



A “Little” Show with a Lot of Heart: Behind the Grade 10 Production of *Little Shop of Horrors*

By: Cruz, Ansherina Allineah E., Tolentino, Jasmine Dana C., & Hässig, Florence R.

Contributors: Ignacio, Chris ‘Iggy’ Danielle C., Esperanza, Shantelle Kirsten S., Villamater, Madison Anne R., Ranara, Andre Joseph L., Marcos, Gabriel Martin R., & Marabut, Francheska Rhaine F.

Look out! The grand finale of the series of junior high school musicals is here! On the special day of February 16th, 2025, the Grade 10 students graced the stage with their rendition of *Little Shop of Horrors*, which was more than just a showcase of talent—it was a spectacular display of teamwork, creativity, and grit. The students—from the very first note of their exhilarating opening number, adorned

in impeccably styled vintage dresses and bold makeup—perfectly embodied the gritty, working-class charm of Skid Row, setting the stage for a truly immersive and unforgettable performance. They didn't just perform; they transformed. And what they gave on stage was only half the story.



The Grade 10 cast

(Photo credits: Florence R. Hässig)

Little Shop of Horrors, originally a horror comedy movie in the 1960s directed by Roger Corman and written by Charles B. Griffith, tells the story of Seymour Krelborn, a florist assistant who buys a strange and interesting plant he names Audrey II, after his coworker and

secret crush, Audrey. As Audrey II grows with the help of human blood, it promises him fame, fortune, and love at a cost that soon turns deadly. Torn between his rising career and the horrifying reality of keeping Audrey II alive, Seymour is faced with difficult choices that spiral into chaos, plunging him down a path of moral corruption.

This outstanding work of art wouldn't have been possible without the heart of the play, **Florence R. Hässig** (known simply as “Ms. Flo”), with *Little Shop of Horrors* being her third, utterly marvelous production for the school. From giving critiques, to awakening hidden talents, to creating a close-knit community, Ms. Flo has played a pivotal role not only as director but also as a pillar in the lives of the Grade 10 students—a beautiful example of how art can bring people together.

Who would've thought that behind the curtains, Shantelle Esperanza, Althea Ragot, Karlsten Lagniton, and Hannah Cruz were not just performers but co-directors in disguise? Their insight, initiative, and leadership helped shape several scenes into the gems they became, ranging from the most energetic to the most emotional of segments. Meanwhile, Mia Asuncion, Cheska Marabut, Jasmine Tolentino, and Datu Viola took on the daunting task of junior choreographers—even while juggling emotionally complex roles. Talk about wearing multiple hats!



Andre with his plant costume creation (Photo credits: Florence R. Hässig)

Then there was Andre Ranara, whose comedic timing as Arthur Denton had the audience in stitches. But behind the scenes, he was also the genius behind the plant headpiece designs; the face (pun intended) of the costume department. These headpieces—decorated with dragon-like scales, sharp teeth, and vein-like vines—brought a horrifying beauty to Audrey II, bringing the bloodthirsty villain to life. From engineering to entertaining, this kid did it all.



The Urchins (Photo credits: Cheska Marabut)

And what would *Little Shop* be without the Urchins? Although there had only been three Urchins in the original film, each of these ladies proved themselves too bright not to be cast! This sensational nine-girl ensemble (Althea Ragot, Shantelle Esperanza, Mia Asuncion, Karlsten Lagniton, Jensen Rivas, Hannah Cruz, Shari Garcia, Denise Sula, and Cheska Marabut) didn't just narrate the story—they brought the funk, sass, and soul that made every scene pop. Their chemistry and charisma elevated the show with every snap, sway, and harmony.

This production also gave us a beautiful chance to discover surprising layers of talent among the cast. From top academic achievers like Martin Taeza to quiet creatives like Yoko Vista, Madison Caimen, and Madison Villamater, and athletic standouts like Kevin Maligaya—it was like opening a treasure chest we didn't know we had. And of course, JM Fernandez. As Seymour, JM might say things could have gone better, but what matters most is that he gave what he could, when he could. He poured parts of his heart into Seymour, and that sincerity came through.



