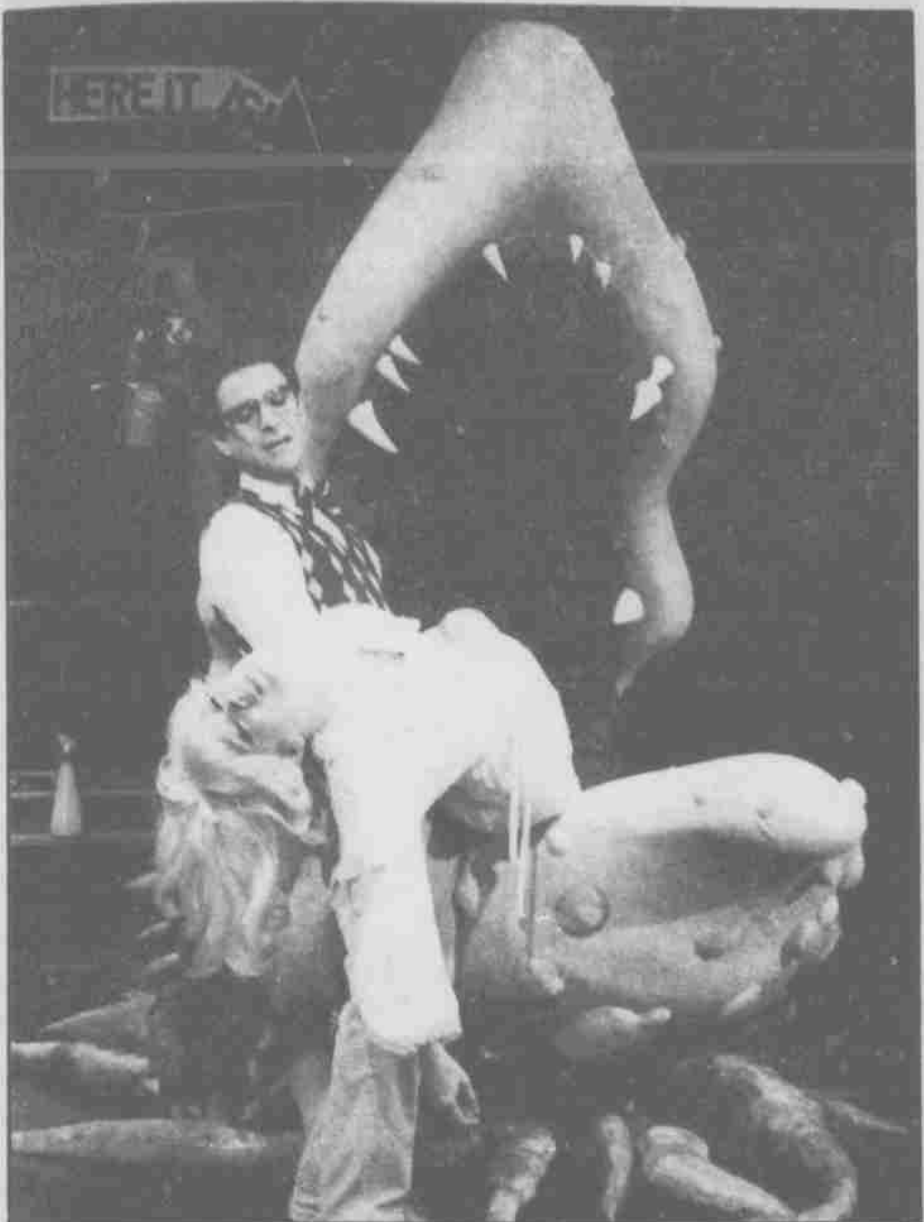


Arts & Entertainment



Ambience, menu, talking plant enhance twisted "Little Shop"

By Chris McCubbin
Staff Reporter

There are dates and there are dates. There's the run-of-the-mill, waste-an-evening, stave-off-boredom, movie-or-burger date. Then there's the real thing, knock-their-socks-off, blow-their-mind, genuine night-to-remember.

It's not easy for the average college student to provide his or her significant other with the sort of world class night on the town that compares to the dates one sees on "Hart To Hart" reruns or Doris Day/Cary Grant movies. At least it's difficult in this part of the world, without dropping a semester's tuition in the process.

