



Little Shop OF HORRORS

BOOK AND LYRICS BY HOWARD ASHMAN. MUSIC BY ALAN MENKEN
BASED ON THE FILM BY ROGER CORMAN

5 DECEMBER 2014 - 31 JANUARY 2015

DIRECTOR Derek Bond

DESIGNER James Perkins

LIGHTING DESIGNER Richard Howell

SOUND DESIGNER Richard Brooker

PUPPET DESIGNER & DIRECTOR Toby Olié

MUSICAL DIRECTOR & CHOREOGRAPHER Tim Jackson

Performed by: Gunnar Cathery (Seymour Krelborn), James Charlton (Ensemble & Audrey 2), Ibinabo Jack (Chiffon), CJ Johnson (Ensemble & Audrey 2 Puppeteer), Ako Mitchell (Orin Scrivello & Ensemble), Joelle Moses (Ronette), Kelly Price (Audrey), Nuno Silva (Audrey 2 - Voice & Puppeteer), Sévan Stephan (Mr Mushnik) and Ellena Vincent (Crystal).

Teacher Resource

This resource has been created for use with Key Stage 3 Art, Drama and English, but many of the activities can be adapted to suit other subject areas and age groups. The activities aim to help students explore significant features of the rehearsal process and production.

Other Resources

You can find more information about the production here:

- **Trailer:** [youtube.com/watch?v=VvJ99WXsdRA](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VvJ99WXsdRA)
- **Interview with Audrey & Seymour:** [youtube.com/watch?v=-G5MeX0VBhI](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=-G5MeX0VBhI)
- **How to do a vocal warm up:**
[youtube.com/watch?v=QtwOMZMyU7c&list=UUOKd6GvsdIkLpPvKrs9kWWw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QtwOMZMyU7c&list=UUOKd6GvsdIkLpPvKrs9kWWw)

Synopsis

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS is a comedy horror rock musical about a hapless florist shop worker who raises a plant that feeds on human blood and flesh. The Royal Exchange production is based on the low-budget 1960 black comedy film *The Little Shop of Horrors*, directed by Roger Corman. The music, composed by Menken, is in the style of early 1960s rock and roll, doo-wop and early Motown.

Act I

A voice recalls a time when the human race "suddenly encountered a deadly threat to its very existence". A trio of 1960s street urchins named Crystal, Ronette, and Chiffon set the scene and then comment on the action throughout the show. Seymour Krelborn is a poor young man, an orphan living in an urban skid row. Audrey is a pretty blonde with a fashion sense that leans towards the tacky. They lament their stations in life and seek a life away from the urban blight ("Skid Row (Downtown)"). They are co-workers at Mushnik's Skid Row Florists, a run-down flower shop owned and operated by the cranky Mr. Mushnik. Seymour has recently obtained a mysterious plant that looks like a large Venus Fly Trap. While he was browsing the wholesale flower district, a sudden eclipse of the sun occurred, and when the light returned, the weird plant had appeared ("Da-Doo"). Seymour is secretly in love with Audrey and names the plant Audrey II in her honour.

The plant does not thrive in its new environment and appears to be dying. Seymour questions why it should be poorly, since he takes such good care of it. He accidentally pricks his finger on a rose thorn, which draws blood, and Audrey II's pod opens thirstily. Seymour realizes that Audrey II requires blood to survive and allows the plant to suckle from his finger ("Grow For Me"). As Audrey II grows, it becomes an attraction and starts generating brisk business for Mushnik. As the caretaker of the plant, Seymour has suddenly gone from loser to hero ("Ya Never Know"). Audrey reveals that she secretly has feelings for the timid Seymour. Her dream is to have the ideal suburban life with Seymour, complete with a tract home, frozen dinners, and plastic on the furniture ("Somewhere That's Green").

Meanwhile, the employees at Mushnik's are sprucing up the flower shop because of the popularity of the rapidly growing Audrey II and the revenue that it is bringing in ("Closed for Renovation"). Orin Scrivello, a sadistic dentist, is Audrey's abusive boyfriend. Orin drives a motorcycle, wears leather, and enjoys bringing other people pain ("Dentist!"). Orin encourages Seymour to take the plant and get out of Skid Row. Realizing that his store's sudden profitability is completely dependent on the plant (and therefore on Seymour), Mushnik takes advantage of Seymour's innocence by offering to adopt him and make him a full partner in the business ("Mushnik and Son"). Having always wanted a family, Seymour accepts, even though Mushnik has always yelled at him and treated him poorly.

