

May 01, 2012 | Posted by [Bev Sykes](#)

This 'Little Shop of Horrors' is lots of fun



Seymour (Andrew Perez) slowly but surely discovers Audrey II's voracious appetite in "Little Shop of Horrors," on stage at the Sacramento Theatre Company through May 20. Kelly Christoffersen/Courtesy photo

Check it out

What:
"Little Shop of Horrors," presented by the Sacramento Theatre Company

When: 6:30 p.m. Wednesdays and Thursdays, 8 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 2 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays through May 20

Where:
Main Stage, Sacramento Theatre Company, 1419 H St.,

Sacramento

Tickets: \$15-\$38; half-price tickets available one hour before each performance, subject to availability; www.sactheatre.org; (916) 443-6722

If I had any houseplants, I would not feed them after seeing what happens with Audrey II, the strange plant intent on world domination.

"Little Shop of Horrors," the new musical at Sacramento Theatre Company, is a musical adaptation of the 1960s Roger Corman science fiction movie of the same name, with book and lyrics by Howard Ashman.

Directed by Michael Laun, and choreographed by Jerald Bolden, this is the story of a strange plant from outer space that finds its way into a Skid Row flower shop, owned by the blustery Mr. Mushnik. The plant is nurtured by Seymour Krelborn, a nerdy shop clerk who likes to experiment with plants and who is madly in love with the naive and somewhat ditzy shop girl, Audrey.

Seymour sees the chance to transform his life and win the heart of Audrey when the curious plant flourishes under his care. The plant, which he names "Audrey II," is actually a talking creature from outer space and the only way to keep it alive is by feeding it human blood.

When Seymour becomes anemic from Audrey II's nightly feedings, he is forced to find alternative sources of nourishment for the plant, drawing Seymour into a web of greed and deception that spirals out of control. The results are both hilarious and harrowing.

Andrew J. Perez leads a marvelous cast as Seymour. With his wire-rimmed glasses, tennis shoes and timid demeanor, he makes a perfect nerd, who is determined to save this pathetic, dying plant ("Grow for Me"), and then feeling growing dread as he realizes what the plant needs to eat ("Feed Me"). He can also be tender, in his profession of love to Audrey (the girl) in their duet "Suddenly Seymour."

Jessica Goldman totters about the stage on ultra high heels, a bit top heavy with a prominent décolletage and a longing to get out of Skid Row and move to "Somewhere That's Green." She is victim to her abusive boyfriend, the evil dentist Orin Scrivello (William Elsmann), who regularly beats her up, but she feels she doesn't deserve anything better because she has "a past." Goldman gives Audrey a beautiful air of vulnerability and innocence.

You have to wonder what sort of dental experiences Elsmann had in his youth, given the sadistic antics he has written for Dr. Scrivello. William Elsmann is evil personified as he gyrates around the stage in black leather, alternately taking quick sniffs of laughing gas and wielding a huge drill with which to work on Seymour's mouth.

Elsmann not only plays Scrivello, but several other characters as well, male and female, and is listed in the program as "Orin and everyone else."

Michael R.J. Campbell plays Mr. Mushnik, the flower shop owner who plucked Seymour out of an orphanage and gave him a place to sleep (on the floor of the shop, under the desk) and allows him to have one Sunday off every two weeks. I love Campbell in just about everything he does, and he does not disappoint in this role.

There is a sort of Greek chorus of school dropouts who hang around the flower shop and keep the audience up to date with what is happening. Crystal (Miranda Lawson), Ronnette (Ure Egbuho) and Chiffon (Gabriella "Ella" Isaguirre) keep the action moving and each has a moment to shine. Lawson, in particular, displays a great set of pipes whenever she steps into the spotlight.

But with all this talent, the show really belongs to Audrey II, the plant whose size increases with every scene. Jeffrey Lloyd Heatherly is the booming voice of the plant, at times frighteningly commanding, at other times deceptively whining and pleading for help.

Aaron Hitchcock is the man who really brings the plant to life and gives it such character. He is

assisted by Tom Block, Javen Crosby, Daffyd Wynn and Garrick Sigl.

Music is by a small, unseen four-piece combo led by conductor Dan Pool. The wonderful set is by Jarrod Bodensteiner, with lighting design by Jessica Bertine. Jessica Minnihhan's costumes are fun — from the drab, nondescript outfit of Seymour, to the provocative dresses of Audrey, to the glitz of the do-wop girls.

Michael Laun has created a tight, fast-paced production that never fails to delight. "Little Shop of Horrors" is a lesson of what can happen when you wish for it all, get it and then have to deal with the consequences.



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