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Johnny Cash

Jerry Lee Lewis

Carl Perkins

Elvis Presley

Viow rosults



Photo Credit: Million Dollar Quartet Original Broadway Cast; Photo by: Joan Marcus

Buzz Extra is a publication of the Community Engagement & Education Department at PlayhouseSquare

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Editors:

that soar through the house, creating a feeling of instant joy." *The Record*

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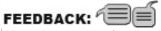
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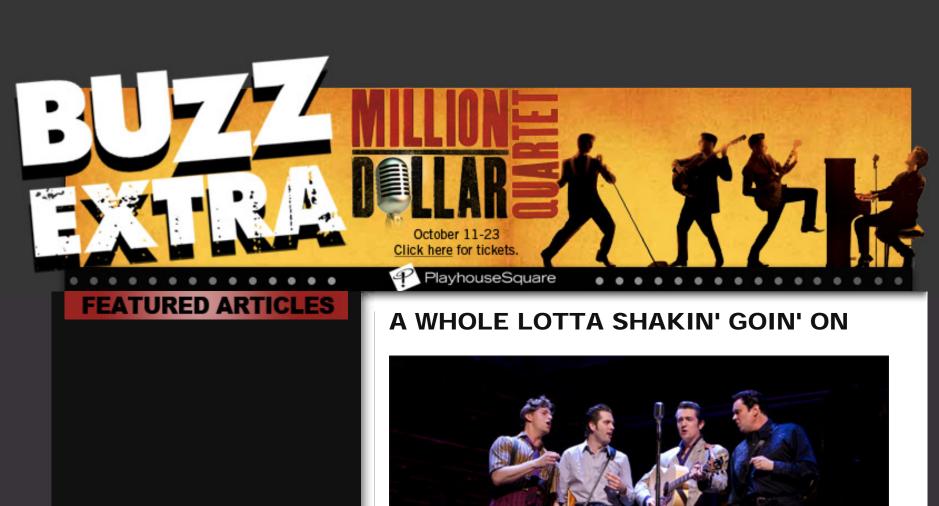
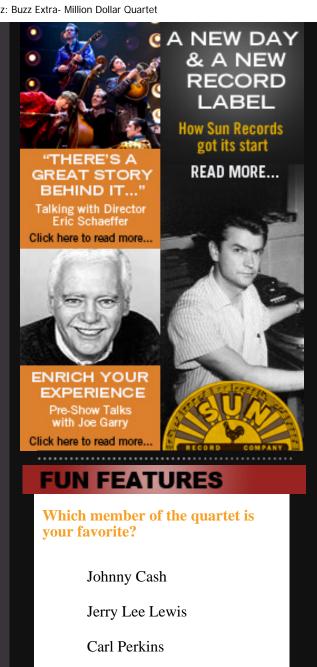




Photo Credit: Million Dollar Quartet Original Broadway Cast; Photo: Joan Marcus

There will be "a whole lotta shakin' goin' on" at PlayhouseSquare October 11-23 when



Elvis Presley

Viow recults

MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET rocks and rolls into Cleveland as part of the KeyBank Broadway Series.

"This wildly entertaining show wonderfully captures the spirit of these seminal figures who would go on to change the course of popular music." The Hollywood Reporter

"The kind of jaw-dropping turns that snap your head to the stage and unlock your feet from the floor." Chicago Tribune

"MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET explodes off the stage with a rhythm and a drive that soar through the house, creating a feeling of instant joy." The Record

"The strongest indication of the magic that must have taken place, as four great musicians with troubled lives and complicated careers came together to forget everything but what they loved to do most: express the riotous joy, beauty and sadness of life in songs that shoot straight for the soul." New York Times

"This is an enjoyable, feel-good musical with a soundtrack to die for." The Independent

"Find yourself hand-jiving, tapping your feet and wanting to scream and shout." Whatsonstage.com

Everybody Wins!

With eight nominations, a Tony and Outer Critics' Circle award, MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET has won the hearts of fans from New York to Chicago to London and is now headed across the United States on the National Tour that kicks off right here in Cleveland!

Synopsis

On December 4, 1956 four musicians – Carl Perkins, Elvis Presley, Johnny Cash and Jerry Lee Lewis - meet to jam in Memphis, Tennessee.

Returning to the studio that launched their careers will they become the most amazing band ever formed for one night only?