Meanwhile, Seymour is having difficulty providing enough blood to keep Audrey II healthy. When Seymour stops feeding the plant, Audrey II reveals that it can speak (in a demanding voice) and says that, if fed, it will make sure that all of Seymour's dreams come true ("Feed Me (Git It)"). Seymour initially refuses, but he then witnesses Orin abusing Audrey. The plant presents this as a justification for killing Orin. He sets up a late-night appointment with Orin, intending to kill him. However, Seymour loses his nerve and decides not to commit the crime. Unfortunately for Orin, who is getting high on nitrous oxide, the gas device is stuck in the "on" position, and he overdoses while asking Seymour to save him. Seymour, unable to shoot Orin, lets him asphyxiate ("Now (It's Just The Gas)"). Seymour feeds Orin's body to the now huge Audrey II, and the plant consumes it with ravenous glee ("Act I Finale").

Act II

The flower shop is much busier, and Seymour and Audrey have trouble keeping up with the onslaught of new business ("Call Back in the Morning"). Audrey confides to Seymour that she feels guilty about Orin's disappearance, because she secretly wished it. The two admit their feelings for one another, and Seymour promises that he will protect and care for Audrey from now on ("Suddenly, Seymour"). The two plan to leave together and start a new life.

Before they can go, Mushnik confronts Seymour to accuse him of causing Orin's death, saying that the police are investigating, although they do not have much evidence yet. Mushnik has put two and two together: the bloody dentist's uniform, the drops of blood on the floor, and he has seen Seymour and Audrey kissing. Seymour denies it, but Mushnik wants him to give a statement to the police. Audrey II tells Seymour that he has to be rid of Mushnik or he will lose everything, including Audrey ("Suppertime"). Seymour tells Mushnik that he put the days' receipts inside Audrey II for safekeeping. Mushnik climbs inside the plant's gaping maw to search for the money, realizing the deception too late, and screams as he is chomped on, slurped and swallowed. Seymour now runs the flower shop and reporters, salesman, lawyers, and agents approach him, promising him fame and fortune. Although tempted by the trappings of his success, Seymour realizes that it is only a matter of time before Audrey II will kill again and that he is morally responsible. He decides that Audrey II must die after the scheduled *LIFE* magazine interview at the shop.

Audrey is confused and frightened by Seymour's behaviour, and goes to the flower shop to talk with him. He is not there, and Audrey II begs her to water him. Not sensing the mortal danger, she approaches to water it, and a vine wraps around her and pulls her into the plant's gaping jaws ("Sominex/Suppertime II"). Seymour arrives and attacks the plant in an attempt to save Audrey. He pulls her out, but Audrey is mortally wounded and tells him to feed her to the plant after she dies so that they can always be together. She dies in his arms, and he reluctantly honours her request ("Somewhere That's Green" (reprise)).

The next day, Patrick Martin from the World Botanical Enterprises tells Seymour that his company wishes to take leaf cuttings of Audrey II and sell them across America. Seymour realizes the plant's evil plan: during the solar eclipse, Audrey II came from an unknown planet to conquer Earth. He tries shooting, cutting, and poisoning the plant, but it has grown too hardy to kill. Seymour, in desperation, runs into its open jaws with a machete planning to kill it from the inside, but he is quickly eaten.

Crystal, Ronette, and Chiffon relate that, following these events, other plants appeared across America, tricking innocent people into feeding them blood in exchange for fame and fortune. Out of the fog, Audrey II, bigger than ever, appears with opened new flowers revealing the faces of Seymour, Audrey, Mushnik, and Orin, who beg that, no matter how persuasive the plants may be, they must not be fed ("Finale Ultimo (Don't Feed the Plants)").

Why Not?

In musicals, the songs form a vital part of the storytelling. Play the songs "Grow For Me" and "Somewhere That's Green" to your class (both songs can be found on YouTube, or you can download the *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS* soundtrack from iTunes) and discuss what these songs tell us about the characters of Seymour and Audrey. You might think about the lyrics, the pace of the song, the types of instruments used and the melody.

As an extension, play the song "Suppertime" to your class. Discuss how this song moves the story forward – what has changed for the characters by the end of the piece of music?

Don't Feed the Plant!

When any theatre decides to stage *LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS*, the question on everyone's lips is: "how are they going to do the plant?" Audrey II is a delicious challenge for directors – she is a plant that has to move, talk, sing and eat a number of people during every performance.

The film's version of Audrey II was an extremely elaborate creation, using puppets made in six different stages of growth. Each of the talking plants had to be cleaned, re-painted and patched up at the end of each day of filming, which took up to three hours depending on the size of the plant. The "Suppertime" number involves two different versions of Audrey II, a smaller plant that sings all alone in the shop, and a larger one that interacts with Seymour and gobbles up Mushnik. To make them look the same size, the smaller plant was placed in a scaled-down version of the set, which made it look larger. The larger plant was incredibly heavy and took 60 technicians to operate it!

Because the Royal Exchange is in-the-round, director Derek Bond and designer James Perkins had an especially tough job in designing Audrey II. It is impossible to hide anything when you have audience all around you, so they decided to make the plant in the Bunraku style. Bunraku is a Japanese style of puppetry that allows the audience to see the puppeteers at all times. If you have seen *War Horse*, the horse puppets are an excellent example of the Bunraku style.



