

Little Shop of Horrors Director's Note

Little Shop of Horrors originally premiered at the Orpheum theater off-Broadway in 1982. Based on the 1960 Roger Corman film *The Little Shop of Horrors*, the musical was one of the most successful off-Broadway musicals of all time, running 5 years (longer if you count its initial off-off-Broadway run). Satirizing B-film horror movies, this musical has been wildly popular since its debut.

After its premiere, *Little Shop* continued to be a staple of college theater departments, community theaters and high schools across the country, not to mention a go-to for professional companies. It was also adapted into a 1986 film starring Rick Moranis, Steve Martin and Ellen Greene.

In 2003, the show had a Broadway run, with new orchestrations befitting the larger performance space and some subtle rewrites to improve the libretto's shelf life. It is that version we present to you this evening here in Prescott Park.

I have been a fan of this show since I was a ten-year-old boy, gleefully watching my father play Mr. Mushnik in a community theater production in my hometown. I enjoyed everything about the show. It was funny, touching, had great music and the coolest puppet I'd ever seen. I watched the movie soon after and have been lucky to see a number of other productions in my life. This is my first opportunity to direct the show and I couldn't be more excited.

What I love about this show is not only its style, but also its depth. B-movies are famous for their narrowly drawn characters, ridiculous conceits and archetypal format. The musical leans into those concepts but elevates the form to create something more.

The ridiculous conceit of this show is perhaps its most enduring legacy. A carnivorous flytrap bent on world domination manipulates people into feeding it blood and eventually starts to eat its way through the community.

Fantastic.

Beyond that, we actually have a very touching story with some characters that SEEM to be fairly cookie-cutter, but actually exhibit an engaging complexity that keep people connected to the story. We have an "everyman" type hero in Seymour Krelborn. Seemingly a bumbling geek, he's incredibly relatable as someone who feels downtrodden and wants to catch the eye of the woman he loves. We meet Audrey, a slightly over the top character with a thick accent and wild fashion sense that makes many in this world write her off. But we get to know her hopes and dreams and see what drives her.

It is these two characters that we root for throughout the show. And they move through the story encountering a range of over-the-top caricatures including a contemporary take on a classic Greek chorus.

Like most great musicals, this show has a lot of elements that make it stand out. It has evergreen thematic content (greed and the Faustian agreement). There is comedy. There is romance. There are great characters and fantastic music. And, of course, some homicidal horticulture to bring us home.

I want to thank everyone who has helped bring this show to life. Courtney, Jill, Casey and everyone who works here at the park. This incredible creative team. And this wonderful cast. One of the best parts of summerstock theatre is that you get to meet new people each year and collaborate with them on something special. And this production was no different. While we had many returning faces who are a joy to work with, I'm equally thankful for the time I have gotten to spend with those who are spending their first summer at the park. I'm so proud of this show and hope you all enjoy it as much as we enjoyed working on it.