JM as Seymour (Photo credits: Madison Villamater)

Jasmine Tolentino's portrayal of Audrey was a masterclass in transformation. Audrey, a character often misunderstood, became someone real and relatable under Jasmine's interpretation. If you know Jasmine, you'd recognize how far outside her comfort zone this role was—but you'd also know that no one else could've brought Audrey's vulnerability, hope, and voice to life quite like she did. Her performance was not just a portrayal—it was a breakthrough.



Jasmine as Audrey (Photo credits: Florence R. Hässig)

Chris “Iggy” Ignacio as Mr. Mushnik was nothing short of brilliant. The decision to cast Mr. Mushnik as a transgender man wasn't planned, but it turned out to be one of the most inspired choices of the production. Iggy's comedic timing, physicality, and inventiveness turned a typically subdued role into one of the show's most delightful surprises. It was comedy gold with heart. Vincent Duroy's take on the dentist was another standout. Much like Jasmine, Vince stepped into a role that was the total opposite of his real-life personality—and he nailed it. His electrifying presence made the audience squirm in all the right ways. Creepy, crazy, and compelling.

And what can we say about the Plant Trio—Gab Marcos, JA Dela Cruz, and Datu Viola? Wow doesn't even begin to cover it. Taking on the iconic Audrey II in rotating performances, these three brought power, precision, and a playful rivalry that never overstepped the harmony of the whole. Acting, singing, and dancing with massive plant heads is no easy feat, but they made it look effortless—and electric. They truly put the AAAAAAAH in plant!



Iggy's rendition of Mr Mushnik

(Photo credits: Florence R. Hässig)



Vince's take on The Dentist

(Photo credits: Florence R. Hässig)

Heads up, this is one for the history books! In a feat unprecedented in the school's musical productions, a fully student-composed band breathed vibrant life into the performance. Jada Cruz, who supported the band by experimenting with tabs, was anchored by other guitarists Martin Tazea, Marithony Sy, Gihan Buencamino, and Cedric De Leon, featuring also the skilled pianist Elijah Quirante and the dynamic drumming duo, Dylan Naldo and Charles Jamero. Passion + dedication + talent + instruments = MAGIC. Led by Dylan, this band was one of the driving forces behind the decision to do Little Shop. Musical talent was bursting at the seams, and they knew they had to unleash it. The fact that they learned and perfected a full score in under two months is beyond impressive, and none of them had ever

performed on a stage this big before! The heartbeat and groove of the show simply wouldn't have existed without them.



The Plant Trio (Photo credits: Florence R. Hässig)



Let the band play! (Photo credits: Florence R. Hässig)

And finally, the unsung heroes—the backbone of the production. Keziah Patacsil and Marithony Sy (lights and tech), Maro Egay (spotlight), Marion Rafael (props and set), the ultra-creatives Shaira Tachado and JA Dela Cruz (art and visuals), Kylie Santos, Madison Villamater, Neon Casas (the ultimate supporters), and Shantelle Esperanza (who practically brought her house to school!)—who all made the

impossible happen. Every member of the class contributed in ways big and small, and the result was nothing short of magic.

By the time the curtains fell, the buzzing audience erupted in applause, giving the brilliant cast and crew a well-deserved, enthusiastic send-off. The Grade 10 students' version of *Little Shop of Horrors* left the audience brimming with theories, with some insisting that Audrey had succumbed to her injuries, while others argued otherwise. According to Ms. Flo, the finale is ambiguous, and the decision to go with said ending wasn't planned either. In spite of that, many viewers praised their hard work, dedication, and sheer talent on display.

This wasn't just a school play. It was a celebration of courage, creativity, and community. And it was all thanks to one extraordinary class of students who believed in each other—and the story they had to tell—as well as a dedicated director and mentor. More friendships were formed through this blast of a production, and hopefully, there will be more to come in the succeeding years.

XXX