



**THEATER
LATTÉ
DA**

**ASSASSINS
PLAY GUIDE**

FEBRUARY 7 - MARCH 18, 2018
RITZ THEATER

THEATER LATTÉ DA

THEATER MUSICALLY

Founded in 1998, Theater Latté Da (TLD) is in its 20th season of presenting original and re-imagined musical theater. Theater Latté Da seeks to create new connections between story, music, artist, and audience by exploring and expanding the art of musical theater. TLD is dedicated to expanding the American Musical Theater with work that speaks to a contemporary audience. Theater Latté Da has fostered innovation and diversity since its conception. We believe in work that is bold and collaborative; we act with integrity and gratitude. These values are integral to the organization's health and drives the discussion at every stage of decision-making. Through productions that transcend the conventional, the organization helps solidify the Twin Cities' reputation as a place where progressive art plays a vital role.

Theater Latté Da is the leading nonprofit professional theater in the Twin Cities that exclusively produces musical theater. Since its inception, TLD has presented 70 Mainstage productions, including ten world premieres, and ten area premieres. Each has garnered critical acclaim and earned its artists and TLD a host of awards, including: seven IVEY Awards for overall excellence, National Endowment for the Arts, the Gabriel Award for Broadcast Excellence, and the American Theater Wing National Theater Company Award. In addition to our Twin Cities presence, TLD's original production *All is Calm: The Christmas Truce of 1914* celebrated its 11th anniversary with a national tour to 16 cities, ranging from New Jersey to California and Wisconsin to Florida. TLD's provocative staging of *Ragtime* was remounted at the 5th Avenue Theatre in Seattle, Washington in October 2017, and will be remounted at Asolo Repertory Theater in Florida in May 2018.

Since 1998, TLD has performed in venues throughout the Twin Cities, ranging from the intimate 120-seat Loring Playhouse to the Pantages Theater in downtown Minneapolis. To deepen our relationship with Twin Cities audiences and to better reach the communities we serve, Latté Da decided to make a permanent home in northeast Minneapolis. In 2016, TLD became the proud owner of the historic Ritz Theater, a 234-seat theater with administrative offices, rehearsal space, dressing rooms, and box office.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

- 3 *A History of Assassins***
- 4 *The Creators of Assassins***
- 5 *About the Assassins***
- 10 *Assassins Plot Summary***
- 12 *Further Reading***

ASSASSINS

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

Directed by Peter Rothstein
Music Direction by Jason Hansen

February 7 - March 18, 2018
Previews on February 7, 8, and 9
Opening Night on February 10 at 7:30 pm

A HISTORY OF ASSASSINS, THE MUSICAL

1979: Stephen Sondheim reads an unproduced musical by composer/lyricist Charles Gilbert Jr. which opened in a shooting gallery over which a lighted sign announced “Shoot the Prez and Win a Prize”. Although Sondheim didn’t find the piece successful overall, the premise—a musical about presidential assassins and the shooting gallery setting—intrigued him. Ten years later, looking for another project to embark on with his Pacific Overtures collaborator, John Weidman, Sondheim proposed the idea and, after getting permission from Charles Gillbert Jr., Sondheim and Weidman began work on *Assassins*.



John Weidman and Stephen Sondheim

1990: *Assassins* opens off-Broadway at Playwrights Horizons (also home to the first production of Sondheim’s *Sunday in the Park with George*) in the middle of the Persian Gulf War and ran for 73 performances. The critical response was mixed, but Playwrights Horizons Artistic Director, Andre Gregory wrote, “I know that for Playwrights Horizons, *Assassins* is one of the best things we’ve ever done. The show touched a nerve, God knows, and it did so in a funny, daring, high wire-act way.”



The cast of the off-Broadway production of *Assassins*

1992: *Assassins* opens in London at the Donmar Warehouse—the inaugural production of Artistic Director, Sam Mendes (who would later direct the film, *American Beauty*, and the Bond films *Skyfall* and *Spectre*).



