

# Audition notice



# ASSASSINS

Book by JOHN WEIDMAN  
Music and Lyrics by STEPHEN SONDHEIM



# ASSASSINS: AUDITION NOTICE

Music and Lyrics by Stephen Sondheim Book by John Weidman  
Assassins is based on an idea by Charles Gilbert, Jr.  
Playwrights Horizons, Inc. - New York City produced Assassins Off-Broadway in 1990  
Orchestrations by Michael Starobin

## KEY INFO

### Dates and venues

**Pre-audition workshop:** evening of Thursday 1 May at  
The Boury Academy Studios near Vauxhall  
**Deadline for self-tape auditions (all roles):** midnight on Sunday 25 May  
**First round dance call for those auditioning for dancing chorus only:** evening of  
Tuesday 10 June at Wheatsheaf Hall near Vauxhall  
**Recalls (by invitation):** daytimes of Sunday 15 June (balladeers and assassins) and  
Sunday 22 June (ensemble and dancing chorus) at St Gabriel's Halls, Pimlico  
**Rehearsals:** Tuesday and Thursday evenings and Saturday daytimes, 15 July onwards,  
mostly at Theatre Deli Leadenhall Studios

### Show week including compulsory rehearsals

**Final rehearsal room rehearsal:** Saturday 20 September  
**Sitzprobe:** afternoon of Sunday 21 September  
**Tech rehearsal:** evening of Sunday 21 September  
**Dress rehearsal:** evening of Monday 22 September  
**Performances:** Tuesday 23-Saturday 27 September

### Sign up for workshop

<https://membership.sedos.co.uk/signup/136>

### Any queries? Or want to know more about Sedos?

Email [assassins@sedos.co.uk](mailto:assassins@sedos.co.uk)  
Find out more about Sedos at [sedos.co.uk](https://sedos.co.uk)

## ABOUT THE SHOW

*Assassins* lays bare the lives of nine individuals who assassinated or tried to assassinate the President of the United States, in a one-act historical "revusical" that explores the dark side of the American experience. From John Wilkes Booth to Lee Harvey Oswald, writers Stephen Sondheim and John Weidman bend the rules of time and space, taking us on a nightmarish roller coaster ride in which assassins and would-be assassins from different historical periods meet, interact and inspire each other to harrowing acts in the name of the American Dream.

*Assassins* combines Sondheim's signature blend of intelligently stunning lyrics and beautiful music with a panoramic story of our culture of celebrity and the violent means some will use to obtain it, embodied by America's four successful and five would-be presidential assassins. Bold, original, disturbing, and alarmingly funny, *Assassins* has never been more relevant in these turbulent political times.

Our version of *Assassins* takes us away from the traditional fairground setting and relocates us to an American political convention – AmeriCon. Political conventions are at their heart about being chosen and celebrated by the masses. They are opportunities for political and public figures to get up and pitch why you should choose them, to tell their story, to be the centre of attention for a primetime moment – essentially, why their way is right, and any other way is wrong. This is what our assassins crave, for people to understand and celebrate why they did what they did.

## ABOUT THE MUSIC

*Assassins* boasts a rich, varied score that mirrors each assassin's distinct era and personality. For example John Wilkes Booth's song carries a dramatic, operatic flair, whilst Charles Guiteau's leans into a quirky, vaudevillian style – in all cases the songs showcase each assassin's individuality. The score weaves in Americana and patriotic tones – "Everybody's Got the Right" and "The Ballad of Czolgosz," underscoring the assassins' warped chase for the American Dream with recurring motifs emphasizing shared themes of entitlement and disillusionment.

It is chilling that the music also serves to humanize these historical figures, exposing their emotional depths. Songs such as "Unworthy of Your Love" and Lee Harvey Oswald's pivotal scene reveal their yearning for connection and purpose. Meanwhile, irony and dark humor shine in "The Gun Song," a deceptively upbeat take on firearms that critiques America's relationship with violence.

Sondheim's score emerges as a brilliant tapestry – eclectic, provocative, and haunting – exploring the personal and societal toll of unfulfilled aspirations and exclusion, all while blending musical diversity with sharp cultural commentary.

