



Assassins Audition Pack

Audition details

Friday 26 January 2018
6pm-9pm

Saturday 27 January 2018
3.30pm-7.30pm

You only need to attend one of the dates above. No appointment necessary.

Call backs

Sunday 28 January 2018
From 2pm

Location

The Clove Hitch
23 Hope Street
Liverpool
L1 9BQ

Production details

Wednesday 6-Saturday 9 June 2018
Unity Theatre, Hope Place.

Production Team

Director: Zoë Thirsk
Musical Directors: Josie Conti and Mark Newberry

Assassins

Book: John Weidman
Music and Lyrics: Stephen Sondheim
Based on an idea by Charles Gilbert, Jr.

Synopsis

Assassins was first performed off-Broadway in 1991, opening in London in 1992. The New York Broadway revival won several Tony awards, including best revival, best direction, orchestration and best actor for Michael Cerveris (John Wilkes Booth).

Assassins is a one-act, revue-style, musical depicting historical events in USA from 1865-1974. Most of the characters portrayed are based on real men and women who assassinated (or attempted to assassinate) Presidents of the United States. The production breaks formal conventions of time, enabling the assassins from different historical periods to interact with one another. Their interactions culminate to inspire one final, harrowing act in the name of the American Dream.

Bold, original, disturbing, and alarmingly funny.

Characters

The characters are bold and varied. The full team will be a true ensemble cast, with a mixture of talents and strengths. All actors must sing, but several do not sing alone. All cast will need to be comfortable with movement but it's not a dance show. Many parts require strong character actors who enjoy getting their teeth into complex and dramatic monologues. Other characters require an actor with excellent comic timing and others must be strong singers with the ability to act through song.

This isn't a conventional musical and we want to see as many different types of performers as possible to get the right balance amongst the cast. We are also happy for people to audition for more than one part.

There are a couple of parts written for male performers that we are interested in also auditioning women for. Please see character notes below. Women – if you feel you can give one of the male parts a good go then we'd love to see it, even if it isn't one of the ones we have indicated. If you have any queries prior to the audition about this, please get in touch.

When reading, please speak with an American accent, unless otherwise stated in the character notes below.

Please read the character descriptions below and if you have any questions, please contact Zoë (zoe@wwdn.co.uk).

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Assassins

John Wilkes Booth

Male

Age 20s-40

Baritone F2-G4

Assassinated President Abraham Lincoln during a performance at Ford's Theater in Washington D.C. on 14 April 1865. Foreman and inspirational celebrity to the other assassins, acting as a mentor throughout the production.

Charles Guiteau

Male (or female)

Age 30s-50s

Tenor A2-Ab4

Strong character actor needed.

Assassinated President James Garfield in the waiting room of the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station, Washington, D.C., on July 2, 1881. Dashing but mad. His key scene involves a cakewalk to the gallows.

Leon Czolgosz (pronounced CHOL-gosh)

Male

Age 20s-30s

Bass G#2-G4

Slight Polish twang, otherwise American accent is fine.

Assassinated President William McKinley at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y. on 6 September 1901. A young poverty-worn radical who killed the president for the sake of the common citizen.

Guiseppe Zangara

Male

Age 20s-40

Tenor B2-A4

Heavy Italian accent.

Attempted to assassinate President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt as he greeted well-wishers in Bayfront Park, Miami, FL on 15 February 1933. An angry immigrant who blamed capitalists for the fire he felt in his belly. Executed in the electric chair.

Samuel Byck

Male

Age 30s-50s

Baritone D3-G4

No solo song but sings with cast and has a few solo lines

Philadelphia accent

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Attempted to assassinate President Richard Nixon by hijacking a commercial jetliner.
Hysterically irate guy in a Santa Claus suit.

Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme

Female

Age 20s-30s

Mezzo-soprano A3-G5

Attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford at the Capitol Park in Sacramento, CA on 5 September 1975. A flower power hippie in love with Charles Manson.

Sara Jane Moore

Female

Age 25-40s

Mezzo-soprano F3-Eb5

Requires excellent comic timing.

Attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford at the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, CA, on 22 September 1975. A frazzled housewife with little sense.

John Hinkley

Male

Age 18-30

Baritone A2-G4

Guitar playing is a bonus but not essential.

Attempted to assassinate President Ronald Reagan as he left the Washington Hilton in Washington, D.C. on 30 March 1981. A love-obsessed and depressed college student.