Sam Mendes

2001: Roundabout Theater Company plans the first Broadway production. However, after the events of September 11th, the production is postponed. Sondheim and Weidman issued the following statement: “*Assassins* is a show which asks audiences to think critically about various aspects of the American experience. In light of [September 11th]’s murderous assault on our nation and on the most fundamental things in which we all believe, we ... believe this is not the appropriate time to present a show which makes such a demand.”



2004: *Assassins* opens on Broadway in the Roundabout Theater Company’s production at Studio 54. Directed by Joe Montello, starring Neil Patrick Harris as The Balladeer and Lee Harvey Oswald, the production wins 5 Tony Awards including Best Revival of a Musical and Best Director.



The 2004 cast of *Assassins*

FROM THE CREATORS



JOHN WEIDMAN AND STEPHEN SONDHEIM

“Nobody at the end of the show should feel that we have been excusing or sentimentalizing [the assassins]. We’re examining the system that causes these horrors. The US Constitution guarantees the pursuit of happiness. It doesn’t guarantee the happiness. That’s the difference. These are people who feel they’ve been cheated of their happiness, each one in a different way.”

- Stephen Sondheim;
Interview in *The Telegraph*, 2014

“After reading the script prior to directing it, Sam Mendes, [who directed the 1992 London premiere of *Assassins*] felt that there was a song missing toward the end of the show, although he wasn’t exactly sure what it should be. Around that time Weidman was revisiting the Texas Book Depository and sent me a video being sold there which focused on the reactions of people after Kennedy was shot. It became immediately clear that the missing song should deal with the nation’s shock at each of the assassinations...some musical expression of the...emotional impact of these irrational (or rational but misguided) acts on all of us Bystanders.”

- Sondheim on the addition of the song
“Something Just Broke”

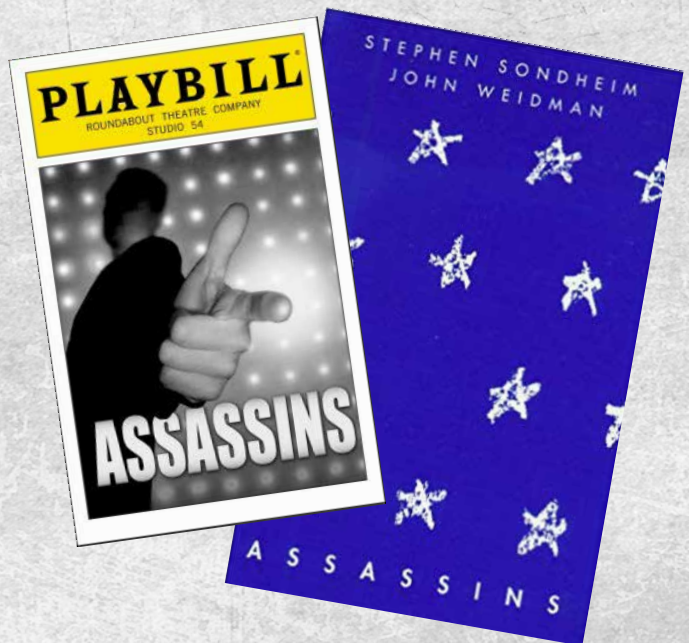
“Thirteen people have tried to kill the President of the United States. Four have succeeded. These murderers and would-be murders are generally dismissed as maniacs and misfits who have little in common with each other, and nothing in common with the rest of us.

Assassins suggests otherwise. *Assassins* suggests that while these individuals are, to say the least, peculiar—taken as a group they are particularly American. And that behind the variety of motives

which they articulated for their murderous outbursts, they share a common purpose—a desperate desire to reconcile intolerable feelings of impotence with an inflamed and malignant sense of entitlement.

Why do these dreadful events happen here, with such horrifying frequency, and in such an appallingly similar fashion? *Assassins* suggests it is because we live in a country whose most cherished national myths, at least as currently propagated, encourage us to believe that in America our dreams not only can come true, but should come true, and if they don’t someone or something is to blame.”

