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# Cash And Carry A Tune



David Stone and the Johnny Cash Experience tribute band will perform two shows at the Dakota Theatre in downtown Yankton on June 22. The shows are sponsored by the Corps of Discovery Welcome Center. (Courtesy Photo)

## Johnny Cash Tribute To Perform Two Shows At Dakota Theatre

BY EMILY NIEBRUGGE  
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**W**hen David Stone was a child, the family rule was that he had to take one year of piano lessons. But Stone began playing guitar instead, and learned every Johnny Cash song he could.

Stone has been performing the Johnny Cash Experience tribute for seven years now, and will bring his show to Yankton. Sponsored by the Corps of Discovery Welcome Center (CDWC), the performances will be held in the Dakota Theatre on Saturday, June 22, with shows at 2 p.m. and 7:30 p.m.

"I saw my brother suffer through piano lessons, and I didn't want to do that," Stone said. "The minister at our church played guitar sometimes, and I pressured my parents to get me a guitar, and they did."

At that time, the Johnny Cash television show was aired on ABC, and Stone said he was enthralled with Cash as a personality and a singer.

"The first record album I ever owned was a Johnny Cash album," Stone said. "So I learned all of his songs."

Stone played guitar throughout high school and college, but then joined the military and married. For 13 years he did nothing with music, until he was divorced in 2001 and was "looking for things to with (his) time."

"Johnny Cash was what I knew best, and so I started playing solo and going to open mics," Stone said. "People started telling me I sounded like (Johnny Cash) and one thing led to another. I put together a band for fun and the next thing we knew we were being booked for shows in the tri-state area."

At the time, Stone was in the pharmaceutical business, but said he was becoming disenchanted with it. Then in his mid 40s, Stone decided to make a run for a career doing Johnny Cash tribute shows.

"The next thing I knew we were being booked all over the country," he said.

Becky Leapley, director of the CDWC, wanted to bring another tribute show to Yankton. Cassie and the Bobs performed a Patsy Cline tribute last

summer, and Leapley said she heard good feedback about the show.

"The people absolutely loved it," she said. "They said it was like a two-hour escape with Patsy Cline, and I heard that over and over again and that it took them back in time and they really felt like they were part of Patsy Cline."

So Leapley decided to bring Stone to Yankton. The Johnny Cash Experience covers Cash's early career, his teaming with June Carter and the Folsom Prison concert era. It is the only Cash tribute act ever to be selected over Cash's original band to play the 40th anniversary concert at San Quentin State Prison in 2009.

Leapley said when she was deciding on a show to bring in for summer, she wanted to focus on what act would bring the most people from the middle- to the older-aged group.

"In the summer, the younger people are out on Jet Skis on the lake, and the older people aren't going to go to the bar for a bar show," she said. "The concert series goes over so well in Yankton, and that's what I looked at when I decided to do this."

Stone will also focus on making the show family friendly. Leapley said that was something else important to her for the summer show.

Leapley said she is also looking forward to the Dakota Theatre performance.

"What better way to see Johnny Cash than in a theatre that still looks like the 1950s," she said. "They've got the '70s paint on the walls, and I can really picture him playing on that stage."

For Stone, the best part of the show is keeping Cash's music and history alive.

"People will come up to us for autographs on their CDs or take pictures and they'll say 'I saw Johnny Cash and I had forgotten about the music, and I'm glad you're keeping it alive.' I don't think you can get any better of a compliment than that," he said. "The younger people will tell us they never knew about this music. For us, it's a mission to keep June Carter, Johnny Cash and the Tennessee Three alive. That's the most satisfying thing."

You can follow Emily Niebrugge on Twitter at [twitter.com/ENiebrugge](https://twitter.com/ENiebrugge)

**"For us, it's a mission to keep June Carter, Johnny Cash and the Tennessee Three alive. That's the most satisfying thing."**

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