Lee Harvey Oswald

Male

Age 20s-30s

Tenor G3-C4

Must be a strong, dramatic actor.

Sings with the cast, no solos. Can double as the Balladeer but we want to keep this open.

Assassinated President John F. Kennedy from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas, TX on 22 November 1963. A suicidal, dejected shipping clerk. Heavily involved in the pivotal climax of the show.

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Other Characters

Balladeer

Male

Any age

Tenor C3-G4

Can double as Oswald but we want to keep this open.

A folk singer and narrator of the show – all lines are sung. Represents the voice of America.

The Proprietor

Male or female

Any age

Tenor Gb2-F4 (or an octave up if female)

An ominous character who runs the shooting gallery. Acts as a seducer, representing the part of the psyche that allows people to commit unspeakable acts.

Billy

Male

Age 7-14

Son of Sara Jane Moore. Parents please note, the production features content including strong language, on-stage violence and death, and mature themes.

Ensemble

A very small ensemble will be made up of other historical characters, such as Emma Goldman and President James Garfield, as well as depicting reporters, photographers, tourists and bystanders. The ensemble will be tasked with challenging vocals and required to multi-role.

Audition songs

Proprietor

Everybody's Got the Right from beginning up until, "You can climb to any height. Everybody's got the right to their dreams."

Up to 2:33 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6djdNnICNTs>

Balladeer

Ballad of Booth (Part 1) From beginning to, "Was that the reason, tell us, John – along with bad reviews?"

Up to 2:16 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nW4WYhwI0zM>

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Booth

Ballad of Booth (Part 2) From, "How the country is not what it was..." to, "Never, never. No, the country is not what it was."

5:15-6:16 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nW4WYhwI0zM>

Zangara

How I Saved Roosevelt From, "You think that I scare?" to, "I no care who I kill, long as it's king!"

1:32-2:49 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JAAUQZwsoRk>

Moore

Gun Song From, "I got this really great gun." to, "There it is!"

2:20-2:47 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HIQja4HrVo>

Czologosz

Gun Song From beginning to, "It takes a lot of men to make a gun... One gun."

Up to 0:33 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=2HIQja4HrVo>

Hinkley

If you can play the guitar, please bring along to play the intro. Not essential!

Unworthy of Your Love From beginning to, "How can I turn your love to me?"

Up to 1:15 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gy29ecw8rOU>

Fromme

Unworthy of Your Love From, "I am nothing. You are wind and devil and god." to, "Let me be worthy of your love, set you free."

1:16-2:07 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Gy29ecw8rOU>

Guiteau

Ballad of Guiteau From, "Look on the bright side, look on the bright side, sit on the right side... of the..." to, "I shall be remembered! I am going to the Lord-y..."

3:23-4:08 here <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QEN16GHuwvg>

Byck

Another National Anthem From, "There's another national anthem playing, not the one you cheer." to, "...getting louder every year."

2:40-3:18 here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SIYeR5xm5eE>

For all other parts, including Oswald, Billy and ensemble parts, please sing any of the above.

If you have any questions regarding the music, please contact Josie and Mark (josie@wwdn.co.uk; mark@wwdn.co.uk)

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Audition process

Everyone who auditions will require a good level of both singing and acting ability, with a focus on strong character acting. We will also be looking for those who are comfortable with movement but there won't be a dance audition.

On the day of the audition, someone will greet you, sign you in and answer any questions that you may have. There'll be a short form to fill out so you can tell us a bit about you and your strengths.

Please note that there are no set audition times and so there may be a short wait before you are able to audition. If you need to audition at a particular time, please let us know in advance.

As well as singing one of the songs above, we'll give you a short piece of script to read, depending on which part you would like to go for. Most of the characters in the production are based on historical people, therefore we ask that you read the part in the appropriate accent, American or otherwise. If you are auditioning to be part of the ensemble please select any part to read in an American accent.

We will provide all audition materials on the day, you do not need to bring any scripts or sheet music with you and we will have a pianist to play for you.

Rehearsals

Rehearsals will be twice a week on Wednesday evenings and Sunday afternoons and will usually take place in the city centre.

Our first rehearsal will be held on Wednesday 31 January 2018.

We ask that you are available from 7pm-9.30pm on Wednesdays and from 12pm-4pm on Sundays. Due to the nature of the production, we will not need everyone for each rehearsal. We ask that you give us notice of your availability once cast, so that we can be as flexible as possible with our schedule.