But it's not impossible to find an affordable dream-date if one knows where to look, and one of the best places to look is Omaha's Firehouse Dinner Theatre.

The Firehouse was established in 1972, one of the first businesses to move into the fashionable Old Market area. Located at 11th and Jackson, the Firehouse is simply a brick wall from the outside, but inside it evokes an opera house of the last century. Everywhere you look you

find stained glass, polished brass, carved wood and antiques.

An evening at the Firehouse begins downstairs at Harrigan's restaurant. The menu is a choice between three entrees: Prime Rib, Cordon Bleu Florentine, or Orange Roughy.

After dinner the crowd moves upstairs to the theatre, where the Firehouse Brigade, an in-house troupe of singing and dancing waiters, serve drinks and deserts.

Entertainment begins with the Brigade's pre-show. Currently the pre-show is selections from four current Broadway musicals. After this another round of drinks is served before the show starts.

This summer's show is "Little Shop Of Horrors" by Howard Ashman and Alan Menken.

The play tells the story of the relationships between a poor, honest boy from skid-row and his talking, man-eating houseplant.

The cast is superb and professional. A couple of the midwestern actors have some difficulty with the variety of New York accents the play calls for, but you stop noticing this quickly as you lose yourself in the play's imaginary world.

Particularly memorable are Belinda Acosta, Kristy Kight, and Tiffany White, as Chiffon, Crystal and Ronnette, three doo-wop-singing street urchins who provide the score with a personality seldom seen in musicals today.

Don Richard, a gangly and rubber-faced actor, takes on a huge number of incidental roles in the play, and unquestionably puts in the show's finest comedic performance as Orin, the sadistic biker-dentist, strung out on amyl nitrate.

The star of the show, though, is Audrey II, the talking plant. Audrey II is a \$13,000 puppet shipped from Florida at a cost of \$1,200. Along with Audrey II came his manipulator, Michael Dayton. Dayton and Riek Kleber, who provides Audrey II's amplified, basso voice, combine to give the plant a charming, cheerful malevolence.

Shows are 7:15 p.m. Tuesday through Sunday, with matinees at 1 p.m. Wednesday and Sunday. Tickets are \$20 with dinner, \$14 without. Friday's shows run \$1 more and Saturday's shows are \$2 higher. For reservations call 346-8833.

Sheldon theater shows independent works

By Jennifer Krumel
Staff Reporter

When you're tired of the glitzy, half-baked and predictable films which always seem to come out in the summer, don't forget Lincoln's alternative cinema at the Sheldon Art Gallery.

During the summer, the Sheldon Film Theatre continues to provide the public with the opportunity to see some of the best and most recent works by independent filmmakers.

"The independent cinema," said Dan Ladely, director of the Sheldon Film Theatre, "consists of those films produced outside of the Hollywood industry." Considering what a national box-office hit "Rambo" was last summer, it doesn't seem likely that too many independent films will make it big in the average American theater in the near future.

Ladely says, however, that the independent cinema's audience has grown, especially in the past year, and its popularity is steadily increasing.

Sheldon's Film Theatre concentrates on portraying film as an art form, so it presents films of a broad range of aspects, styles, and genres. Ladely tries to balance the subject matter by showing documentaries as well as fiction, animation and short features. Ladely said he chooses films which may

heighten social consciousness instead of limiting the cinema to only those films geared toward entertainment.

The Sheldon Film Theatre has a colorful summer schedule. There will be a series of films by women directors as well as films by other American independent filmmakers. A couple foreign films are also scheduled.

Why "women directors?" It just turned out that way," says Ladely. "Women have always been involved in filmmaking, but in the past the trend was in other fields, such as editing."

This year, though Ladely didn't plan the "women's" series, most of the films were made by women.

Along with a variety of fiction films, several important documentaries will be shown, including "Florio" and Mudd's "Broken Rainbow" the Academy-Award winning film about the Navajo Indians. If you're into spectacular animation, Faith Hubley's "The Cosmic Eye" (just released in New York City last Friday) should interest you.

Schedules are available at the Art Gallery. Screenings are usually Thursday through Sunday of every week in the evenings, with Saturday and Sunday matinees. The price is a mere \$3.75 (that's 25 cents less than you normally pay for a movie downtown).

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