Vote Now

Or will broken promises, secrets and betrayals "rattle their brains" as four musical legends try to find "Peace in the Valley."

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An extraordinary moment in music history comes to life on stage.

Did You Know?

On December 5, 1956, the day after the session, *Memphis Press Scimitar* reporter Bob Johnson wrote an article with the headline MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET.

Along with the article was a photograph of the four legends around a piano.

Johnson was noted to say, "If Sam Phillips had been on his toes, he'd have turned the recorder on. That quartet could sell a million."

For information on this show go to: milliondollarquartetlive.com

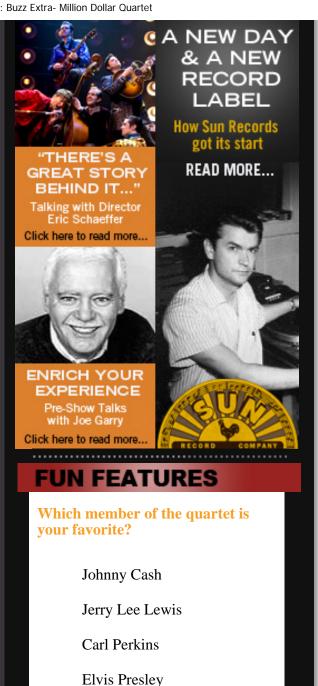


FROM GOSPEL TO ROCKABILLY

Rock and Roll has had several musical influences. The four legends in MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET all explored these many different styles of music.



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Gospel

The members of the quartet were all Christians and very familiar with songs such as "Peace in the Valley" and "Down By The Riverside" that were sung in church when they were young. In fact, Johnny Cash began his career singing gospel music.

According to Columbia College's Center for Black Music Research,

gospel music "refers to African-American Protestant vocal music that celebrates Christian doctrine in

emotive, often dramatic ways." It often combined the hymns of white worship services with Negro Spirituals.

The Blues

The PBS series The Blues claimed that blues music "evolved out of African-American work songs, field hollers, spirituals, and country string ballads more than a century ago. The blues is the foundation of virtually every major American music form born in the 20th century, including jazz, rhythm and blues, rock and roll, and hip hop."

One of the main ideas of this musical style is that if you listen to the blues, you can beat the blues.

Howlin' Wolf, an influential African-American blues singer of the time, said that Elvis "started from the blues...he made his pull from the blues." In fact Elvis Presley's early Sun Record recordings had a blues song on one side and a country song on the other.

Country Music

Country music began in the 1920s and became popular in the 1940s. It came out of folk music and usually had a simple chord progression, with lyrics presenting a strong storyline and a memorable chorus. The instruments used in country music were portable instruments, such as guitars, fiddles, mandolins, bass, jugs, harmonicas, and washboards, rather than full orchestras, organs or swing bands.

Sometimes called the white man's blues, country music came from the south and was often referred to as hillbilly music.

Vote Now

While early country music was music of the white people, race music was country music of the African-Americans. Both styles of music used the banjo, which came from the African-Americans.

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Rockabilly

Rockabilly was the precursor to rock and roll. It combined the blues with the beat of swing and R & B and elements of country/hillbilly music. Carl Perkins, often referred to as the King of Rockabilly, played hillbilly songs but jazzed them up to give them a faster jive, a better beat to dance to. The vocals could range from high falsettos to low bass and could include stutters and hiccups. This style of music and singing was different from what had been playing on the radio in the 1950s. The excitement of this sound was just what teenagers loved to listen and dance to. Of the 100 greatest rockabilly songs, the MDQ recorded 15. Eventually, rockabilly music evolved into good old Rock and Roll.

Popularity

Whatever style of music the Million Dollar Quartet sang, it was popular. Of Billboard's Top 100 songs of 1956 the MDQ had 7: five from Elvis Presley ("Heartbreak Hotel," "Don't be Cruel," "Hound Dog," "I Want You, I Need You, I Love You," and "Love Me Tender") and one each from Carl Perkins and Johnny Cash ("Blue Suede Shoes" and "Walk the Line," respectively).

