



Audio Description Notes for *Little Shop of Horrors*

WELCOME

Welcome to the Guthrie Theater's production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. This play was based on the film by Roger Corman, screenplay by Charles Griffith. The book and lyrics were written by Howard Ashman, and the music was written by Alan Menken. This production was directed and choreographed by Marcia Milgrom Dodge.

My name is Laura Wiebers, and I will be the audio describer for this performance, which is approximately 2 hours and 5 minutes long with one intermission.

The creative team for this production includes:

- Music Director: Denise Prosek
- Scenic Designer: Lex Liang
- Costume Designer: Sully Ratke
- Lighting Designer: Allen Lee Hughes
- Sound Designer: Matt Kraus
- Puppet Designer: Chris Lutter
- Associate Music Director: Jason Hansen
- Resident Dramaturg: Carla Steen
- Vocal Coach: Keely Wolter
- Fight Director/Intimacy By: Annie Enneking
- Puppet Consultant: Yvonne Freese

This production contains strobe lights, haze, fog, mature language and themes, the use of a prop gun, gunshot sound effects, stage blood and physical violence, including a scene depicting domestic abuse.

SYNOPSIS

On Skid Row, Mr. Mushnik plans to shutter his failing florist shop when his timid staffer Seymour presents an exotic-but-wilted flytrap named Audrey II. Convinced it will boost business, Seymour encourages Mr. Mushnik to display the peculiar plant, which Seymour successfully revives. As Audrey II draws much-needed crowds to the shop, Seymour makes a disturbing discovery: It needs fresh blood (and lots of it) to grow — a secret that forces Seymour into a Faustian bargain to keep his fame and fortune intact. A hilarious mashup of science fiction, horror and musical theater, this nostalgic classic boasts Motown-inspired hits like “Git It,” “Suddenly Seymour” and “Little Shop of Horrors.”

SETTING

Skid Row, 1960s.



STAGING AND PROPS

The top level of the set contains various billboards on top of buildings and the city skyline.

The middle level of the set contains the second story of various city buildings. At the left is a sign for ZigZag Records above a set of windows. Behind the windows, barely visible in dim light, is the orchestra. At the right is a billboard for a convertible, just above an apartment fire escape. It's a 3D billboard with the car appearing to extend out from the flat billboard. Some pieces of clothing are draped over the fire escape railing. There's a ladder leading down from the fire escape on one side, and a spiral staircase winding down to the stage level on the other side. In between ZigZag records at the left and the convertible billboard at the right are the windows of second-story apartments.

The main level of the set is the street level. At the back, furthest from the audience, there are signs for a liquor store and a thrift store, but the main set piece is a flower shop, Mushnik's Skid Row Florist. The exterior of the shop is a brick wall. When the main action is happening inside the flower shop, the two halves of the wall separate, and the interior of the flower shop set slides forward. When the main action is happening outside the flower shop — out on the sidewalk in front of the shop and out in the street — the flower shop set slides back, and the two halves of the wall close and appear to be a single solid brick wall.

The sidewalk in front of the shop is made of cracked cement. Beyond the sidewalk, closest to the audience, is a cobblestone street. To the left of the flower shop, there is a streetlamp with a clock at the top. At key moments, the clock lights up, and the hands of the clock rotate quickly to indicate a new time of day. Near the streetlamp, there are some crates, a trash can and various pieces of junk. Along the edges of the stage, there are more trash cans and crates. To the right of the flower shop are more crates, a park bench and another trash can. In the middle of the street, there is a single shoe lying on its side.

The actors have several ways to get on and off the stage. There are exits at the left and right sides of the set, and sloping exits at the left and right front edges of the stage. The sloping exit at the right has a stairway, a railing and a streetlamp.

There is a trap door in the middle of the street, and when it opens, the dentist's office set rises up to the level of the stage, bathed in blood-red light. It has a counter with old-fashioned dental equipment, a rickety dentist's chair and a very large old rusty drill.

Inside the flower shop, there's a sign hung on the door that can be flipped to indicate whether the shop is open or closed. The shop has seen better days. The windows along the back wall of the shop are dirty. The window seat in front of the windows contains a plant stand with a single droopy plant. At the front of the shop is a shabby work counter with some wilted, decaying flowers, an old typewriter and a cash register. The walls are dingy, and a grungy curtain is hung in a doorway leading to a back work room.



CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES

The opening scene begins out on the street in front of Mushnik's flower shop. Several **Denizens of Skid Row** come and go, dressed in shabby, somewhat outlandish, mismatched clothes. They include **Time Brickey, David Darrow, Yvonne Freese, Kiko Laureano, Joey Miller** and **T. Mychael Rambo**.

The opening song is sung by **Chiffon, Crystal** and **Ronnette**, played by **Erica Durham, Gabrielle Dominique** and **Vie Boheme**. They're street urchins who function as participants inside the action and a Greek chorus outside it. They have matching or coordinated costumes and hairdos that are futuristic and alien-like in the opening and finale of the musical but 1960s-themed throughout most of the show.

Mr. Mushnik, played by **Robert Dorfman**, is the shop owner. He has gray hair and a gray mustache, and he wears a rumpled brown suit over a patterned beige shirt, tie and sweater. Later, Mr. Mushnik wears a gray suit over a pink shirt and a blue-and-pink patterned tie.

Audrey, one of Mr. Mushnik's employees played by **China Brickey**, is a young woman who wears a pink wig. She comes into work wearing a leopard print top, a short black leather skirt, black tights and shoes. She has a black eye at the start of the show. Later, she wears a short black romper, a lavender long-sleeved shirt with a visible purple lace bra, purple tights, leopard-print heeled boots and a leopard-print sling over her left arm. At the start of Act Two, Audrey dons a black babydoll dress with white knee socks and flats. In the final scenes of the show, she wears a beige silk nightgown and has her natural hair in braids.

Seymour Krelborn, another one of Mr. Mushnik's employees played by **Will Roland**, is a young man with brunette hair, a mustache and dark horn-rimmed glasses. At the start of the play, he wears a tan collared shirt over a gray long-sleeved shirt, an olive green tie and rumpled brown corduroy pants. Later, Seymour appears in the same brown pants with a red jacket over a gray Brooklyn Dodgers sweatshirt. In the final scenes of the show, he wears brown checkered pants with an orange-and-red checkered sweater vest, beige tie and yellow collared shirt over a white undershirt.

The plant, which Seymour names **Audrey II**, first appears as a sickly-looking potted plant, similar to a Venus flytrap and small enough to be carried in one hand. The two halves of its trap-like mouth can open, waiting for food to be dropped inside. When the plant wilts, it flops over to one side. Audrey II grows larger and larger throughout the play. Eventually, it begins to speak, voiced by **T. Mychael Rambo** and operated by **Yvonne Freese**. The larger versions of Audrey II include pink veins and green protrusions on the body of the plant, a pleated brown collar with a dark pink interior (similar to a corpse flower) and brown roots that move on their own.

A customer, played by **David Darrow**, enters the store, dressed in a pale gray suit, with white hair, red glasses and white shoes, looking similar to Andy Warhol.

Orin, a dentist and Audrey's boyfriend, also played by **David Darrow**, wears rolled-up jeans, black boots and a black leather jacket over a white collared shirt. His black hair flops over one eye. He frequently sucks in vapor from what looks like an inhaler, but the inhaler isn't filled with asthma medicine; it's filled with nitrous oxide — laughing gas. When Seymour visits his dentistry office, Orin puts on an elaborate gas mask rig that includes two large black tanks worn as a backpack and black tubes connecting to a gas mask that encloses Orin's entire head, giving him an almost bug-like appearance.



CAST, CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES (continued)

In the later scenes of the play, as Seymour is offered various contracts and marketing schemes, **David Darrow** reappears to embody several different characters. His costume consists of a metallic green body suit, and he adds accessories or clothing items like a scarf, hat, trench coat or blazer to create the different personas.

In the finale, the characters who have been eaten by Audrey II reappear in costumes that resemble small versions of the corpse flower, including draped robes, pink pleated collars and green headpieces resembling the body of the plant.

THREE THINGS TO KNOW

- Instead of creating Audrey II to look like a typical Venus flytrap, the designers based it on the aptly named corpse flower. This flower only blooms every few years, and when it does, it emits the grotesque smell of decaying flesh.
- The cast includes China Brickey and Time Brickey. Their shared last name is not a coincidence — they are brother and sister, and this is the first time they've worked together professionally.
- This play came about because Howard Ashman, the writer, wanted to do something different that no one had done before. He said, "The idea of doing a monster movie for the stage — not a horror movie, but a monster movie for the stage — I don't think anyone's ever done that, certainly not as a musical."