

# Little Shop Of Which?

Tonight began auditions for WCCTs newest venture: *Little Shop of Horrors*. I knew of at least two others who would be joining me. [Mare](#) and Travis from my stint with the Village Players in *Meet Me in St. Louis*. However, I began to wonder if they were going to show as Mary promised that they would be early. Early turned out to be about 7.05 PM. There was a wide range of talent... some young high schoolers to twenty somethings to the older set (30ish).

To break the ice, we all went around and introduced ourselves (including the director and asst. director). We then sang our selected audition piece. SOMEONE so kindly volunteered me to go second. So, I handed my excerpt to piano man/producer. I thought I did well. Honestly, there were a few who I could barely hear singing. Apprehension, nerves, but there were some who barely opened their mouths. Some sang with the MIDI track from the show provided by the director. Only two others bothered to bring music that was not "canned." I have to mention Tim who sang something called "Ladies Choice" (I have no idea where the song comes from), but the performer was flamboyant to say the least. So much so, that he was asked to perform the song again. This time with his hands in his pockets and not moving so much across the stage.

The role of Seymour (after night one of tryouts) seems to be down to two. If it were up to me, Travis would have had it from the start. In my eyes, the poor sap should have a whiney voice, totally lacking from self-confidence, and shy. Travis not only had the voice, but the mannerisms. He projected well while maintaining the meek, humble character.

As expected, Mary totally rocked as one of the pivotal doo-wop girls. Her stage presence and "ghetto tude" was exceptional. Until the director asked the girls on stage to develop a Spanish(?) accent. Thankfully, that request was quickly

abolished.

We also had a lot of readings done for Orin Scrivello, D.D.S. Tim once again brought some chuckles from the audience. I attempted to be sly, slippery, and sadistic, as I led Seymour to the chair ("Say, AHHHHH"). Squirmy put a southern twang into his performance. I'm just not sure that I could do justice to the dentist's songs.

Only two were asked to read for the voice of Audrey II. Tim put his own spin on the voice. There was a young high schooler who seemed to have the voice. For his audition piece, he sang with the vocal track for "Feed Me/You Can Do It."

I was asked to read a segment of Mr. Mushnik's lines. After my first reading, I was told to be more Jewish. After my second and third, I heard no comments. Maybe I will rewatch some of Vincent Gardenia in the movie version before going back tomorrow night. No one else was asked to read the role... no one else old enough, apparently. Guess I am too old for Seymour... did not get asked to read for the role. But, I think Mushnik would be a fun challenge... he gets eaten, anyway.

I don't remember too many reading the role of Audrey. Dunno, maybe tomorrow night.

So... if anyone else is interested, round two tomorrow night at 7.

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## All The World's A Stage

*and all its men and women merely players.*

*As You Like It* (II,vii, 139-40)

I have often been asked what type of stage I enjoy performing on most. In response, I usually state that it depends upon what is being performed. Sometimes, a show is grand in scale and is meant to be presented on a HUGE stage with a HUMONGOUS audience. Other times, a play is more intimate and is meant for a more intimate setting. I have been watching a Josh Groban concert on PBS tonight (after the Yankees were defeated by the Red Stockings). Being pledge drive time, there are frequent breaks and during one Josh was interviewed. He had recently performed at Madison Square Garden: one of the world's grandest venues. This evening's taped performance was much more intimate: smaller stage, closer audience (in which he could see the "whites of their eyes"), almost a jam session in front of maybe 100 fans. Once again, I was in total awe. Such talent! Singing in Spanish, Italian, as well as English. Taking lyrics that I have no idea what the translation is yet conveying their message brilliantly. Looking forward to the concert version of *Chess* coming next week. Although it is a concert version, it will be my first time seeing any version of the cult musical.

WAIT! I think I have gone off on another tangent. Coming up in a few short months is the WCCT's production of *Little Shop of Horrors*. This is going to be done at the smaller of the two venues. I think it will be quite interesting to discover how we are going to have the huge flesh-eating Audrey II on a small stage as well as the scenery for Skid Row. Seems like a lot, but if it comes off it will be awesome and I think the intimacy of the smaller, in your face venue will have an even more dramatic effect.

So, although I have kind of given a roundabout answer to my own question, it really does have more to do with the type of production being staged. I like being part of big, theatrical extravaganzas that call for a huge setting. I also am comfortable in a small, intimate space in which you can see the audience and know that there are actually butts in the

seats.