Photo Credit: Original Broadway cast member Eddie Clendening as Elvis Presley in Million Dollar Quartet. (Photo by Joan Marcus)

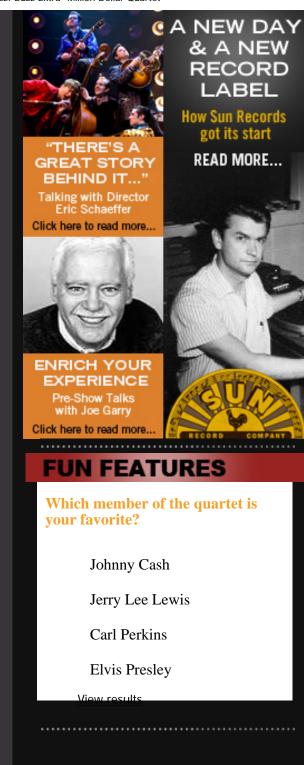


TEST YOUR SONG IQ

Songs from **MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET** (MDQ) have been hits from 1946 to today. While Johnny Cash, Elvis Presley and Carl Perkins have found eternal "Peace in the Valley," their songs, along with Jerry Lee Lewis,' have entertained audiences for generations.



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MDQ Songs Sung by Other Artists

The hit songs from MDQ have been sung by Bill Haley and the Comets, Roy Orbison, Buddy Holly, Eddie Cochran, Patsy Cline, The Beatles, John Lennon, Eric Clapton, Jimi Hendrix, Black Sabbath, Pat Boone, Led Zepplin, Johnny Rivers, George Thorogood, Dolly Parton, Fleetwood Mac and many others.

But who were the original vocalists who performed these songs? Who wrote the songs? Test your song IQ to see how

much you know about these early songs of rock and roll.

Who sang:

- 1. "Blue Suede Shoes"
- 2. "Fever"
- 3. "That's All Right"
- 4. "Sixteen Tons"
- 5. "Great Balls of Fire"
- 6. "Walk the Line"
- 7. "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On"
- 8. "Who Do You Love?"
- 9. "Matchbox"
- 10. "Hound Dog"

Answers:

- The idea for the song "Blue Suede Shoes" came from Johnny Cash who related a story about an airman in Germany who referred to his regulation shoes as "blue suede shoes" and suggested Perkins write a song about shoes. Later Perkins heard a boy on the dance floor tell his girl not to "step on his suedes." A song was born. Carl Perkins wrote and recorded "Blue Suede Shoes" in 1955.
- 2. "Fever" was originally sung by Little Willie John, an African American, who sold more than one million copies and received a gold disc. Peggy Lee did not record the song until 1958. Elve relivored the song in 1960.
- 3. While "That's All Right " was Presley's first hit, it was originally written and sung by Arthur Crudup, an African-American blues singer in 1946

