

Mater Dei's "Little Shop of Horrors" Leaves Audiences Begging to Seymour
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When Seymour accidentally cultivates a blood-thirsty demonic plant, he becomes an overnight sensation. With a diabolical dentist, blooming romance, and larger-than-life comedy, Mater Dei's "Little Shop of Horrors" is a fierce reminder that everything has a price.

Grounding this whimsical production are the leading couple, Audrey (Jillianna Le) and Seymour (Pierce Harvey). Harvey embodies Seymour's awkwardness with hesitant eye contact and clumsy shuffles. Harvey's shoulders hunch and eyebrows scrunch as he digs himself deeper into his botanical dilemma. Foiling Harvey, Le's twinkling giggles and batting eyelashes convey a naive and ditsy character. During "Somewhere That's Green," Le's eyes widen with hope as she sinks into her daydreams, portraying a genuine moment of vulnerability. Together, their chemistry is palpable as they melt into each other's arms with magnetic stares and romantic harmonies during "Suddenly, Seymour."

Cackling maniacally and gesturing wildly, Ethan Ferguson's performance as Orin Scrivello is both captivating and terrifying. While Ferguson's bulging eyes and shrill tone add comedic relief, his intentional exaggerations ensure audiences don't ignore the devastating reality of abusive relationships. Mushnik (Micah Golden) grumbles inaudibly as he trudges offstage, embodying the irritability of a defeated business owner. In "Mushnik and Son" Golden's cranky facade fades away as he tangoes with passion and flourishes with panache.

The sassy Urchins (Elle Zolie Pham, Briel Jim, Claire Riss) stride onstage with infectious energy, driving the plot with their gripping harmonies. Equally mesmerizing, Audrey 2 (Jacob Sanders) powerfully delivers gravelly, rich vocals, establishing his manipulative, desperate, and dominating character through vocal inflection alone.

With 378 cues, Lucas Cruz and Vina Pham achieve precise characterization and plot development through Lighting Design. The over-exposed bright white of the dentist's office establishes an eerie ambiance while ominous flashes of red light suspend audiences in disbelief when Audrey 2 claims its victims.

Marieke Erhard, Hannah Walters, Kemper Rodi, and Riley Lewis expose the internal motivations of each character through hair, makeup, and costumes. While Audrey conceals her insecurities beneath form-fitting dresses and a consistently coiffed auburn wig, Seymour's rumpled hair and homely khaki trousers reveal his dejected self-image. As Audrey discovers self-love, her costumes transform into muted pastels, delicate patterns, and flowing skirts, personifying her dream life that is finally within reach.

Mater Dei's idiosyncratic cast and impressive crew give audiences something to root for in their ground-breaking production of "Little Shop of Horrors."