



August 15, 2018

## Million Dollar Quartet now at Bucks County Playhouse



By Ralph Malachowski

Legends come and go, yet many remain legends long after their deaths. In the musical, **Million Dollar Quartet** now at the Bucks County Playhouse in New Hope, PA, we have four: Elvis Presley; Carl Perkins, Johnny Cash; and (the still living) Jerry Lee Lewis.

This 2010 Broadway musical with book by Colin Escott and Floyd Mutrux originally conceived by Mutrux, tells the story of Sam Phillips and his Sun Records, and how Phillips brought these four talents to the public and what happened up to the time of the story. **Million Dollar Quartet**'s plot focuses on the true story when Sam Phillips invited Presley, Perkins, Lewis, and Cash to a party and jam session on December 4, 1956 at the Sun Records office. Without giving away the plot, all is not what Sam Phillips hopes to accomplish this night, and thereby hangs the tale along with over a score of popular hits performed by the stars, such as "Blue Suede Shoes," "Folsom Prison Blues," "I Walk The Line," and even "Fever" sung compellingly by Elvis' girlfriend, the luscious, voluptuous Venus played by Ryah Nixon as Dyanne.

This spanking fresh production of **Million Dollar Quartet** is played by gifted singing actors who have performed their roles many times, and their ease and professionalism shows: Brandyn Day is Jerry Lee Lewis, Sky Seals is Johnny Cash, John Michael Presney is Carl Perkins, and Ari McKay Wilford is Elvis Presley, and they are indeed a million dollars' worth of talent on this intimate stage. One comes away with the distinct impression that each musical number is sung straight to you, with personalized eye contact. Aiding and abetting the four are their back-up musicians, Fluke Holland (Zach Cossman) and Jay Perkins (James David Larson), both excellent talents themselves, especially considering that both are

almost always backing all the singers. Many will thrill at what the two handsome gents can do with a double bass and a set of drums. In addition to the already mentioned Ryah Nixon, James Ludwig as Sam Phillips is the foundation of the musical, since his astute narration is the engine driving **Million Dollar Quartet**. Indeed, all eight of the cast members are wonderful.

Upon entering the theatre, you will be greeted by the beautiful scenic design of Josh Smith. Sun Records no doubt never looked so spiffy or posh as it does here. Kirk Bookman's lighting, and Bart Fasbender's sound design completed the dazzling effect for the next two hours of the show. The intriguing costumes for the men, and the knock-down gorgeous dresses for Dyanne, were by Lauren T. Roark.

Hunter Foster, again, proves that he is a talent to be reckoned with as a director, since this **Million Dollar Quartet** is a winner on all fronts. A great, joyful experience that will leave you happy.

**Million Dollar Quartet** is now at the Bucks County Playhouse, 70 South Main Street, in New Hope, PA, until September 15. For more information, visit their website: [www.BucksCountyPlayhouse.org](http://www.BucksCountyPlayhouse.org) .