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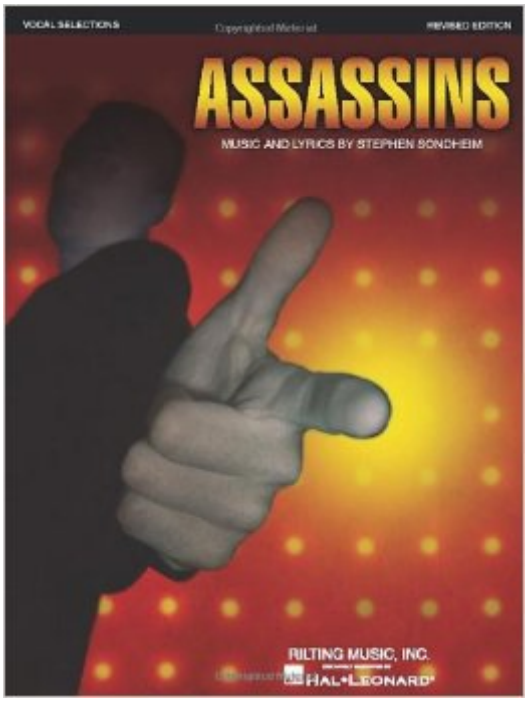
Stephen Sondheim - Assassins: Vocal Selections



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Synopsis

(Vocal Selections). This musical, with a book by John Weidman, explores the history of presidential assassination in America, from John Wilkes Booth to John Hinckley, Jr. Assassins climaxes in a surreal sequence where the assassins convince Lee Harvey Oswald that his act is the only way he will connect with them, with history, and with the world. Newly edited, with new music engravings, added songs, articles and photos. Includes: The Ballad of Booth * The Ballad of Czolgosz * The Ballad of Guiteau * Everybody's Got the Right * Something Just Broke * Unworthy of Your Love.

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Customer Reviews

All I can say about this play is that it is sheer genius. I was fortunate enough to see the Broadway revival cast act it out in Studio 54, thus can safely say that the play is just as shrewd and clever onstage as it seems in the play.The thing that often repels people from 'Assassins' is firstly its subject matter - assassins and would-be assasins of presidents of the United States - and secondly, the way it handles its subject matter. 'Assassins' neither trivializes nor glorifies its characters: what it does is examine them, and let the audience make the decision as to what prompted them to commit the crimes they did. On stage, the play is chilling - seeing "Squeaky" Fromme carve an 'M' for 'Manson' into her forehead at the end of her number with John Hinckley 'Unworthy of Your Love' does not seem disgusting; it is entrancingly horrific. And this is not even mentioning the song 'How I Saved the President', the fast-paced narrative of Giuseppe Zangara's attempt on the life of President Franklin Roosevelt: it rises to an eerie feverish pitch and ends with a jolt - literally. The

singing ceases only when Zangara has been electrocuted.I realize that the above description may seem to portray 'Assassins' as a gruesome horror-trip into history - but really, that is not what it is at all. The rises and falls of emotions in the songs (apparent in the book as well as in the play) are shrewdly placed so that the viewer can't quite bring themself to feel sorry for the assassin, exactly, more fascinated. And this is what 'Assassins' is - a fascinating look at some of the most forbidden American taboo in our country's history. The play jumps on its subject matter with surprising gusto - it does not jump delicately from point to point.

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