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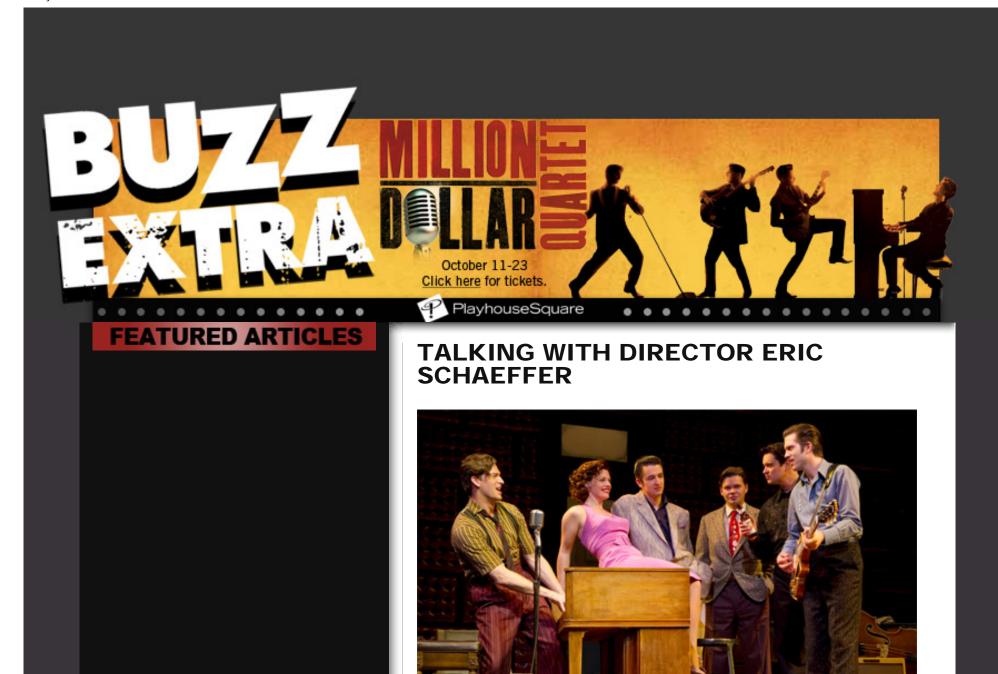
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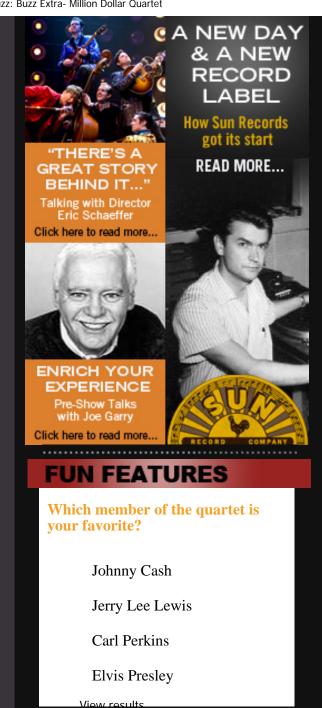
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- 4. "Sixteen Tons" was first sung by country singer Merle Travis in 1946. It became a huge hit for Tennessee Ernie Ford in 1955.
- 5. Jerry Lee Lewis recorded the song "Great Balls of Fire" in 1957. The song was written by Otis Blackwell who also penned "Fever,", "Don't Be Cruel," "Return to Sender," and "All Shook Up".
- 6. "Walk the Line" was written and sung by Johnny Cash in 1956.
- 7. Jerry Lee Lewis' "Whole Lotta Shakin' Goin' On" was a joint production of African-American singer/songwriter Curlee Williams and white bandleader Roy Hall (pseudonym of Sonny David). The first recording of the song was by Big Maybelle in 1955, produced by none other than Quincy Jones. Lewis recorded the song for Sun Records in 1957.
- 8. "Who Do You Love?" was written and recorded in 1956 by Bo Diddley.
- 9. While "Matchbox" was a hit for Carl Perkins in 1959, an earlier version of the song was first recorded by Blind Lemon Jefferson in 1927. Perkins' version was later recorded by the Beatles in 1964.
- Big Mama Thornton, a blues singer, recorded "Hound Dog" in 1952. Then when Elvis saw Freddie Bell and the Bellboys perform the song in Las Vegas in 1955, "Hound Dog" became part of his repertoire.

Photo Credit: Original Broadway cast member Lance Guest as Johnny Cash in Million Dollar Quartet. (Photo by Joan Marcus)



Million Dollar Quartet Original Broadway Cast; Photo: Joan Marcus



Eric Schaeffer is the director of **MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET**. He is the cofounder and Artistic Director of Signature Theatre in Arlington, Virginia. Winner of the 2007 Arts Founder Award, six Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Direction, and six Helen Hayes Awards for Outstanding Musical, Schaeffer wass the 2002 Washingtonian of the Year. He has directed on and off Broadway for National Tours and Regional Theaters at the Kennedy Center and in London and Los Angeles.

EXTRA: What does a director do?

SCHAEFFER: I am the captain of the ship. I work with everyone on the design team from the music department to the sound design. I am involved in casting, and I make decisions every step of the way. I move the actors all around the stage to make it seem natural and tell them what to do and when to do it. I add all the lighting on top of that. Everything. Have to get everyone rowing in the same direction.

EXTRA: You've directed many musicals, but what was your background with rock and roll?

SCHAEFFER: None, which is why I wanted to do it. I had never done a jukebox musical before. I was familiar with the songs but not with the back story. It was an exciting challenge to be able to do that.

EXTRA: Were you into rock and roll as a kid?

SCHAEFFER: Not really. Every Saturday night I had to watch the Lawrence Welk show with my grandmother. But I loved music all types of music. I loved Johnny Cash music and the Elvis movies. I was familiar with all those things.

EXTRA: You've directed the Chicago, New York and London productions, but now with the tour do you direct each production before it goes up, or do you have an assistant?

