

Little Shop of Horrors

Book and Lyrics by Howard Ashman

Music by Alan Menken

TAOS Musical Theatre

Wednesday 27th November 2019

Reviewed by Delia Lee, District 10 Representative, South West Region

Thank you for your kind invitation to review your production of *Little Shop of Horrors*.

The set was fabulous with so much attention to detail. There is not a huge space to work with at the Arc theatre, so to fit in a whole shop that opened out when needed but still leaving enough room for the cast was admirable.

Karl Montgomery-Williams was a very likeable Seymour. It was a shame he had some problems with his mic on the night we came, but he had a beautiful singing voice and acted the part with ease.

Audrey was brilliant played by **Connie Knight** who once again showed us what an accomplished character actress she is. She made the part her own without resorting to copying Ellen Greene's famous portrayal of the role. She also had a strong voice and a real stage presence.

With the two lead roles in such safe hands it was obviously going to be a very enjoyable production. However there were other very strong performances. **Paul West** was delightful as Mr Mushnik and I liked his very comical number with Seymour, *Mushnik and Son*. **Ashley Watson** gave an energetic and completely bonkers performance as the horrible Dentist, Orin Scrivello, which I absolutely loved.

The three girls, **Tasha Harvey**, **Bee Partington** and **Daisy Woodruffe** as Crystal, Ronnette and Chiffon worked well together. They had some good harmonies and moved well. There were times when they weren't quite together in the style of their moves, which was a shame as they had some lovely choreography that would have looked even more fabulous if the attention to detail had been there.

The Audrey II's at the various stages of growth were all handled well by the puppeteer **Ben Jenkins** and the voice, provided by **Tim Hobbs**, was excellent.

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There isn't a huge amount for the chorus in this show, but they harmonised beautifully in their numbers and had some strong movement from choreographer **Debi Weaver**.

The band, led by Musical Director **Lou Knight** produced a good sound but was unfortunately too loud most of the time, especially one of the keyboards. There was quite a lot of dialogue that we couldn't really hear, especially near the start of the show, and we had to strain to hear some of Seymour's numbers, which was a shame.

Director, **Matt Heaton**, really brought out the humour of this quirky and enjoyable show and kept scene changes as quick and simple as possible so as not to interrupt the flow. I also liked the use of other areas of the theatre to bring on chorus and principals. The screens during the interval were a very clever way of installing the fully grown Audrey II without spoiling the illusion for the audience.

The whole show had a good pace and the evening went by in a flash, which I think is always a good sign that you are really enjoying the performance. The whole audience joined in with the encore and we had the added bonus of seeing the voice of Audrey II on stage to lead the singing. I very much enjoyed the production, as did everyone around me. My congratulations to you all.

Delia Lee

NB The comments above solely form the view of the representative attending and only reflect the performance seen.