- John Weidman on *Assassins*



ABOUT THE ASSASSINS



JOHN WILKES BOOTH 1838 - 1869

Booth worked as an actor throughout the Civil War. Born into a theatrical family, he showed excellent early potential on stage but his career suffered from his emotional instability and his difficulty accepting his brother Edwin's success as the foremost actor of the day. Booth, a strong supporter of the Southern cause, frequently spoke out about his hatred of President Lincoln. By 1864, Booth had recruited several co-conspirators and held meetings to plan the abduction of Lincoln. After several failed attempts, the group resolved to kill the president and his cabinet, hoping the assassinations would save the South from defeat. Although Robert E. Lee surrendered his troops a few days before the assassination, Booth believed that the war was not over because a few Confederate armies were still fighting.

The Assassination of Abraham Lincoln

On the morning of April 14, 1865, Booth heard that the President and Mrs. Lincoln would be attending the play *Our American Cousin* at Ford's Theater that evening. Booth made plans for the assassination and for his escape.

That evening, as the play progressed, Booth snuck into the Lincoln's balcony box and shot him in the back of the head. He then jumped to the stage and shouted, "Sic semper tyrannies," or "Thus always to tyrants." A doctor in the audience rushed to Lincoln, and a group of men carried the President across the street to Peterson's Boarding House, where he died at 7:22 am the next morning. In the company of co-conspirator David Herold, Booth escaped on horseback, evading his pursuers for twelve days. At some point during his flight, Booth broke his leg. On April 26th, Union forces found Booth and Herold in a barn in rural Virginia, and threatened to set fire to the barn unless they surrendered. Herold immediately gave himself up but Booth refused. A shot rang out, fatally wounding the assassin.

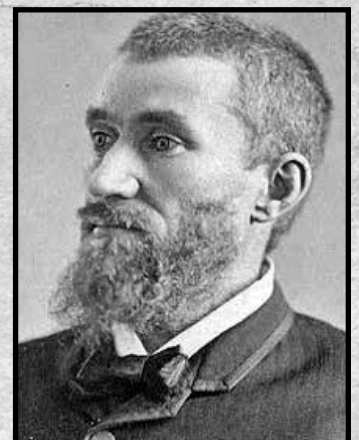


CHARLES GITEAU 1841 - 1882

Charles Guiteau was a theologian, lawyer and politician. Guiteau flitted from job to job working as a clerk, a lawyer and a preacher. Destitute for most of his life, he subsisted on the generosity of his sister. Most historians and medical professionals believe Guiteau was insane.

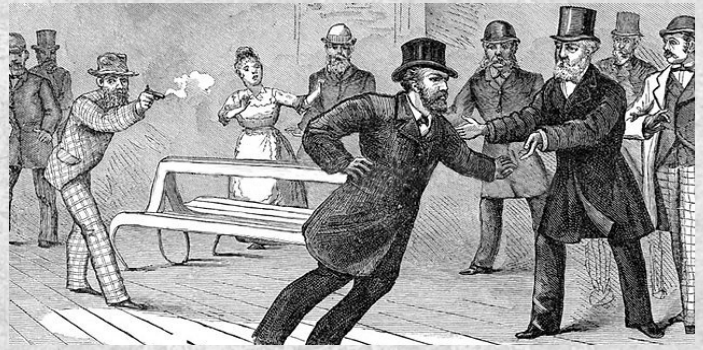
After he failed careers in law and theology, Guiteau turned to politics. Stationing himself outside the Republican headquarters in New York City, he wrote a speech, entitled "Garfield vs Hancock" in support of presidential candidate James Garfield. While he never delivered the speech in a public setting, he distributed copies throughout New York and believed the speech to be the cause of Garfield's victory.

Assuming that he should be awarded a diplomatic post for his assistance, Guiteau loitered around Republican headquarters and then traveled to Washington in March 1881 after Garfield's inauguration. He repeatedly asked members of the Garfield administration for the Ambassadorship to France. On May 13th, he was banned from the White House waiting room. In mid-May 1881, Guiteau conceived the idea to "remove" the president and wrote letters on the subject.