SCHAEFFER: I direct each one of them. This is the kind of show where the music is so interwoven into the story that the aloten New ould feel like they are a fly on the wall. The show needs a special care and attention to it. We direct each production and go back and check on them. It is important to keep that heart and soul in the storytelling.

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EXTRA: Are you in on casting?

SCHAEFFER: Oh yeah. I do all the casting as well. This is the hardest show I have ever cast. They have to act, play an amazing instrument and sing as well these legendary rock and roll songs. The company we have for the tour come from Los Angeles, Nashville and New York. We really scoured the country to find the best people.

EXTRA: Everyone has to actually play the instrument that their character plays.

SCHAEFFER: In the beginning people thought the actors were faking it and playing to a tape. So we actually had to change the pre-show announcement to say, "these guys are really playing the guitar" so the audience knows this is happening before their eyes.

They are a band. To create that band they all have to work together in a way that is totally different than just doing a normal musical.

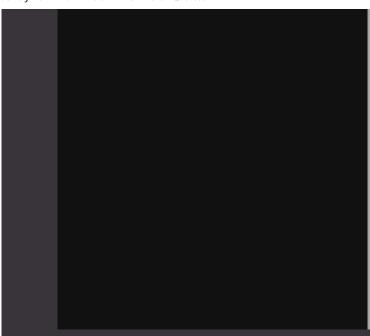
One of my favorite moments is when they are all gathered around the piano singing "Peace in the Valley." It is a cappella [without musical accompaniment] and just a beautiful moment. Jerry Lee Lewis said "we all going to go to hell for playing rock and roll." And it is interesting because all their roots are from the south and from the church. Jerry Lee started playing in the church. Religion was a huge part of what they dealt with.

EXTRA: Who is your favorite character?

SCHAEFFER: I would say Sam Phillips. You realize what a pioneer he was, how he could take someone and turn him into an amazing performer. He created a sound no one else was creating and he was the only one who knew how to do that. The magic that he created in this little garage was amazing.

EXTRA: They never came together again did they?

SCHAEFFER: No this was the only time. They all went their separate ways. Carl Perkins never got the fame and fortune he deserved, he was always the number two guy. Elvis went out to Hollywood and became a star in Vegas. They all just went on different paths with their own lives. It was an amazing night to think that these four



legends were in one room at one time and you knew it was never going to happen again.

EXTRA: What does the audience walk away with?

SCHAEFFER: The audience will have a great time with all this music. But I think people come thinking it's going to be a great rock and roll concert but what they don't realize is that there is this great story behind it. The story of how these four guys got together and how they were like a family and the whole artistry behind what they did. It is actually a very touching, moving story and on top of that you get the rock and roll concert that you really want. These guys are one in a million and it's amazing to see it before your eyes.

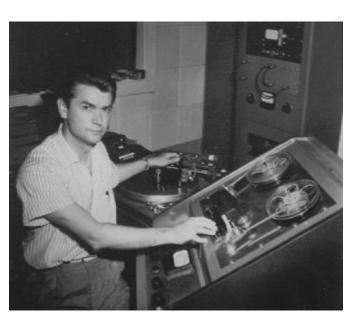
Carl Perkins' son came to the opening on Broadway. He came up to me and said, "my daddy would be really proud of this."

SUN RECORDS

October 11-23 Click here for tickets.

PlayhouseSquare

In February 1952, Sam Phillips launched his new company Sun Records in Memphis, Tennessee. The use of the word "sun" was symbolic of a new day and a new beginning.



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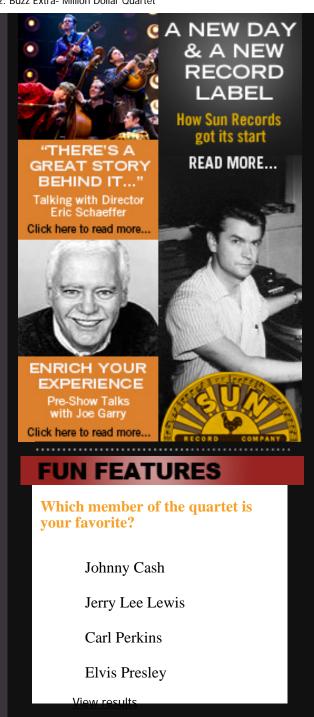
Memphis in 1952 was home to many kinds of musicians - country, gospel, pop, blues, hillbilly, swing, jazz. Both black and white musicians, playing all styles of music, came to Memphis.