Most of the assassins have featured numbers highlighting their individual personalities and their attempts to justify their actions. The ensemble has many opportunities to provide their commentary in songs such as “How I Saved Roosevelt” and as well as dancing, the dancing chorus will be added to a number of the ensemble numbers – and in particular the haunting “Something Just Broke”.

## **CASTING | DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION**

Sedos is committed to diversity and inclusion. Our commitment is to build and sustain a membership that is reflective of the diverse communities within London. We actively encourage all performers to audition for the roles which they feel best suit their skills.

Across the entire cast there are opportunities for actors of all ages, ethnicities and genders to be cast, with the primary consideration in casting being the performers' ability to sing and act in their assigned role.

We intend to pursue non-traditional casting, so all roles in *Assassins* are open to actors of all ethnicities, except John Wilkes Booth, whose Confederate allegiance and opposition to the abolition of slavery were key factors in his assassination of Abraham Lincoln, so it would feel inappropriate and confusing for a non-white actor to play this role.

Playing age and gender presentation requirements for all roles are detailed in the breakdown at the bottom of this notice.

With regard to the assassins, the characters' lived experience was a contributing factor to their motive so we will be casting actors who present as the traditional gender presentation. Anyone can audition for any role, provided they are comfortable portraying that gender.

There are no strict gender presentation requirements for the balladeer/proprietor (but please see the role breakdown as to how we are intending to portraying those roles), the ensemble and dancing chorus, but we will be looking to create a balanced cast. We are not intending to double the balladeer and Lee Harvey Oswald (see role breakdown).



We will not be transposing any vocal lines (other than potentially changing the octave).

You can read Sedos's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion policy in full [here](#).



Images of productions of *Assassins* at Chichester Theatre, Nottingham Playhouse and Yale Repertory Theatre

## WHAT WE ARE LOOKING FOR

We are looking for a cast of 22, broken down as follows:

2 x balladeers (the convention hosts)

The Balladeer role will be split between the two “hosts” and will also combine the Proprietor role. We are open to actors of all genders performing as the convention hosts.

9 x assassins - see role breakdown below

5 x ensemble - these actors will play the various smaller roles in scenes and perform the primary singing roles in the two ensemble numbers. These are non-dancing roles, though all roles will require moments of movement.

6 x dancing chorus - these performers are the dancing chorus of the convention. They accompany the balladeers/hosts and assassins in a variety of the ‘convention

numbers' and are primarily a dancing group, though they will sing at various points. Must be strong dancers.

## WORKSHOP, AUDITIONS AND RECALLS

### Pre-audition workshop

When: Thursday 1 May, 7pm

Where: Studio 5, [The Boury Academy Studios](#), Top Floor, Wyvil School, Wyvil Road, London SW8 2TJ

Sign up: <https://membership.sedos.co.uk/signup/136>

The workshop is an opportunity to get to know the show, the team and ask questions. You'll hear from the director about his vision and have a chance to sing through a few numbers from the show.

The workshop is free to attend, not compulsory and attendance does not affect whether you are cast in the show. Please sign up to give us an idea of numbers.

### Auditions

First-round auditions will be by self-tape for everyone, with a first-round dance call for those auditioning for the dancing chorus only (more info below). Those auditioning for the dancing chorus also need to submit a self-tape.

**Your audition self-tapes will only be seen by the creative team and committee liaison (or other delegated members of the committee standing in for committee liaison) and will not be shared outside this group. The self-tapes will not be held any longer than is necessary for the purpose of casting the show and will then be deleted.**

For your self tape, we will be asking you to perform one song and one monologue. If you are only auditioning for the dancing chorus, you do **not** need to perform a monologue.

The song should be sung to a backing track, karaoke style. We are likely to reject any self-tapes sung a capella.

### Song

We have provided [a list with backing tracks](#) of suggested Sondheim songs that you can sing for your first round self-tape audition. However, if you would like to, you may

choose to sing any other song (whether or not by Sondheim), including songs from *Assassins*, as long as it also meets the below criteria:

- Is a solo (i.e. if there are sections of your song with other characters speaking or singing, there is no need to get someone else to perform those parts.)
- Has a backing track or accompaniment.