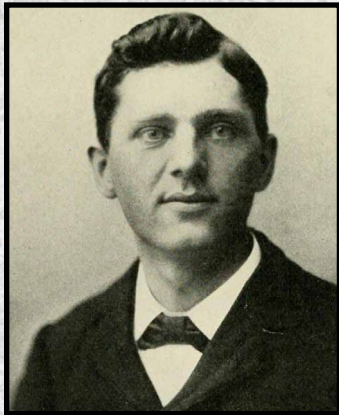


The Assassination of President Garfield

Guiteau shot Garfield in the Baltimore and Potomac Railroad Station on July 2, 1881. Guiteau's first shot grazed the President's shoulder but the next shot hit him in the back. Police quickly arrested Guiteau and took him to a nearby police station. Garfield was carried back to the White House. Doctors believed he would not survive the night, but by morning they hoped for recovery. Unable to find the bullet, Doctors probed the wound with unsterilized instruments, leading to infection. While in increasingly poor health, Garfield survived until September 8 when he died of infection from the wound.



At his trial in November, Guiteau's strange behavior made national headlines. He argued with his defense team and formatted his testimony in epic poems. The trial was one of the first high-profile cases to consider the insanity defense. However, the jury dismissed this defense and found him guilty. Guiteau was hanged on June 30, 1882. At the execution, he danced to the gallows, shook the hand of his executioner, and recited his final poem "I am Going to the Lordy."



LEON CZOLGOSZ 1873 - 1901

Czolgosz, the son of Polish Catholic immigrants, spent most of his life working in factories. Enraged at the rich and powerful's exploitation of the poor, Czolgosz became interested in anarchism. He attended lectures and heard Emma Goldman speak in Chicago and even spoke to her as she was on her way to the train station. As Czolgosz' interest in anarchy deepened, he decided to follow the example of Gaetano Bresci, who assassinated King Umberto I of Italy in July 1900.

The Assassination of President McKinley

President McKinley was shaking hands with the public on September 6, 1901, during a reception at the Temple of Music Pavilion at the Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo, when the assassination occurred. The President reached to shake Leon Czolgosz' hand and Czolgosz shot him twice. The first bullet grazed the President but the other one lodged in his abdomen.

Eight days after being shot, President McKinley died of a gangrene infection to the wound. After McKinley's assassination, Congress passed legislation officially charging the Secret Service with the protection of the President.

Czolgosz went on trial nine days after the President passed away and was sentenced to death. Before being executed by electric chair on October 20, 1901, Czolgosz is quoted as saying, "I killed the President because he was the enemy of the good people, the working men of all countries!"

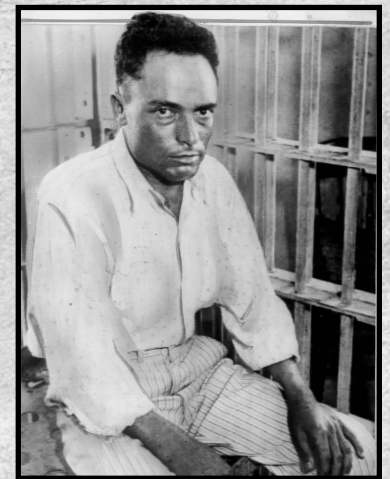


GIUSEPPE ZANGARA 1900 - 1933

Giuseppe Zangara, an immigrant from Italy, worked for most of his life as a bricklayer and blamed President Herbert Hoover for the lack of work during the Great Depression. When Franklin Delano Roosevelt beat Hoover in the Presidential election, Zangara's hatred carried over to the new President-elect. He suffered from severe abominable pains and believed they were the fault of the US Government.

The Assassination Attempt on President Roosevelt

On February 15, 1933, President-elect Roosevelt stopped to give a speech from the back of an open car in Bayfront Park in Miami, FL., Zangara, armed with a .32 caliber pistol, attempted to shoot the President. After the first shot, an onlooker grabbed his arm and Zangara fired four more shots wildly into the crowd. Zangara's shots did not reach the President, but he fatally wounded Chicago Mayor Anton Cermak and wounded five others. After the attempted assassination, Zangara declared that he felt no remorse for his actions, claiming he would kill "all capitalists, presidents and kings." He was sentenced to death by electric chair. In his final moments, enraged when he learned that there would be no newsreel coverage of his death, he shouted, "Goodbye, adieu to the world, go ahead, push the button!"





