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Assassins



Synopsis

Evoking a fraternity of political assassins and would-be assassins across a hundred years of our history, Sondheim and Weidman daringly examine success, failure and the questionable drive for power and celebrity in American society. "Dark, demented humor, as horrifying as it is hilarious."--Michael Kuchwara, Associated Press

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

The creators of the musical "1776" said succinctly, "God writes LOUSY theater". This is a case where they have been proven wrong. All that was needed was a book by John Weidman that twisted time into the depths of a carnival shooting gallery plus music and lyrics by Stephen Sondheim to tie it all together into a neat little package called "Assassins". An example regarding Guiseppe Zangara, who attempted to assassinate president-elect Franklin D. Roosevelt:from Wikipedia:"Zangara, a poorly educated bricklayer, suffered severe pain in his abdomen, later attributed to adhesions of the gall bladder, possibly originating from an appendectomy performed in 1926. These adhesions were later cited as a cause for his increasing mental delusions. It became increasingly difficult for him to work due to both his physical and mental conditions."from the book of Assassins, Zangara is singing while strapped in the electric chair: "Ever since then, because of them I have the sickness in the stomach Which is the way I make my idea To go out and kill Roosevelt."Weidman and Sondheim definitely did their research homework.I highly recommend this book. The worst that can happen is you might learn something while being entertained.

It's not one of Sondheim's better known musicals, but as a government teacher and a Sondheim fan, I bought the book because I was interesting in seeing how things played out. It's a great story, weaving history, imagination and music together. If our high school had a drama program, I would have recommended it.

My favorite Stephen Sondheim musical. The Ballad of John Wilkes Booth taught me everything I need to know about lyrics, music, story. Powerful, compelling, dark. It is also fun to parody, sharpen your chops. Johnny Football was a handsome fellow.... I love this song and my parodies. Love Victor Garber's voice which I hear on the CD and throughout the libretto.

Since I own both cast albums of this show but haven't ever gotten to see it, it's a pleasure to have the libretto to read to see how everything links together. Another nice feature is the opening essay by Andre Bishop that reflects on memories of the original production. Altogether a very worthwhile read.

Another Sondheim stab at something new. Although much of his work has originally not taken off, he is brilliant and his plays are wonderful.

Very nice!

I assumed this would be a book about the assassins featured in the show - didn't realise it's only the lyrics, which I have anyway in the CD. Quite disappointed.

This is a fine example of 20th century writing which focuses on issues that most people would rather not think about. How many of us have sat through history class and learned that John Wilkes Booth shot Abraham Lincoln and never even thought about why? What is most surprising about the play (and music) is that you really begin to understand why these people thought they should try to kill the President. Unfortunately this musical will go down as one of the most seldom performed because of its subject matter and the fact that people will believe it promotes the assassins. Sondheim and Weidman seem to make quite a statement about gun possession as well as the insanity of the perpetrators. Samuel Byck's monologue alone is enough reason to buy this book and I plan to use it in an audition if given the chance.

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