Fig 1: Model box version of Audrey II

For the 'look' of the plant, Derek and James wanted to emphasize that Audrey II is an alien *pretending* to be a plant, as opposed to a plant that happens to be an alien.

They watched the *Alien* movies for inspiration and then worked with puppet designer Toby Olié to create a gruesome creature with a huge stomach, an alien-like spine and an orchid-like head.

The plant was built onto a truck so that, when it ate a cast member, the actor could remain hidden in the truck until the plant was wheeled off stage.

Why Not?

Challenge your class to make their own man-eating plants that are dark, deadly and full of personality! Plants can be made from absolutely anything. See Appendix A for suggested materials and visit our special Pinterest page for inspirers: <http://www.pinterest.com/royalexchange/>

Have a look around our **Don't Feed the Plants** installation, which will be in the Lounge (next to the bar in the Great Hall) for the entire run of the show. The plants have been made by students from 14 schools from Greater Manchester.

Have a go at our other suggested classroom activities (Appendix B). These include: Plant Poems and Performing Plants, which are great exercises for Key Stage 3 English and Drama.

Appendix A

MATERIALS FOR MAN-EATING PLANTS!

Your plants can be made from absolutely anything! We would suggest that you root around in your cupboards and ask your students to bring materials in from home. As a suggestion, you might want to consider using:

Balloons / water bombs	Pom Poms	Pebbles
Pipe cleaners	Cotton wool	Natural materials i.e. leaves/twigs
Beads / Buttons	Artificial flowers	Bones
Wadding / Pillow stuffing	Wobbly eyes	Cable ties
Scrap fabric	Cardboard / paper	Hot glue guns
Oasis (for flower arranging)	Polystyrene	PVA
Glitter	Polystyrene balls	Sewing kits
Coloured sand	Wire – different thicknesses	Velcro
Unwanted household items	Telephone wires (coloured)	Battery operated lights
Straws	Nuts / bolts	Toys with sounds (up cycled)
Cat toys	Plastercine / modelling clay	Pea sticks / bamboo
String / wool / cord	Plaster of Paris	Plant books and magazines
Hair bobbles	Railway model making materials	Staplers
Rubber bands	Lollipop sticks	Hole punches
Tiny Jars and vessels	Scrap wood	Craft punches
Old sunglasses	Fake fur	Floral wall papers
Old sheepskin rugs	Old cutlery	Seeds
Coloured sand	Old cutlery	Paint
Bottle tops	Cocktail sticks	Drawing materials
Expandable Foam	Bubble wrap	Loom bands
	Paper	



Fig 2: Plants made by students for our DON'T FEED THE PLANTS installation

WARNING LABELS

As a means of exploring the imaginative qualities that can be added to the supernatural plants, we suggest the following activity:

Split your students into small groups and allocate each group a plant. Invite them to create a plant specimen description card using the following information prompts to get them started (see card below). You may like to prepare and print similar cards for your students to work on, or create your own cards using luggage tags or similar.

Plant name:

Description (size / flowering period / colour / variations):

Favoured growing conditions / habitat / climate:

WARNING – what happens if you feed this plant?

Picture/Toxic Symbol:

Appendix B

PLANT POEMS

Ask your students to choose a plant. They could choose one that they have made, a real plant that they have found outside, a picture of a plant they have found on the internet, or they could simply imagine one. Ask them to describe the plant, imagining that they are describing it for someone that cannot see it. They can describe it using metaphors, similes and adjectives.

Now challenge your students to create a poem about the plant by invoking the five senses. To give them a simple structure, ask them to answer the following questions:

- When I look at this plant, it reminds me of...
- When I touch this plant, it feels like...
- When I smell this plant, it smells like...
- If I tasted this plant, it would taste of...
- If this plant made a noise, it would sound like...
- If this plant could talk, it would say...

Your students can then edit their poems or leave them as they are. As a last activity, they should give their plant a name and use this name as the title of their poem.

PERFORMING PLANTS

Ask your students to get into small groups and to choose a plant. They could choose one that they have made, a real plant that they have found outside, a picture of a plant they have found on the internet, or they could simply imagine one. Challenge the group to create a freeze frame of their plant involving everyone.

Ask each group to imagine that their plant is a character. What would its personality be like? What would its occupation be? What would it like to wear? What would it like to eat? Etc. They should now re-create their plant freeze frame, but find a way of showing their plant's personality. Discuss how each group has used facial expressions and physicality to bring their plant to life.

Now ask each group to nominate someone to narrate the plant's 'voice'. The group should experiment with movement as the 'voice' speaks, exploring how the plant might move when feeling different emotions.

Finally, invite one of your students to have a discussion with one of the plants. How does the plant interact with a human being? See what happens to the plant when it tries to persuade/comfort/intimidate/tease/befriend the human character.