LEE HARVEY OSWALD 1939 - 1963

Lee Harvey Oswald was born in New Orleans. His father died before he was born, and he had a contentious relationship with his mother. He dropped out of school in the 10th grade and enlisted as a Marine at age 17.

A self-proclaimed Marxist, Oswald studied Russian and openly advocated Marxism to his fellow Marines. In 1959, Oswald travelled to Russia and defected to the Soviet Union. When the Soviets refused to give him asylum, Oswald attempted suicide and ended up in a psychiatric ward in Moscow. The Soviet national security agency, the KGB, reversed its decision and allowed Oswald to stay. While in the Soviet Union, Oswald married Marina Nikolayevna Prusakova and they had their first child, June. In 1962, unhappy with life in the Soviet Union, Oswald applied to return to the United States.

The family moved to Texas and Oswald's interest in politics grew. In April of 1963, Oswald attempted to assassinate Ret. General Edwin Walker, shooting a bullet through the window of Walker's study, narrowly missing him. Oswald immediately confessed the act to his wife, but not publicly. The Walker case would not be resolved until after the Kennedy assassination. After attempting to defect yet again at the Cuban and Soviet embassies in Mexico City, Oswald returned to Dallas and got a job at the

Texas School Book Depository in October 1963. His wife gave birth to their second child, Rachel, a few days later.

The Assassination of President Kennedy

On November 22, 1963, Lee Harvey Oswald left home early in the morning carrying an oblong package wrapped in brown paper. He arrived at work at the Depository, and spent the morning filling book orders.

At noon, Oswald's co-workers left for lunch. Around 12:30pm, President John F. Kennedy's motorcade entered Dealey Plaza. As the President's car passed the Depository, the President and Texas Governor John Connally were shot. The President's car sped to a nearby hospital, but at 1:00pm doctors declared the President dead. Governor Connally would eventually recover.

Police arrested Oswald at 1:40pm after the shooting of police officer J.D Tippitt in the Oak Cliff neighborhood of Dallas. Police charged Oswald with the murders of Tippitt and Kennedy later that day. Two days later, as police were transferring Oswald to the county jail, Jack Ruby, a Dallas, Texas nightclub owner, shot Oswald in front of live television cameras. Oswald never regained consciousness after the shooting and died a little over an hour later. Many conspiracy theories remain about Kennedy's assassination, though numerous government investigations have concluded that Lee Harvey Oswald acted alone.



SAMUEL BYCK 1930 - 1974

Samuel Byck grew up in South Philadelphia and dropped out of high school in the ninth grade to support his family. He served briefly in the US Army from 1954 to 1956. After leaving the military, Byck married and had four children. He suffered from severe depression, checking himself into a mental hospital after his wife divorced him in 1972. He believed in government conspiracies to oppress the poor and threatened President Richard Nixon as well as sending ranting tape recordings to public figures such as Senator Abraham Ribicoff and composer Leonard Bernstein. Byck's strange behaviors included protesting in front of the White House on Christmas Eve, 1973, dressed in a Santa Claus suit.



In early 1974, Byck began to plan his assassination attempt. He stole a revolver and built a bomb out of gasoline. Thinking he would be considered a hero, Byck made many recordings outlining his plans and the motives for his actions.



The Assassination Attempt on President Nixon

On February 22, 1974, Byck drove to the Baltimore/Washington International Airport intending to hijack a commercial jetliner and crash into the White House with President Nixon inside. When Byck arrived at the airport, he stormed aboard the plane and demanded to take off. A standoff with police resulted in police officers wounding Byck and gaining entry to the plane, though Byck committed suicide by shooting himself in the head before the police could board the plane. The standoff left a police officer and a pilot dead as well as another pilot seriously injured. Nixon's schedule remained unaffected by the assassination attempt.



LYNETTE "SQUEAKY" FROMME b. 1948

Lynette Fromme attended high school in a Los Angeles suburb. Despite drug use and slipping grades, Fromme managed to graduate in 1966 and attended junior college for a few months before dropping out.

