

FROM: CHILLIWACK ARTS &
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High Resolution photo: [Ring of Fire graphic.jpg](#)

Description: Western Canada Theatre brings their enthralling adaptation of the original Broadway musical *Ring of Fire* to town featuring the iconic music of Johnny Cash.

Photo Credit: N/A

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Step into a burning *Ring of Fire* and experience the music of Johnny Cash.

CHILLIWACK, BC – The music of Johnny Cash has influenced people world-wide for decades, but never in this way before! *Ring of Fire* is a theatrical production conceived by William Meade – all set to the music of the iconic man in black – and on **March 12** it's coming to the Chilliwack Cultural Centre. **Western Canada Theatre's** adaption by Richard Maltby Jr. and Jason Edwards of the original Broadway show first performed in 2006 features 28 of Cash's tunes, everything from "I Walk the Line," to "Folsom Prison Blues," to "Hurt."

However, although *Ring of Fire* is the music of Cash and no one else, it's more than a tribute or just his life story. A Western Canada Theatre/Chemainus Theatre Festival production the show is part of Kamloops-based **Western Canada Theatre's** 2016/2017 season and features an eight person cast – none of whom ever actually portray Cash. Richard Maltby Jr., the show's creator and original director saw this as a way to prevent cheapening Cash's character. "The persona, the voice, are unduplicatable, and the very best we could achieve would be a poor imitation," he said. "As interesting as Johnny Cash's life was, dramatizing it on the stage (it seemed to me) would only lessen, not enhance it."

But that doesn't mean Cash isn't present. The production explores a variety of themes and elements of the musician's life, from love and faith to struggle and success, from rowdiness and redemption to family and home. "Taking all the songs together, adding in the life he led, the person he was, the people he knew, loved, and sang about, it seems to me that there is another story here," said Maltby. "It's an almost mythic American tale – of growing up in simple, dirt-poor surroundings in the heartland of America, leaving home, traveling on wings of music, finding love, misadventure, success, faith, redemption, and the love of a good woman – and eventually returning home. It's about the journey of a man in search of his own soul, which is what in fact emerges when you consider all the details of Cash's life. That seemed to be a worthy story to put on a stage – and the best part is we could tell it entirely in the songs."

Cash's repertoire is known for relating to its audience, pulling them in and evoking emotions they forgot existed. *Ring of Fire* does this through Cash's songs instead of a

set plot or storyline, letting the music speak for itself. “By the end of the show the audience will feel that they have spent the evening in the presence of an extraordinary and real man,” Maltby said. “In many ways Johnny Cash wrote and sang about the lives we all lead, regardless of where we lead them. If watching this show, you feel yourself being drawn back to your roots, it isn’t accidental – even if you’ve forgotten what those roots are.”

From Cash’s soulful ballads to his foot-stompin’ county tunes, ***Ring of Fire*** is a salute to the entire catalogue of the Man in Black. Whether you’re a die-hard fan or not, it’s a show that’ll leave you feeling closer to the songs that inspired and defined a generation.

Ring of Fire is coming to the Chilliwack Cultural Centre’s HUB International Theatre on **March 12 at 7:30 pm**. Tickets are \$40 for adults, \$37 for seniors, and \$35 for youth, and can be purchased at the Centre Box Office, online at www.chilliwackculturalcentre.ca, or by calling 604-391-SHOW(7469).

Ring of Fire is generously sponsored by Canadian Tire, Amax Praetorian, John Martin MLA, The Chilliwack Progress, What’s On! Sardis, Best Western Rainbow Country Inn, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the British Columbia Arts Council, the Province of British Columbia, and the City of Chilliwack.

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For additional information and to arrange interviews, contact:

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Chilliwack Cultural Centre

Owned by the City of Chilliwack, the Cultural Centre houses two unique performance venues, an art gallery, music instruction studios, arts and crafts studios, meeting rooms, offices, and is home to the Chilliwack Academy of Music and the O'Connor Group Art Gallery. Since opening in 2010, over 290,000 tickets have been sold through the Centre Box Office, with a value exceeding \$4,280,000. The Centre is overseen by The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society on behalf of the City.

Chilliwack Cultural Centre highlights:

- 597 seat performance theatre
- 168 seat recital hall / rehearsal space / dance studio / meeting space
- Chilliwack Art gallery (22-foot high display area)
- 21 music instructional rooms
- Arts, crafts and performance studios
- Storage and Archival Resource Room

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The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society is registered under the British Columbia Society Act as a not-for-profit society (society number S-54973), and is a registered Canadian charitable organization under the Canadian Charities Directorate. (Charity number 805742897 RR0001)

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