We will rehearse more regularly nearer to the production and will expect full cast and production team to be available for the two weekends prior to the show. We will ask you for availability information on your audition form to identify any major clashes, however we strive to be as accommodating as possible, given the high standard of performance we want to achieve.

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Fees

What We Did Next is a community interest company, producing non-commercial theatre. We are able to put on high standards of theatre through funding from ticket sales and from a small contribution from the cast and crew. Unfortunately we are not in a position to pay any cast or crew involved in the production.

You do not need to pay anything to audition but, if cast, we require a £10 annual membership fee (which covers your insurance for rehearsals and the performance) as well as a £40 contribution to the cost of this show. This can be paid in one lump sum, or across instalments.

If you have any questions about this please contact Zoë (zoe@wwdn.co.uk)

About What We Did Next

What We Did Next is an ambitious musical theatre group producing great theatre for and by the community of Liverpool. It sprang up in the summer of 2008 from the realisation that the central Liverpool community had no focus to gather around in order to put on great musicals specifically, whilst having a rehearsal schedule that fits around people's busy lives and also aiming to provide a vibrant social scene. Since our inception we have expanded into original writing, workshopping scripts and straight drama pieces.

We also bring our members and audiences together through regular social events such as musical theatre open mic nights.

Alongside theatre, we also run a choir, which meets weekly and performs at venues in and around Liverpool.

We know many people love to be connected to the stage, whether performing or contributing behind the scenes, and this love brings us together as part of a dynamic group – What We Did Next.

Previous Shows

Pippin, Unity Theatre, 2017: Stephen Schwartz's (Wicked, Godspell) imaginative and darkly humorous coming-of-age musical was performed by WWDN's ensemble cast, to brimming audiences.

Three Sides, 81 Renshaw, 2016: WWDN presented the amateur premier of this musical romantic comedy, by the composer of One Man, Two Guvnors , Grant

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Olding. It tells the story of three passionate, neurotic and hopeless romantics lost in the tangles of the heart.

Urinetown, Unity Theatre, 2016: A social and political satire set in a fictional future where a 20-year drought has crippled the city's water supplies. The production played to WWDN's strengths of being a large ensemble piece with a lot of humour.

I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change, Age Concern Liverpool, 2015: A promenade performance of a show which explores all aspects of romantic relationships: from the crucial first date through wedding preparations, the social isolation of having a baby and the inevitable demise of your loved one and the question of how to be intimate in your twilight years.

Bonnie & Clyde, Unity Theatre, 2015: A musical telling of the famous criminal pair. With a "faultless band" and "nifty projections", WWDN continued to show just what a non commercial theatre company can do

[*title of show*], Lantern Theatre, 2014: A musical about two guys writing a musical about two guys writing a musical.

Carousel, Unity Theatre, 2014: We decided to put our own unique stamp on the Rodgers and Hammerstein classic with a huge cast, successfully selling out every single night.

Batboy, Unity Theatre, 2013: Performing a 'classic love story with a serious bite', to sell out audiences!

Elegies for Angels, Punks and Raging Queens, loisis Studio, 2012: WWDN formed another large ensemble which presented a story of love, loss, hope and laughter in memory of those who have lived with, and died from AIDS. The show was in support of Sahir House, Merseyside's HIV Charity.

Into the Woods, The Black-E, 2011: Arguably our biggest challenge to date, WWDN took on the mammoth Sondheim production, returning to the Black-E. The show was well-received by audience and reviewers.

Any Other Name: The Vines, 2011: An original piece written by one of our members for the RSC Open Stages project, showcasing some of Liverpool's most talented actors. The piece was picked to be performed at the RSC Open Stages regional showcase in Manchester, an achievement we are very proud of.

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Last Five Years: The Kazimier, 2011: This Jason Robert Brown piece explores a couple's journey throughout their five year relationship, enabling us to showcase two talented, up-and-coming performers.

Spring Awakening, Unity Theatre, 2011: One of the most controversial musicals ever written, *Spring Awakening* contrasts the strict society of 19th century Germany with witty dialogue and a punchy, contemporary soundtrack. The production was entirely sold out across the run and was well received.

RENT, The Black-E, 2010: WWDN performed their production of the musical *RENT* at the Black-E, Liverpool city centre. We were the first theatre company to be granted the rights to present the full stage version of Jonathan Larson's hit musical in Merseyside

Company, The Kazimier, 2009: Our inaugural production was to sell out audiences over three nights. *Company* was a demanding musical, both in script and score, and we are pleased it was such a success.

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