

Sedos Audition Notice

ASSASSINS

Music & Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim
Book by John Weidman

Assassins



**Performances:
9th - 13th August
2011 at The
Winterflood
Theatre**

First Round Auditions: Saturday 7th May & Sunday 8th May 2011 at Ocean House

Recalls: Saturday 14th May 2011 at Ocean House

**To book an audition slot, please email:
assassinssedos@gmail.com**

Rehearsals: Start 14th June 2011 & will be held on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Sundays

Production Team

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|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Director: | Maria Waters |
| Musical Director: | Ryan Macaulay |
| Choreographer: | Ruth Sullivan |
| Producer: | Matt Hudson |
| Lighting: | Steve King |
| Costumes: | Deborah Lean & Karen Lister |
| Stage Design: | Bronia Kupczyk |

The Show

Assassins was first performed off-Broadway at Playrights Horizons in 1991. It opened in London in October 1992 at the Donmar Warehouse in a production directed by Sam Mendes and won an Olivier award for Henry Goodman as best actor in a musical. The New York Broadway revival also led to a host of Tony awards for best revival, best direction, orchestration and best actor for Michael Cerveris. There have been 2 other London productions, one at the Landor in 2008 and one at the Union Theatre in 2010 which was nominated for 5 Off West End awards. A production at the Crucible in Sheffield in 2006 also won much critical acclaim.

The Critics reviews

MICHAEL BILLINGTON in the GUARDIAN of the Sheffield Crucible production: "What keeps this show very much alive is its dual attack on America's psychotic celebrity cult and institutionalised success worship... but its real irony is that it celebrates musically the America it attacks politically. Sondheim's score amounts to a dazzling anthology of national styles, We get folk ballads, Sousaesque marches, Copland-style anthems, and, in one extreme case, a cakewalk."

PAUL TAYLOR in the INDEPENDENT of the Donmar production: "Fittingly for the venue, it's a focused chamber piece, but in every important respect (dramatic punch; incisive musical and lyrical intelligence; cunning control of irony etc), it dwarfs the elephantine, muddle-headed hulks of 'product' recently unveiled in the West End.... this inaugural production takes perfect aim."

BEN BRANTLEY in the NEW YORK TIMES of the 2004 revival: "Assassins does not celebrate its homicidal subjects. Mr Sondheim & Mr Weidman are simply posing a question that arises in many people's minds when they read accounts of shocking, irrational crimes: "Why would someone do that?"... Mr Sondheim identifies certain emotional poisons - feelings of dispossession, of failure and alienation - as chemicals that exist in small quantities in every human body... and magnifies those elements to monstrous proportions. Your being able to recognise them as familiar makes their presence in these looming, distorted forms all the scarier. Assassins has also acquired a new point of connection with contemporary culture... that imaginary constitutional amendment to which these anti-heroes subscribe so ardently: the right to be famous.... For two haunted, exquisitely wrought hours, the assassins are allowed to present their own version of reality. It is by no means a comfortable place. But... there is catharsis and even



exhilaration in working your way through this tarnished looking-glass land.”

Synopsis

Assassins is not a long show but it packs in an awful lot of American history from 1865 to 1974, taking as its milestones the various assassination attempts on Presidents of the United States, with the music reflecting the popular music of the eras depicted. It uses the premise of a murderous carnival game to produce a revue-style portrayal of the various men & women who attempted, successfully or otherwise, to assassinate the US Presidents. Sondheim & Weidman bend the rules of time & space, taking the audience on a nightmarish roller coaster ride in which the assassins from different historical periods meet and interact, and in an intense final scene, inspire one of the most infamous acts in modern history - all in the name of the American Dream.

The show runs for about 100 minutes without an interval.

The plot in more detail is available on the Sedos website.

A great show for a long hot summer....

Assassins is a relatively short show. There are only 11 songs - 3 involve the Ensemble; 3 are performed by the Assassins, with the Proprietor involved in 2 numbers; and the rest are solos, duets & quartets with a combination of Assassins & the Balladeer.

The remainder of the piece involves a number of monologues, duologues and a few group scenes with all the Assassins. It is therefore very easy to break the rehearsal schedule down into separate chunks & rehearse efficiently. This means that no one will be stuck indoors every Sunday during the summer, apart from the production team! You will only be called when needed.

There will be a vocal coach, Linda James, to help with accents early on in the rehearsal period, as the characters are from a variety of places. Some are immigrants from Italy, Russia and Poland and the rest are from different areas within the USA. Because the characters are based on real people, it is important that they sound as authentic as possible.

There will also be a workshop run by a highly experienced professional theatre & TV director. This will work on helping the



actors to quickly establish to the audience the different historical periods & places that their characters come from.

We are very lucky to be able to perform at The Winterflood theatre which sits on the Thames, directly opposite the Tate Modern, in the City of London School. It is a purpose-built theatre seating 170 and was designed by the same team that designed the Donmar Warehouse.

The Band

There will be a 13 piece band, which is as it was written for the Broadway Production.

Staging

Simplicity will be key. There are a lot of scenes but they will be played with minimal set, good lighting and projections. Pace is very important in this show so dramatic tension and atmosphere can be built and maintained - slow scene changes will be avoided at all costs. Costumes will be based on photographs of the actual characters. We are very lucky to have a great extended production team on board.

Dates

Auditions/Recalls:

First round - Individual auditions will be held on Saturday 7th May and Sunday 8th May. We will allocate audition slots; there will be about 6 per hour. We will try to accommodate first preferences as much as possible. If you are unable to attend either of these dates, please let us know.

You will be required to sing **ANY SONG OF YOUR CHOICE**. It does not have to be a song from the show, or a Sondheim number, but of course, it can be. You will need to choose a song which demonstrates your vocal range & performance skills & we have decided to give you the option to sing any song in order for you to show us what you do best. You will also be asked to present a piece of dialogue from the show. Please request a character/s when booking to receive dialogue pieces.

All the audition pieces are now available. To arrange an audition slot and be sent pieces please email: assassinssedos@gmail.com

Recalls - will be held on Saturday 14th May. The recalls will be held in a workshop format. If you are recalled, we will ask you to



perform specific songs and/or dialogue, or some movement, depending on the role or roles that you are auditioning for, and you will then workshop these with the other auditionees. We would ask you to keep the whole day free.

Notification

We will aim to inform you as quickly as possible after the auditions whether or not you have been cast.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals will commence w/c 13th June 2011. The first rehearsal will be on 14th June & there will be an 8 week rehearsal period. Rehearsals will be on Tuesdays, Thursdays & Sundays.

Venue

Auditions, Recalls & Rehearsals will all take place at

Ocean House
10 Little Trinity Lane,
London, EC4V 2AR

Nearest Tubes: Mansion House & St Paul's

Sedos: Audition, participation and membership fees

Sedos is one of London's pre-eminent amateur theatre societies, producing quality shows to the best artistic quality possible. Please note that performers are not paid - not even expenses. To perform in ASSASSINS you must be a member of Sedos (membership is currently £30 per year) and pay a participation fee of £30. There is a £5 audition fee for non-Sedos members. If you are cast in the show, your audition fee will be deducted from your participation fee.

To book an audition slot or for further information, please contact:
assassinssedos@gmail.com

We look forward to seeing you at the auditions!

Maria, Ryan, Ruth & Matt

