

JUNE CARTER CASH.

THE WOMAN, HER MUSIC AND ME.

VISUAL GUIDE



JUNE CARTER CASH: THE WOMAN, HER MUSIC AND ME

VISUAL SYNOPSIS

June Carter Cash: The Woman, Her Music and Me is written and performed by Charlene Boyd, and directed by Cora Bissett.

In this semi-autobiographical show, Charlene Boyd plays both June Carter Cash and herself. It mixes moments from June's life with moments from Charlene's life. The show tells us about June's family's history and influence on country music, to her singing in the family band then becoming a star in her own right, her marriage to and touring with Johnny Cash, to her legacy. Charlene tells us about the similarities she found between her and June's lives, and the journey of discovery she went on to learn more about June, the history of country music, and the realities of being working mums and artists.

Charlene is also supported by a band on stage, who voice some of the other characters in June and Charlene's stories. The band also play live music, sometimes underscoring moments with music, and sometimes singing songs.

There is a stage on which the band always sit. It has a round circular section which reflects the circle of the Grand Ole Opry stage in Nashville. The audience are seated around tables and some rows of seating, almost like a cabaret. Charlene sometimes stands on the stage with the band to perform, and sometimes moves through the audiences or stands on some of the tables to perform. The tables are decorated with things inspired by June and Charlene's lives. There will be placemats at each of the tables to show the audience where to sit and place any drinks they bring with them.

CAST

June Carter Cash: The Woman, Her Music and Me has four performers. They are:



Charlene Boyd- Charlene plays June Carter Cash and herself. She plays both characters at different moments in their lives. She plays June when June was a young girl, and also when she was an adult.

She plays Charlene as an adult. She also briefly plays some other characters, including June's Aunt Sara, and a man Charlene meets in Nashville.



Amy Duncan – Amy plays the double-bass and sings in the band, and also helps to voice Charlene's children.



Harry Ward – Harry plays the guitar, banjo, mandolin, and sings in the band. He voices various men that Charlene meets; Johnny Cash; Carl Smith; an American radio host; Mother Maybelle, June's mother; and helps to voice Charlene's children.



Ray Aggs – Ray plays the guitar, fiddle, mandolin, percussion, melodica, and sings in the band. They voice a person Charlene meets in the USA who knew June; Siri; and helps to voice Charlene's children.

The show is recommended for ages 16+. It features strong language; references to physical and domestic violence; and a reference to a child being hospitalised.

During the production you will hear the occasional loud noises including a gunshot sound effect.

There will be some bright and flashing lights at moments throughout the play, and some use of haze.

SCENE BREAKDOWN



Pre-set : before the show starts

The band will be on stage playing some music and tuning their instruments. You are welcome to come into the show space, take a seat, and get comfortable.

Charlene will be in the space dressed as June Carter Cash. She will be speaking in an American accent, and will be saying hello to the audience as they come in. She makes some jokes and observations about the space.

When everyone is in and seated, the show starts.



SCENE 1

June tells us about some of the items in the room and how they relate to her life. She recounts the story of when she first met Johnny Cash, and about the origins of the song 'Ring of Fire'.



SCENE 2

Charlene introduces herself and talks a little bit about her life as an actor and her personal relationship to country music. She shows a dolls house she made with her children, and describes how she took it with her when she got divorced. Charlene and the band sing 'Wall to Wall Love'. She describes moving into a high-rise flat after the divorce, and starts to go through the things she has taken with her in the move. She discovers a book written by June Carter Cash.



SCENE 3

Charlene reads from the book and tells us about the history of June's life. Her family formed a band called The Original Carter Family, made up of her mother, aunt and uncle. We learn more about each of them, and how some of the songs they performed were related to Scottish folk music. The band play a little bit of a folk song called 'Bawbee Allen', which influenced several different country songs.

Charlene then recounts how the Original Carter Family band broke up, and how Mother Maybelle, June's mother, started a new band with her three daughters. The band and Charlene sing 'Hummingbird'.

Charlene plays young June, showing how June started doing a comedy act which involved telling jokes and playing a style of dance called flat-footing. She does a flat-foot dance while the band play 'It's My Lazy Day'.