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One of Sam Phillips' goals was to get black musicians recorded for a white audience. He recorded Rufus Thomas, Little Junior Parker, Billy "the Kid" Emerson, Little Milton Campbell and Johnny London. Phillips treated all musicians, according to the Sun Records Company, "with respect and honesty."

Sun Slogan

Phillips wanted to give people who had nowhere else to record, or people walking in off the street, or the many blues musicians who lived in Memphis, a chance to record their songs. Sun recorded weddings, funerals, bar mitzvahs, anything. In fact, the slogan of his new company became "We Record Anything-Anywhere-Anytime." \$3.98 was all it cost to record two songs.

Elvis

Elvis Presley was one of the people who walked in off the street. He claimed he wanted to record a song for his mother's birthday. The Sun Records manager recorded his song and later played it for Phillips.

Months later when Phillips was looking for a singer, he brought Elvis in to record. In one recording session, Elvis began playing his guitar singing, "That's All Right, Mama," an old blues song by Arthur Crudup. Phillips found what he had been seeking, a white singer, "with the Negro sound and the Negro feel." Elvis and his musicians blended white country music with black rhythm and blues.

Phillips took Elvis' song to the radio station WHBQ. Listeners loved it. The DJ emphasized that Elvis graduated from Humes High School, an all white school, so people would know for certain that Elvis was not black.

Elvis made five singles for Sun Records and each one was a bigger hit than the last. However, Presley's new manager, Colonel Tom Parker, wanted Elvis to move to a bigger record company. Phillips knew Elvis' days with Sun Records were limited. Consequently, he sold Presley's contract to RCA for \$35,000 in 1955.

More Artists come to the Sun

Elvis' success brought more artists to Sun Records. Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash, Roy Orbison, Charlie Rich, Conway Twitty, Ray Haws, Charlie Feathers, Warren Smith, B. B. King, Joe Hill Louis, Howlin' Wolf and Jerry Lee Lewis were some of the musicians who recorded for Sun.

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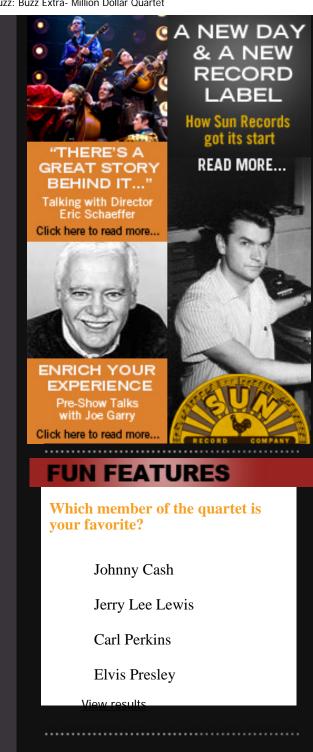
International Success

Phillips encouraged creativity in his musicians and experimented with recording techniques. His use of flutter echo and over-amplification in recording helped create the new sound of rockabilly music. Rockabilly was a combination of country music with rhythm and blues. Usually with only a guitar, bass fiddle and piano, rockabilly music made country (also called hillbilly music) really swing. Carl Perkins' hit song "Blue Suede Shoes" brought rockabilly to the forefront of the music business. It sold a million copies in the United States and England, making Sun Records an international success.



Want to find out even more about the show? Come get "buzzed" with host Joe Garry at the Broadway Buzz Pre-Show Talk! Join us one hour before performances of

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MILLION DOLLAR QUARTET in the Idea Center® at PlayhouseSquare.

The Idea Center is located just two doors west of the Allen Theatre at 1375 Euclid Avenue. You can enter the Idea Center quickly from the PlayhouseSquare parking garage by taking the elevator or stairs to Level 1. Exit through the red doors and cross at the crosswalk which will lead you directly into the rear entrance of the building. You also may enter the Idea Center from Euclid Avenue.

Can't make it to the Pre-Show Talk? Listen live on opening night (October 11) at 6:30 p. m. on WCLV 104.9 FM or watch live on wclv.com. The video will be available for viewing after opening night at playhousesquare.org/broadwaybuzz.

Catch our Post-Show Chats with the Cast following Thursday evening performances (October 13 and 20).

There is no charge for admission to Broadway Buzz events.

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