After an argument with her father left her homeless and suffering from depression, Fromme traveled to Venice Beach, California in 1967. There she met Charles Manson, a cult leader recently released from prison. Captivated by Manson, Fromme traveled with him and his other followers—the Manson "family" for two years. When police charged Manson and others of the "family" for the murders of Sharon Tate and Rosemary LaBianca, Fromme camped with other Manson followers outside the trial. She was briefly held in prison in relation to a series of murders in Stockton, California, but was released after two and a half months due to lack of evidence; the other Manson "family" members involved were convicted.

The Assassination Attempt on President Ford

On September 5th, 1975, under the pretense of pleading for the plight of the California Redwoods, Fromme, dressed in a nun-like robe, went to Capital Park in San Francisco. As President Gerald Ford left the nearby Senator Hotel, Fromme pointed a gun at him, but while the gun had four rounds in it, the firing chamber was empty. A Secret Service agent immediately restrained Fromme. Later, Fromme told the press she had deliberately ejected the cartridge. A cartridge was found later in her bathroom.

After a lengthy trial, Fromme was convicted of attempted assassination of the President. She was sentenced to life in prison but released on parole in 2009.



SARA JANE MOORE b. 1930

Sara Jane Moore was a native of Charleston, West Virginia. She attended nursing school, worked as an accountant, married and divorced five times and had five children before turning to revolutionary politics. She worked as a bookkeeper for People in Need, an organization with connections to the Symbionese Liberation Army—a left-wing radical group. Moore also served as an FBI informant.

The Assassination Attempt on President Ford

Seventeen days after Squeaky Fromme's attempt, Moore attempted to assassinate President Gerald Ford outside the St. Francis Hotel in San Francisco, California, shooting at him from 40 feet away and narrowly missing. The bullet ricocheted off the entrance to the hotel and slightly injured a bystander. As she raised her arm to fire again, an ex-marine in the crowd pulled her to the ground. Moore had previously been



evaluated by the Secret Service, but they decided she posed no danger to President Ford. She pleaded guilty to attempted assassination and

was sentenced to life in prison. She was released from prison on December 31st, 2007 at the age of 77.

There are no known connections between Sara Jane Moore and Squeaky Fromme.



JOHN HINCKLEY b. 1955

John Hinckley grew up in Dallas, Texas. After an unsuccessful university experience, he moved to Los Angeles with the hope of becoming a songwriter. In letters to his parents, he pleaded for money and wrote of a fabricated girlfriend, Lynn Collins.

He saw the 1976 film, *Taxi Driver*, at least fifteen times and developed an obsession with actress Jodie Foster, who appeared in the film. In *Taxi Driver*, the protagonist plans to assassinate a Presidential candidate. When Foster enrolled at Yale University, Hinckley moved to New Haven, Connecticut, with hopes of gaining her affection. When she did not respond to repeated phone calls and messages slipped under her door, Hinckley's plans to get her attention grew more desperate, leading to plots of aircraft hijacking and suicide. He eventually decided to assassinate President Ronald Reagan, writing that the fame would help him achieve Foster's "respect and love."

The Assassination Attempt on President Reagan

On March 30, 1981, Hinckley wrote a letter to Jodie Foster describing his plan to assassinate President Reagan and went to the Washington Hilton where Reagan was scheduled to speak.

Outside the hotel, Hinckley stepped out of the crowd of reporters and fired six shots. The bullets struck Press Secretary James Brady in the left temple, police officer Thomas Delahanty in the neck, Security Agent Timothy J. McCarthy in the stomach and President Ronald Reagan in the left chest (after the bullet ricocheted off the presidential limousine). All the shooting victims survived, although some sustained serious injuries.

Police immediately arrested Hinckley. At his trial, he was found not guilty by reason of insanity. He was confined to St. Elizabeth's Hospital in Washington, DC, where he remains today.



ASSASSINS PLOT SUMMARY

STORY

The evening begins with "Hail To The Chief" - not in its familiar stirringly patriotic certainty, but eerily arranged for a carnival calliope, and not to announce the entrance of the President but of his would-be assassins. We are at a fairground, in front of a shooting gallery which boasts a unique entertainment: "Shoot the President - win a Prize". As the Proprietor ballyhoos his sideshow, eight figures come forward one by one to chance their luck, assassins drawn from over a century of American history. They are a disparate group, one dressed in a 19th century frock coat, another as a department store Santa. But each is handed his own distinctive gun - the preferred means of ultimate political protest in the United States. "EVERYBODY'S GOT THE RIGHT to be happy", the Proprietor asserts. Everybody's got the right to their dreams: isn't that the American way?