SCENE 4

We are back with Charlene at home. She is on the toilet, recapping the history she has learned, while her children bang on the door and loudly shout for her. She gets a new book, and learns more about June. She asks Siri for more information about what she is reading. The kids keep trying to get her attention.

Charlene starts emailing different people who knew June to try to learn more about her. She has decided she is going to write a play about her. She reads more books, learning more about June's life.

She tells a story about her own childhood, and sings 'Crazy' with the band.

Charlene arranges Zoom calls with organisations in Nashville, and keeps trying to get in touch with June's children.

She tells a story about something that happened to her in school, when a teacher threw a chalk duster at her, which made her drop out of studying English. She doubts her own abilities to write a play about June.



SCENE 5

Scared of the sound of football hooligans outside, Charlene turns to the story of June moving to New York after her divorce from Carl Smith. Charlene talks about how she got married in New York, and puts on a wedding dress. She reflects on their shared experiences of divorce.

She hears a small voice seeming to come from a box. It is a ventriloquist puppet, which is representing Carl Smith. Charlene transforms into June, and sings a duet with the puppet – ‘Time’s A Wastin’. She grows frustrated with the puppet and shuts it back in its box.



SCENE 6

Charlene’s kids are shouting for her again. She is at a low point, when she re-finds a book of June’s that she had read earlier. Re-reading the book, she realises that she needs to go to the Appalachian Mountains, where June grew up.



SCENE 7

Music transitions from Scottish folk to American country, while Charlene changes outfit to get ready to be in America.



SCENE 8

Charlene is in the Appalachian mountains. She tells us about the places she sees and some of the people she meets. One of the people she meets knew June and played music with her. This person tells Charlene more about the history of country music, especially that Black people have been written out of the history of country music and weren’t allowed to record music even when they wrote and performed it.

Charlene and the band sing ‘Storms Are On The Ocean’. She is at June’s family home, and reflects on what she has learned. She thinks about what she knows about her dad, and her relationship with her mum.



SCENE 9

Charlene moves from the mountains to Nashville. The city is big, bright and brash. The band sing 'She Thinks My Tractor's Sexy' while we hear interviews Charlene conducted with women working in the music industry there. She talks about how hard it would have been for June, and how hard it still is for women in the performing arts.

Charlene gets a message from her kids, and thinks about the things she has missed because of being an actor. Someone tells her about a venue that is all women and non-binary artists, so she goes there. Amy and Ray in the band sing 'You're Not Alone'.



SCENE 10

Charlene visits the Ryman Auditorium, the original venue that country music started from in Nashville. We learn about June starting to go on tour with Johnny Cash. Charlene transforms to June, welcoming Johnny Cash to the stage. He isn't there.

Charlene as June goes to look for Johnny Cash. A double-bass case is used to symbolise him. He has been taking pills and can't perform. She struggles to get him onto the stage, but it is clear he is in a bad way. She curls up to him and sings 'You're A Good Man'. She puts him back together until he is upright again.



SCENE 11

Charlene visits the Country Music Hall of Fame. It is an amazing building, but she learns that June hasn't been inducted into it. She learns about all the people who aren't in it, and what that says about country music.

She meets a man who is writing a book about the Carter Sisters, but who talks over her the whole time.



SCENE 12

Charlene has managed to get in touch with Carlene Carter, June's daughter, and arranged an interview.

They end up meeting in person. Charlene learns more about June, and the similarities between their lives.



SCENE 13

Charlene travels to Cash Cabin, a recording studio where Johnny and June recorded their later albums. There she meets John Carter Cash, Johnny and June's son. She gets to sign the fireplace, which is a tradition for artists recording there. Seeing her own signature makes her think about her own story, and where she wants it to go.



SCENE 14

Charlene rushes to the Grand Ole Opry in Nashville before flying home. She stands in the same spot that June would have done. She sings some lines of 'Ring of Fire'.

Then she is back in Glasgow, returning to her flat which has been renovated. Her mum is there with her kids. They reconnect.

Charlene toasts June. She and the band sing 'Ring of Fire', it is loud and joyous. The audience are encouraged to clap and sing along. The song finishes, the lights go out.