Note: If you choose a song not by Stephen Sondheim, please nevertheless pick a song that demonstrates your ability to cope with the kind of vocal complexity required by a Sondheim score. This website has some interesting suggestions of songs that might be chosen dependent on the role you are looking at. [Audition Songs for Assassins - By Character | Theatre Trip](#)

### Monologue

Please perform a monologue of your choice [from the options provided here](#).

To submit your self-tape, please email your video to [assassins@sedos.co.uk](mailto:assassins@sedos.co.uk) with the following:

Subject: Self tape [your name]

In your self-tape, please:

- Clearly say your name at the start of the video
- Film in landscape orientation
- Film from the waist up and so we can clearly see your face
- Please sing to a backing track and listen back to your tape before you send it to ensure that we can clearly hear you and the backing track
- Don't worry about the perfect lighting or not having high tech camera equipment – as long as we can see and hear you clearly, not having the most up-to-date kit will not prejudice your audition
- Don't worry about editing your video
- Don't wear a costume – just be yourself!
- You can send the song and monologue on one video or as two – we don't mind!
- It's fine to send the video by a google drive link, wetransfer or similar. We will acknowledge the video receipt by email when we receive it

**IMPORTANT:** Please also complete the [AUDITION FORM](#) and (optionally) the [DEI MONITORING FORM](#) when you submit your self-tape.

**SELF-TAPE DEADLINE:** midnight on Sunday 25 May



### **First round dance call for those auditioning for dancing chorus only**

When: Tuesday 10 June evening

Where: Wheatsheaf Hall, Wheatsheaf Lane, London SW8 2UP

[Sign up for a slot](#)

Those auditioning for the dancing chorus need to submit a self-tape of a song only as detailed as above as well as attending the in-person dance call. If you are only auditioning for the dancing chorus, you do **not** need to perform a monologue.

There is no preparation required for the dance call – you will be taught a routine in the room by our choreographer, Emma.

**We will video parts of the first-round dance call. The videos will only be seen by the creative team and committee liaison (or other delegated members of the committee standing in for committee liaison) and will not be shared outside this group. The videos will not be held any longer than is necessary for the purpose of casting the show and will then be deleted.**

### **Recalls (by invitation only)**

When: daytime of Saturday 15 June (balladeers and assassins recalls) and Sunday 22 June (ensemble and dancing chorus recall)

Where: [Men's Club at St Gabriel's Halls, Churchill Gardens, Pimlico, London SW1V 3AA](#)

More information will be given to those who are invited to attend the recall and access to the required materials will be provided as part of your recall invitation.

We may cast some parts from the first-round auditions without using recalls.

## **REHEARSALS**

Rehearsals will start on Tuesday 15 July and will be held on Tuesday and Thursday evenings (7-10pm) and Saturdays (generally 11am-5pm, occasionally noon-6pm).

Not everyone will be called to every rehearsal. Please be honest about your availability on the audition form so we can build the rehearsal schedule.

Most rehearsals will be held at [Theatre Deli Leadenhall Studios 107 Leadenhall Studios, London EC3A 4AF](#), with occasional rehearsals in other London spaces.

### Show week including compulsory rehearsals

Final rehearsal room rehearsal: Saturday 20 September

Sitzprobe: afternoon of Sunday 21 September

Tech rehearsal: evening of Sunday 21 September

Dress rehearsal: evening of Monday 22 September

Performances: Tuesday 23-Saturday 27 September, 7.30pm evening and 2.30pm Saturday matinee



Images of productions of *Assassins* at Chichester Theatre, Nottingham Playhouse and Yale Repertory Theatre

## SEDOS VALUES

Sedos is an ambitious, vibrant and inclusive London theatre society, striving for excellence and creativity in our productions for over 100 years. As a busy and energetic London amateur theatre group, we stage between five and ten musicals and plays each year and offer open auditions for all our shows.