The last to arrive is John Wilkes Booth, who promptly uses his newly-acquired weapon on President Lincoln. As the fatal shots ring out, the Balladeer steps out to sing THE BALLAD OF BOOTH - a handsome devil who decided to take his bad reviews out on his Chief of State. Holed up in a tobacco barn with his confederate David Herold, Booth is determined to set down his version of events: he's not a common cut-throat, not a madman, but someone who did what he did for his country, who slew a tyrant - as Brutus did. But, even as Booth dies, the Balladeer's banjo ballad returns to point out that, thanks to him, Lincoln, who'd hitherto received mixed reviews, now gets only raves.

The other assassins are in a bar. "Has Nixon been in?" asks Samuel Byck, still wearing his Santa suit. But it seems not. Booth is back, though, just in time to hear Giuseppe Zangara complaining about how nothing seems to relieve the pain in his stomach. Booth suggests shooting FDR. "Will it help?" asks Zangara. But Zangara's attempt misfires and he kills, instead, Mayor Cermak of Chicago. Grouped around the radio microphones in Miami's Bayfront Park, a handful of bystanders boast, over the strains of a Sousa march, of "HOW I SAVED ROOSEVELT", while, strapped into the electric chair, Zangara insists he is not left or right, only an "American nothing". The song ends as the current is switched on.

Forty years later, in the mid-Seventies, Sara Jane Moore and Lynette "Squeaky" Fromme meet up over a bucket of Kentucky Fried Chicken, discuss the evils of fast food and end up taking pot shots at the graven image of Colonel Sanders. Neither is very good with a gun, but at least they have one. "It takes a lot of men to make a gun," says Leon Czolgosz, a lumbering glass-factory worker contemplating the significance and power of his weapon. In THE GUN SONG, Czolgosz, Moore, Booth, and Charles Guiteau identify, in barbershop harmonies, the advantages of firearms: all you have to do is move your little finger and you can change the world. The others wander off, leaving Czolgosz alone to consider what he should do. He is an admirer of the anarchist agitator Emma Goldman and, after one of her meetings, she suggested that he might like to visit the 1901 Pan-American Exposition in Buffalo. He does, and the Balladeer takes up the story in THE BALLAD OF CZOLGOSZ. As President McKinley shakes hands with visitors to the Exposition, Czolgosz wraps his gun in a handkerchief, joins the President's excited admirers and kills Big Bill.



THEATER LATTÉ DA'S ASSASSINS REHEARSAL

Back to the Seventies: Samuel Byck, an out-of-work tire salesman, has hatched a bold scheme to kill President Nixon and is explaining it, via his cassette machine, to Leonard Bernstein, the busy conductor and composer. "Maybe if you can't listen now," suggests Byck, aware of the pressures on the maestro's time, "you can listen 'Tonight, tonight . . .' I love that song". His message completed, he leaves singing "Everything's great in America . . ."

John Hinckley also enjoys singing, but only his own compositions, angrily accompanied on his acoustic guitar. "I am UNWORTHY OF YOUR LOVE", he admits in an overwrought ballad addressed to his "girlfriend", Jodie Foster. Lynette Fromme watches and then delivers her own version of the number, addressed to her lover (and the new Messiah) Charles Manson. But Hinckley blows his opportunity to prove his worthiness to Jodie when he starts shooting unsuccessfully at a photo of President Reagan that is projected on to the back wall. The President just keeps wisecracking his way through the bullets - and, hey, where'd that guy learn to shoot anyway? The Russian army?

Charles Guiteau has better luck. In 1881, he meets President Garfield at the Baltimore and Potomac station in Washington and asks to be made Ambassador to France. Garfield ignores him and is fatally shot in the back. Failed lawyer, preacher, politician, and author, Garfield's killer is looking forward to being an angel and, in THE BALLAD OF GUITEAU (I AM GOING TO THE LORDY), cakewalks up and down the gallows steps with irrepressible cheerfulness.

