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Performance

ZING OF FIRE!

[Stacy Davies](#) Wed. June 10

More hillbilly Lawrence Welk than ‘Walk the Line,’ La Mirada’s Johnny Cash dazzles nonetheless



Dyed-in-the-wool Johnny Cash fanatics usually don’t like anyone singing Cash but Cash—and those obsessive hipsters would certainly never buy tickets to a showcase of his music unless other woolly hipsters were singing it. But if you’re a moderate Cash admirer, who occasionally listens to his music when a tune haphazardly rolls by (and maybe even enjoyed *Walk the Line*, although I should be excluded from this last group), this presentation of his music might end up being one of your guilty pleasures.

Richard Maltby Jr.’s creation directed by Jason Edwards is definitely mainstream—a real Lawrence Welk-ian hoedown of the Man in Black’s catalogue. It’s also pretty fun. There’s no old German guy wrangling an accordion, of course (blast it!), but there is an exceptional backwoods band on stage under the porch of a rickety old shack cranking up a fiddle, keys, standup bass and a crop of guitars. There’s also a lot of singing and dancing, because it is all about the music and not the drama: this production does not attempt to retell Cash’s story or his struggles—and that’s a plus, since we’ve seen it all through the eyes of Joaquin Phoenix, anyway. Instead, four actors—Troy Burgess, Michelle Duffy, Christa Jackson, and director Jason Edwards—take you on a sassy, thigh-slapping songful trek through Americana via the words and music of one of its most beloved sons. Burgess and Edwards even strike a bit of a Cashian pose—one wears black, the other has a wee pompadour—but it’s a tame symbolism that merely accompanies their rip-roaring and mournful tunes. Rocketing the show into another stratosphere, however, are Duffy and Jackson—a powerhouse female duo that deliver the material with so much soul and sex appeal, it might make you wonder why more gals don’t cover

Cash. It'll certainly remind you that Johnny Cash and his stories are powerful enough to transcend any medium, style or strata of cool. He's a man for the everyman—and woman—after all.

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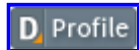


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