The Sedos values help guide the society's decision making, how we behave and interact with each other, and how we represent ourselves to the London theatre community and beyond – both as a reflection of who Sedos are, and who we aspire to be. They are:

- We want our people to feel supported and at home, to be included and treated fairly.

- We want our people to feel empowered, giving them the platforms and the tools to be bold, take risks, and innovate.
- We want to be ambitious in our pursuit of creating high quality theatre, and our desire to continuously improve as a society.

## PARTICIPATION COSTS

Please note that actors in Sedos shows are not paid and do not receive expenses.

If you are cast in *Assassins*, you must become a member of Sedos (membership is currently £30 per year if paid by direct debit; £40 if paid as a one-off). There is also a participation fee of £100, which goes towards the cost of putting on the show.

## FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE SCHEME

Sedos understands that taking part in a show can be a significant financial burden. In line with our values, we are committed to being as inclusive as possible – particularly as we believe socio-economic status should not be a barrier for exceptional talent.

For those who are cast in the show but would not be able to take part without financial assistance, Sedos has a Financial Assistance Scheme. Through the generosity of donors (both anonymous and known to Sedos but never known to our beneficiaries), the scheme aims to cover – either partially or in full – membership fees and participation fees for those who need it.

The scheme is a fund which relies on kind donations from members and friends of Sedos who wish to support and facilitate the opportunities to experience being in a Sedos show.

If you would like to benefit from the Financial Assistance Scheme, please either;

- Email the Sedos treasurer (Sam Ferguson) at [treasurer@sedos.co.uk](mailto:treasurer@sedos.co.uk) with 'FAS [Your Name] – Assassins' in the subject line and with a short message indicating that you may require financial assistance if cast in the show.
- Email Assassins producer Pippa Kyle at [assassins@sedos.co.uk](mailto:assassins@sedos.co.uk) with a short message indicating that you may require financial assistance if cast in the show.

Rest assured, if you have requested financial assistance, it will have no bearing on whether you are cast in the show.

## ANY QUESTIONS

Please email producer Pippa Kyle at [assassins@sedos.co.uk](mailto:assassins@sedos.co.uk) if you have any questions.

We look forward to receiving your self-tape auditions.

## ABOUT THE TEAM

### Director | Dan Edge (he/him)

Dan's directing credits include *Richard III* for Sedos in 2024, *Kingmaker*, *Elegies for Angels*, *Punks and Raging Queens*, *Bug* in the Bloomsbury Studio and *Rent* at RADA Studios. He also assistant directed *Amadeus* with Sedos in 2022.

### Musical Director | Matt Gould (he/him)

Matt's musical director credits for Sedos include *Candide*, *Grand Hotel*, *Parade* and *Rent*. With other societies, Matt's Musical Director credits include the Stephen Sondheim shows: *Merrily We Roll Along*, *Company*, *Into The Woods* and *Sweeney Todd*; also *Jesus Christ Superstar*, *The Who's Tommy*, *Cabaret* and *Anything Goes*. Matt is also an experienced director – for Sedos shows include *Into the Woods*, *Ragtime* (NODA London Best Musical 2019) and *A Man of No Importance*. Play director credits include *Arcadia*, *Frankenstein*, *Noises Off* and *Amadeus* (NODA London Best Play 2022).

### Choreographer | Emma Bowker (she/her)

Emma is a performer and choreographer with experience in both musical theatre and competitive cheerleading since 2016. Having ticked off *Bring It On: The Musical* already, adding cheer to Sondheim felt like a natural progression. Recent shows include: *Into the Woods*, *Bring it On*, *Our House*, *The Hunchback of Notre Dame*, and *Legally Blonde* (three times!).

### Production designer | Adrian Jeakins (he/him)

Adrian has been involved in numerous shows with Sedos as a designer handling a mix of sound and video. His recent shows include collaborating with Dan on *Richard*

*III* (Sedos), *A Midsummer Night's Dream* (Sedos), *PS I'm a Terrible Person* (Pint Of Wine) and *1984* (Questors) . When not actually in a theatre Adrian heads up engineering at Brompton Technology, developers of award-winning LED video wall processing systems for live events and film.

