

Backstage Pass

INSIGHTS ON STAGE, SCREEN AND BEYOND

Sondheim's 'Assassins' Set to Open Next Week

HOW DO I BUY TICKETS?

The Villages Entertainment sells tickets in person at its four box office locations or online at thevillagesentertainment.com

The theme of Season 4 at The Studio Theatre Tierra del Solis reaching across the political divide, and the third show of the season, "Assassins," exhibits what happens when people take their political beliefs too far.

"Assassins" features the stories of every person who has tried to kill a U.S. president and is a satirical and funny show, but also a deeply poignant one, according to Ryan Dooley, who plays The Balladeer in the show. The musical opens at The

Studio Jan. 24 and runs until March 1. Tickets are \$40 and can be purchased online at thevillagesentertainment.com or at any Villages Box Office location.

Potential audience members should be aware that a stage gun will be used during



Submitted photo

Stephen Sondheim's "Assassins" opens Jan. 24 and runs until March 1 at The Studio Theatre Tierra del Sol.

the performance.

"The show takes the point of view of the assassins and dives deep into the 'why' of their actions," said Mark Kirschenbaum, who plays Samuel Byck in the show. "It provides the audience with an alternate look as to these assassinations, while remaining true to historical facts."

"Assassins" was written by John Weidman and its music and lyrics were written by Stephen Sondheim.

Though Sondheim's music can be difficult, the cast is

thoroughly enjoying it.

"Each melody feels intentional, and each lyric is deep with meaning," said Elias Wygodny, who plays John Wilkes Booth. "It is a dream to get to fill up with his melodies and share them outward."

Heather Currie, who plays Sara Jane Moore, said Weidman and Sondheim's collaborative process is strongly evident in the show.

"It is smart, beautiful and perfectly captures the narrative, characters and mood of every moment in the show,"

Currie said of Sondheim's music. "John Weidman has created a very dark, funny and poignant piece of theater."

While "Assassins" is a challenging show, all of the cast members are enjoying their time at The Studio.

"All aspects of the show have been amazing," said Michael Shiles, who plays The Proprietor. "The cast really respects the piece and wants to present it so the audience may think of these characters in a new light. I can't say enough for the direction, musical direction, stage management and technical crew. This theater is wonderful."

"Assassins" raises questions about happiness and the lengths to which people go to be heard. Cast members said they hope the show is thought-provoking and conversation-inducing for the audience.

"I hope they end up asking the same questions the show does, about what the American Dream is really about, and what it means for someone who hasn't 'made it,'" Dooley said.

Senior writer Kristen Fiore can be reached at 352-753-1119, ext. 5270, or kristen.fiore@thevillagesmedia.com.