hear Cash's famous songs. Those are covered, to be sure, but some of the best musical moments in the show are songs I'd never heard before.

Third, the show presents many interesting facts about Cash's family history and hard-knock life.

The best voices in the cast belong to Clagett, First and Waltman.

Clagett pretty much knocks it out of the park every time she opens her mouth. She is especially powerful, both vocally and emotionally, on "Sunday Morning Coming Down."



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(<http://www.pnj.com/story/entertainment/2015/05/28/front-row-loblolly-theatre-revives-weekend/28009247/>)

First is also strong throughout and is at his best on "If I Were a Carpenter," which he sings with Therkelsen.

Waltman provides a memorable highlight with her soulful rendering of the gospel-flavored "Waiting on the Far Banks of Jordan." This style is definitely her strength as a singer.

Among Cash's most famous songs, the one that really stood out to me was "Folsom Prison Blues," which featured nice work by Haselbauer.

The best full-cast performance was "Oh Come, Angel Band," another of the production's gospel-style pieces that features some strong a capella passages.

If you like the music of Johnny Cash, "Ring of Fire" is definitely the show for you. Even if you haven't been a fan of his music, this show offers a good opportunity to experience some fine young regional talent.

GO

•**WHAT:** "Ring of Fire."

•**WHEN:** 8 p.m. today through Sunday and Tuesday through Thursday, continuing on that schedule through July 3.

•**WHERE:** South Baldwin Community Theater, 2022 W. Second Ave., Gulf Shores, Ala.

•**TICKETS:** \$20; \$15 for children ages 12 and younger.

•**DETAILS:** (251) 968-6721, or visit www.summertide.org.

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