## **Producer | Pippa Kyle (she/her)**

*Assassins* will be the 11th show Pippa has produced or co-produced for Sedos, following *Taking Steps*, *A Little Night Music*, *A Man of No Importance*, *Noises Off*, *I Love You, You're Perfect, Now Change*, *Frankenstein*, *Pippin*, *Ragtime*, *Amadeus* and *The Pirate Queen*, this year's Sedos show at the Minack Theatre, Cornwall. She has been involved in more than 25 Sedos productions in various roles over the past 15 years and is chair of the Sedos marketing group, as well as a Trustee of the society.

## **Committee liaison | Emma Miller (she/her)**

Every Sedos show has one or two committee liaisons, who act as a link between the production team and the management committee. Their role is to provide support and act as an independent voice, should any auditionee, cast or team member wish to raise a query or concern. You can contact Emma at any time on [emma.miller@sedos.co.uk](mailto:emma.miller@sedos.co.uk)

# **ROLES**

### **Balladeer (Convention Host) x2**

Gender: Any

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: Any

A combination of the Proprietor and Balladeer roles, these are the hosts of our convention. Inspired by American cable news hosts, they are charming, smiley and confident.

Generic American accent.

Range: we will make it work, whatever your range – your vocal and acting ability and suitability for the role will determine who we cast. Once we have our pair of hosts, we will work the part split out accordingly.

### **John Wilkes Booth**

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: White – John Wilkes Booth's Confederate allegiance and opposition to the abolition of slavery were key factors in his assassination of Abraham Lincoln, so it would feel inappropriate and confusing for a non-white actor to play this role.



Playing age: 25-40

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

Southern American accent.

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: F2

### **Giuseppe Zangara**

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 30-50

Attempted to assassinate President-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt as he greeted well-wishers in Bayfront Park, Miami, FL on February 15, 1933. An angry, heavily-accented immigrant.

Italian accent.

Vocal range top: A4

Vocal range bottom: B2

### **Sarah Jane Moore**

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 35-50

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

Generic American accent.

Vocal range top: Eb5

Vocal range bottom: F3

### **Leon Czolgosz**

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 25-35

Assassinated President William McKinley at the Pan American Exposition in Buffalo, N.Y. on September 6, 1901. A young poverty-worn radical.

Eastern European accent.

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: G#2

### **Charles Guiteau**

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 35-50

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.

Generic American accent.

Vocal range top: Ab4

Vocal range bottom: A2

### **Lynette “Squeaky” Fromme**

Gender: Female

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 20-25

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

Generic American accent.

Vocal range top: G5

Vocal range bottom: A3

### **John Hinckley**

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 20-25

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

Generic American accent.

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: A2

### **Samuel Byck**

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 40-50

Attempted to assassinate President Richard Nixon by hijacking a commercial jetliner. Hysterically irate schlep.

Generic American accent.

Vocal range top: G4

Vocal range bottom: D3

### **Lee Harvey Oswald**

Gender: Male

Ethnicity: Any

Playing age: 20-25

Assassinated President John F. Kennedy from the sixth floor of the Texas School Book Depository in Dallas, TX on November 22, 1963. A suicidal, dejected shipping clerk. Generic American accent.

Vocal range top: C4

Vocal range bottom: G3

**Please note, this role will not be doubled with the Balladeer.**

### **Ensemble x5**

Gender: Any

Ethnicity: Any

Playing Age: Any

The Ensemble will play the various smaller roles in scenes throughout the show.

**These are non-dancing roles, though all roles will require moments of movement.**

### **Dancing chorus x6**

Gender: Any

Ethnicity: Any

Playing Age: 20-35

The dancing chorus of the Convention. They will accompany the Balladeers/Hosts and Assassins in a variety of the 'convention numbers' throughout the show.

**These are primarily dancing roles, though there will be moments of both singing and acting.**

**Please note that those auditioning for the dancing chorus need to submit a self-tape of a song only as detailed as above as well as attending the in-person dance call ([sign up here](#)). If you are only auditioning for the dancing chorus, you do not need to perform a monologue for the self-tape.**