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## Audrey's Adventure

It all began with my husband suggesting the play *Little Shop of Horrors* to our community theater's play-reading committee. Somehow, they actually chose it and my husband was chosen to direct it. That was months ago, and the play is slated for production in October, which is rapidly approaching. Realizing the enormity of the scale of a production like this, we've begun to work on it, even though it's only April. Among the many challenges we will face are casting, music (do we cram a band into the theater or use pre-recorded music?), blocking / dancing, and props – which are going to be a doozy for this show. Normally these things are all part of the fun of staging a production, but given a unique set of circumstances, we are in for quite an endeavor – mainly, the fact that we are to perform this thing on a very small stage with an even smaller back stage area. If you are familiar with the show, then you know that the plant involved is HUGE – it must be big enough to eat a person. Not only that, but there are actually *four* of the plants – it starts small and gets bigger during the show, and at least 2 of the Audrey's are VERY large. Also challenging will be filling the role of the plant – it is a VERY physical role, as the person actually has to get inside the plant and use all of his/her muscles to move the thing around – very challenging, and it's not like they will get a lot of glory in that role; their face will never be seen on stage. I expect it to be challenging to fill such a role in community theater where most all of the actors I know LOVE the glory that comes from a role well-played. I am really looking forward to the challenge, however, and I think great things can be accomplished!

What we need is a lot of HELP! Manpower, brains, talents all intersecting to achieve what might seem impossible – to stage an awesome production of Little Shop in a small theater. The good news is, we've already had LOTS of volunteers, with some people actually stepping up to help already – and it's only April! Take [JustJ](#), a fellow blogger for instance. Yesterday he ventured to Lima Ohio with us, an hour and a half away (thought it took much longer than that to get back – you'll read why later), to pick up Audrey II, the man-eating plant needed for the show. And it was an adventure, to say the least. Let's begin by saying that the three quotes I'd gotten from costume shops and other theaters to RENT an Audrey range from \$900-\$1200 – WAY out of our theater's price range. So when I found a theater down in Lima who was willing to see us all four Audreys plus some miscellaneous props for \$250 to KEEP, not rent, I was excited and charged ahead with the arrangement like an idiot who made a New Year's resolution to curtail her bad procrastinating habits. Was \$250 too good to be true? I guess that's something I should have thought about before we made the drive. Their \$250 Audrey II was a heap of foam mess on the floor. They did throw in a curtain for the last scene of the show, a huge (and awesomely scary looking) dentist's drill, some "seedlings" for the flower shop and a flower display case, but the Audrey II was in a state of ... well, I'm going to say disrepair, but only because today is our 10th wedding anniversary and I'm in a good mood. But you know what? We're going to set up a PMS Team (**P**rops and **M**ovable **S**et Team – what were **you** thinking?) who will start working on repairing Audrey II and breathing some life back into her ASAP. I am going to be totally optimistic, and that's why we're starting so early – it's going to be a GREAT show!

Back to the adventure portion of this post... We loaded the heap of foam that was Audrey into JustJ's pickup truck, along with all of the other props, and it all fit! Well, sort of...



Of course it had to be somewhat windy yesterday, and that complicated things. We're driving along, and next thing we know, JustJ and my husband (who was riding shotgun) are seeing pieces of Audrey flying down the road in their sideview mirrors! So we pull over, and my husband goes to retrieve whatever lost pieces of Audrey he can find while JustJ adjusts the tarp that we had to stop and buy earlier in the day. My husband didn't quite get all of Audrey's pieces, so don't be surprised if you read about little man-eating plants sprouting up somewhere in the farm fields outside of Lima, Ohio! We get back in the car for take two and didn't make it more than a few miles before Audrey is flapping in the wind again. The cycle continues, and now Audrey is breaking (eating? Nah, she has a taste for only flesh) bungee cords too, so we have to stop at the first hardware store we came across – a little hole in the wall place in Bufu Cooper Ohio, wherever that is...

The good news is that only seven stops later, we finally made it back to the theater with Audrey, just a little worse for wear. Hey, she needed much repair in the first place, so what's the difference? Now she is ours and she's here! So any takers for the PMS Team? And thanks, JustJ for making the trek and keeping your cool during Audrey's adventure. A producer job is yours if you want it!