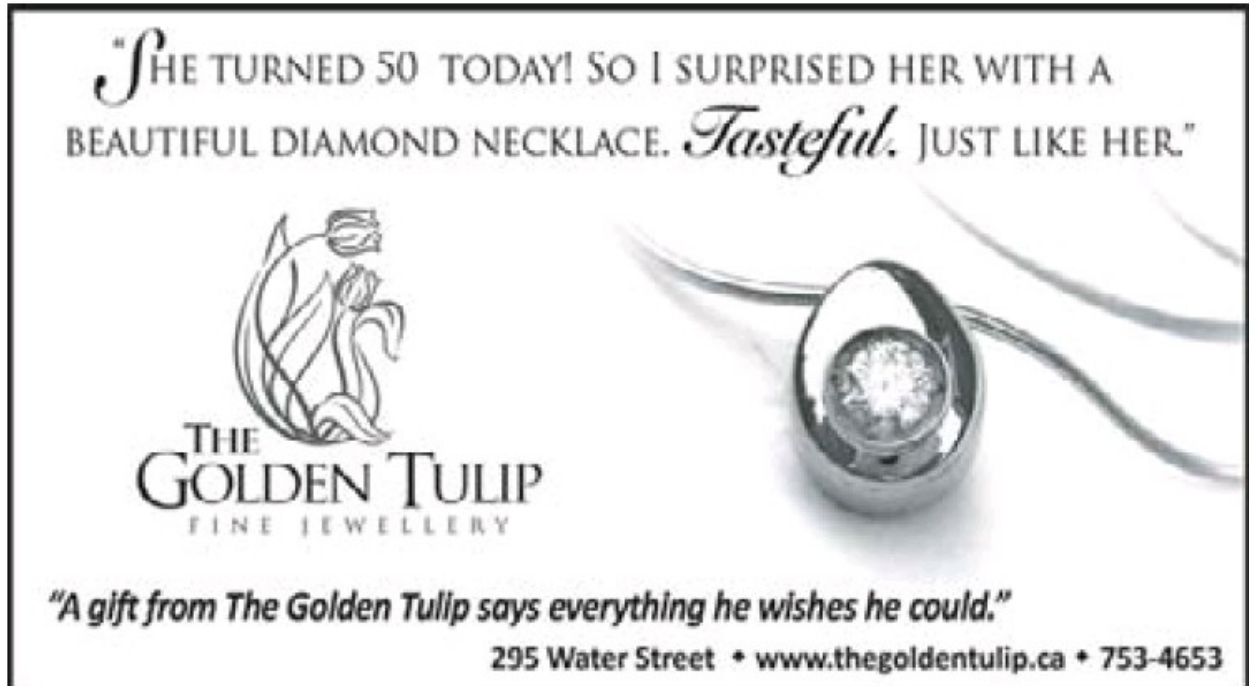


‘Little Shop’ delivers the goods

- [The Telegram \(St. John’s\)](#)
- [24 Oct 2009](#)



Premiering off-Broadway in 1982, “Little Shop of Horrors” is a macabre, sci-fi spoof intertwined with a boy-meets-girl, boy-wins-girl story, culminating in an outrageous twist on the together-happily-ever-after formula.

Working in a failing flower-shop on Skid Row (where else more prone to fail?), nerdy, bespectacled Seymour yearns for the beautiful and seemingly unattainable Audrey, who is squired by a sadistic dentist. Audrey’s beau favours black leather and handcuffs.

Not to despair, though, because amongst Seymour’s floral charges is an ever-growing plant from outer space. Like some intergalactic fairy godmother, it can grant any wish — as long as you stay in its good books by providing a diet of human flesh and blood.

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“Feed me,” it cajoles and demands, while growing and growing and growing.

The demented dentist, who dies frantically while overindulging in laughing gas, provides a nice snack.

So does the suspicious flower-shop proprietor, who has noticed red spots on the floor. Perhaps Seymour is not quite as nice as he seems, although it must be granted that the ravenous, exponentially expanding, talking plant is not easy to satisfy.

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Nathan Wilson is a steady and grounded Seymour, with a reliable singing voice that does a lot of heavy lifting in the show.

The flamboyantly sadistic Orin the dentist is a part to die for. Not one to look a gift horse in the mouth, Gary Lamkin rides it with relish and panache.

The shop's owner, Mr. Mushnik, is a fatherly figure, far beyond the years of a student actor, but Desmond Smickersgill takes a good run at it.

Alanna Fraize's Audrey is poised, bright, ditsy, breathy — think Marilyn Monroe in "Some Like It Hot," — except that Alanna has a much stronger singing voice than Marilyn. Principals are ably supported by sharp and sassy performers in the roles of three singing, dancing, wisecracking and seen-it-all Bowery girls (Alicia Hartley, Brianna Gosse and Victoria Arnold). And all the while the grotesque plant keeps getting bigger and bigger.

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Ultimately, in this post-modern fable, the monster wins. So, not a fantasy with a happy ending, but, wild and woolly, exuberant as a herd of stampeding mastodons, the bizarre, cult musical is fun to watch, and it is well-suited to an irreverent and adventurous bunch of high-school students, supplemented by the unseen guest role of Bruce Brenton, funny but terrifying as the booming voice of the grotesque, carnivorous plant with humungous articulated jaws.

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Song and music are heavy-duty and insistent, with high sound levels: no nuance is needed in this inverted fairy tale, taken on with gusto.

Onstage and auditorium performance space is used enterprisingly, creating three-level and even four-level effects. Tom Dunphy's high-tech lighting is versatile and dramatic.

Directed by John Rao, with vocal direction by Susan Quinn, choreography by Jill Dready and musical direction of a very competent four-piece band by Grant Etchegary, the Holy Heart High School production has its final airing today, running 8-10 p.m.

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Not perhaps a show for hyper-impressionable kiddies prone to nightmares — and definitely not for dentists — “Little Shop of Horrors” nevertheless provides a robust evening of musical comedy for those with a radically off-beat sense of humour.



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Part 2: The controversy

Is our budget good medicine or just another opiate for addicts?

Several key budget items are being scrutinized by the opposition and the public.

By Scott MacKenzie
@ScottMacKenzie

Even though the budget has been passed by the legislature, it is still being scrutinized by the opposition and the public. The budget is a controversial document that has sparked a heated debate in the legislature and among the public. The budget is a controversial document that has sparked a heated debate in the legislature and among the public.



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Byelection means many ministers

More voters elect to the work show in early previous year

By Scott MacKenzie
@ScottMacKenzie

How many ministers will be elected in the by-elections? The answer is not clear. The by-elections are being held in several constituencies across the province. The by-elections are being held in several constituencies across the province.

Lewisporte cuts lifted

Just a step to stopgap

By Scott MacKenzie
@ScottMacKenzie

The province has lifted the Lewisporte cuts. The cuts were a temporary measure to deal with the budget deficit. The cuts were a temporary measure to deal with the budget deficit.



Tories in Gander this weekend

Former premier to give the evening keynote address

By Scott MacKenzie
@ScottMacKenzie

The Tories are in Gander this weekend. The former premier will give the evening keynote address. The Tories are in Gander this weekend.

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