Before his assassination of Garfield and execution, Guiteau had given Sara Jane Moore some lessons in how to shoot up her Kentucky Fried Chicken more accurately. But they don't seem to have paid off. Trying now to shoot President Ford, she kills her dog instead. And she got all her dates mixed up, so she had to bring the kid along and he's screaming for an ice-cream and Lynette is screaming at her for bring the kid and the dog to an assassination. "Look, we came here to kill the President", shrieks Moore. "Let's just kill him and go home". Enter President Ford, who trips on the bullets she's dropped, very considerately hands them back to her and proceeds on his way as Moore and Fromme pull their triggers helplessly behind him.

After Sam Byck's abortive mission to crash an airliner into the White House, he and the seven other assassins come together to explain their motives: one did it to avenge the ravaged South, another so her friends would know where she was coming from. Now, they want their prizes. For the first time, they are no longer freakish, embittered, angry individuals but a group with a common purpose, marching to ANOTHER NATIONAL ANTHEM - not the one you cheer at the ballpark, but the anthem of those who can't get in. As the march dies away, the Blue Ridge Boys play Heartache Serenade, and we're listening to a transistor radio in the sixth floor storeroom of the Texas School Book Depository on 22 November, 1963. On the verge of taking his own life, Lee Harvey Oswald is interrupted by Booth and the other assassins, and invited instead to make history. The assassins who preceded Oswald say he will bring them back; those who came after him say he will make them possible, by once again making assassinations a part of the American experience. His act can give them historical power as a united force, not as a bunch of isolated "nuts". Oswald refuses and Booth entices him with the statement that when Hinckley's room is searched after his assassination

attempt on President Reagan, every book written about Oswald will be found. Through the window, flags are flying, bands are marching to patriotic tunes, the President's motorcade is about to pass by the cheering crowds. "In here, this is America, too", says Booth - the land where any kid can grow up to be President, or grow up to kill a President. Oswald picks up his gun and moves to the window. As President Kennedy dies, his assassin takes his place among his confreres in the last empty booth at the carnival. He has brought them back, he has made them possible, and, for those ordinary Americans, who'll always remember where they were when they heard the news, SOMETHING JUST BROKE. Their despair stands in quiet contrast to the jaunty reprise of their theme, EVERYBODY'S GOT THE RIGHT to their dreams. And, as in all the happy endings in all the best musicals, your dream can come true if you just go out and get it.

Source: http://www.guidetomusicaltheatre.com/shows_a/assassins.htm



THEATER LATTÉ DA'S ASSASSINS REHEARSAL

RECOMMENDATIONS FOR FURTHER READING

Assassinations, Threats and the American Presidency: From Andrew Jackson to Barack Obama
by Ronald Feinman

Hunting the President: Threats, Plots and Assassination Attempts from FDR - Obama
by Mel Ayton

John Wilkes Booth

Right or Wrong, God Judge Me: The Writings of John Wilkes Booth
American Brutus: The Lone Gunman
by Michael M. Kauffman

Charles Guiteau

The Truth and The Removal: The Second Coming of Jesus Christ and the Assassination of President James A. Garfield
by Charles Guiteau
Destiny of the Republic: A Tale of Madness, Medicine and the Murder of a President
by Candice Miller

Giuseppe Zangara

The Five Weeks of Giuseppe Zangara: The Man Who Would Assassinate FDR
by Blaise Picchi

Lee Harvey Oswald

Autobiography of Lee Harvey Oswald: My Life in My Words
by Diane Holloway
Oswald's Tale
by Norman Mailer
Lee Harvey Oswald Was My Friend
by Paul Gregory

Lynette Squeaky Fromme

Squeaky: The Life and Times of Lynette Alice Fromme
by Jess Bravin
First Ford Assassination Attempt
History Channel video

Sarah Jane Moore

Taking Aim at the President: The Remarkable Story of the Woman Who Shot Gerald Ford
by Geri Spieler

John Hinckley

Breaking Point
by Jack Hinckley