

Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club  
Club Notice - 12/24/86 -- Vol. 5, No. 24

MEETINGS UPCOMING:

Unless otherwise stated, all meetings are on Wednesdays at noon.

LZ meetings are in LZ 3A-206; MT meetings are in MT 4A-235.

\_ D \_ A \_ T \_ E                    \_ T \_ O \_ P \_ I \_ C

01/7/87 LZ: NEUROMANCER by William Gibson (Consciousness)

01/21 MT: Movie: (to be announced)

01/28 LZ: Book: (to be announced)

02/04 MT: CONTACT by Carl Sagan (First Contact)

HO Chair:        John Jetzt    HO 1E-525    834-1563  
LZ Chair:        Rob Mitchell    LZ 1B-306    576-6106  
MT Chair:        Mark Leeper    MT 3E-433    957-5619  
HO Librarian:    Tim Schroeder    HO 2G-427A    949-5866  
LZ Librarian:    Lance Larsen    LZ 1C-117    576-2068  
MT Librarian:    Bruce Szablak    MT 4C-418    957-5868  
Jill-of-all-trades: Evelyn Leeper    MT 1F-329    957-2070  
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1. Again there is not much news to report, due to the holiday lag. A few small items which will later be officially announced. Our next Leeperhouse film fest will probably be 39 STEPS (not the Hitchcock, but the second remake which I, for one, happen to think may be a better piece of entertainment). It will be playing with a film that really is a Hitchcock, NORTH BY NORTHWEST. Assuming one of them doesn't show up on TV in the interim (and there is a good chance that NORTH BY NORTHWEST will because of the recent death of Cary Grant) then we will show the two together at the next Leeperhouse fest. Since we will have already shown a Hitchcock, we will continue the next fest with two more, ROPE and PSYCHO.

2. Nick Sauer is looking for a VHS copy of the DR. WHO episode "The Hand of Fear." If you have this, please contact him at (HO 4F-427, 949-7076).

3. On the back of this sheet is a review of the \*film\* LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS; on the following sheet is a re-run of the review of the \*stage play\*. Just wanted to get that straight. [-ecl]

Mark Leeper  
MT 3E-433 957-5619  
...mtgzz!leeper

## LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

A film review by Mark R. Leeper

Capsule review: Musical comedy based on the play, based on Roger Corman's 1961 film. As an unpretentious little musical about a man-eating plant who sings jive, this film could be a big hit.

Do the dead return? Well, sometimes yes. The serial was dead for a while, then R\_a\_i\_d\_e\_r\_s\_o\_f\_t\_h\_e\_L\_o\_s\_t\_A\_r\_k brought the style back, at least in spirit. The Western was dead until last year when two were made very much in the style of older Westerns. The musical-comedy, which had been vegetating, is now up and kicking. If you think that is a mixed metaphor, you haven't seen L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_S\_h\_o\_p\_o\_f\_H\_o\_r\_r\_o\_r\_s, a brand-new musical-comedy based on the 1982 off-Broadway play based on the 1961 Roger Corman film.

Seymour Krelborn (played by Rick Moranis) is a little nebbish working in Mushnick's flower shop down on Skid Row. To avoid being fired, he shows Mushnick a weird plant that he (Seymour) is growing. When placed in the flower shop window, the plant attracts so many curiosity-seekers who stay to buy flowers that Mushnick decides to keep Seymour on--assuming the plant stays alive. Unfortunately, the plant cannot survive without human blood and so our story of tongue-in-cheek horror begins.

L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_S\_h\_o\_p\_o\_f\_H\_o\_r\_r\_o\_r\_s is a bright, fun musical-comedy spoofing traditions of both the musical and the horror film. There is a three-girl chorus--Crystal, Chiffon, and Ronette--that keeps popping up at odd

moments and in odd places to lead songs. And the songs are about things like how lousy life is on Skid Row. But the funniest song is sung by a dentist who loves a job for which people pay him to inflict pain on them. Many of the jokes date back to the original Corman film, but each new version has added to the creativity of the story.

It should be said, however, that while the film is enjoyable and creative enough to deserve considerable popularity, most of that creativity is in the first half of the film. While from the midpoint on the film is entertaining, it seems to lose its inspiration and adds little new to the novelty of the idea or to the humor of the story. A number of familiar comedians appear in small roles in the film, but most stick around for one gag or less and then are not seen again.

  L  i  t  t  l  e  S  h  o  p  o  f  H  o  r  r  o  r  s may not single-handedly bring back the musical-comedy, but it should do well. Rate it a +2 on the -4 to +4 scale.

LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS  
A drama(?) review by Mark R. Leeper

[Originally printed in the "Lincroft-Holmdel Science Fiction Club Notice" July 13, 1983.]

As Charlie Chan points out in   T  h  e  B  l  a  c  k  C  a  m  e  l, Hollywood has given rise to many strange mysteries. Chan could easily have been referring to the inexplicable popularity of Roger Corman's films. Roger Corman has made several films that seem to be respected by some film buffs. I have always felt that any quality in a Roger Corman film has gotten there through some oversight at the film factory. And factory made is what most of Corman's films are. One of Corman's most respected films is   L  i  t  t  l  e  S  h  o  p  o  f  H  o  r  r  o  r  s, the story of a man-eating plant in a Skid Row flower shop. How much was this film the result of artistic filmmaking?

Let's let Corman tell us himself:

After the success of B\_u\_c\_k\_e\_t\_o\_f\_B\_l\_o\_o\_d, a comedy-horror picture shot on a five-day schedule, I determined to attempt a similar style of picture on a two-day schedule. Once again, since the cast and crew were mostly all friends making this film was an enjoyable experience. At 9:00 a.m. on the first day of shooting the production manager informed us that we were already behind schedule and we'd have to pick up the pace. We did, and finished in two days. It still plays on college campuses and at midnight screenings, and has become something of a cult film. [Roger Corman as quoted in T\_h\_e\_W\_o\_r\_l\_d\_o\_f\_R\_o\_g\_e\_r\_C\_o\_r\_m\_a\_n]

The film featured ersatz Yiddish humor mouthed by ersatz Jewish actors. In spite of its humble origins, the film did, as Corman points out, strike a responsive chord in some. I have even heard people say it is their favorite horror film.

Well, about a year ago an off-Broadway musical was produced based on the film. L\_i\_t\_t\_l\_e\_S\_h\_o\_p\_o\_f\_H\_o\_r\_r\_o\_r\_s demonstrates, quite effectively, the difference in expectations one has for the two media. As a rendering of the story, the play is not as good as the film. There are several points where good touches in the film were replaced by bad ones in the play. Yet somehow the play turns out to be a brash but enjoyable romp where the film seemed to be a strained piece of mediocrity.

The star of the play is Audrey II, a set of carnivorous plant puppets, each larger than the one before. They start houseplant-sized and grow until the final Audrey II looks like the plant kingdom's answer to the Great White Shark. It has a big toothed bole in the center and a set of toothed leaves on the side, like some botanist's nightmare. Audrey II is discovered by Seymour Krelboin, the totally incompetent assistant in a flower shop owned by Gravis Mushnik (actually in the film

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the name was sometimes spelled "Mushnick" -- checking for consistency might have taken another half hour, which could have added a day to the shooting schedule). Because the presence of Audrey II (whose namesake is another shop assistant) is very good for business, the monstrous

plant is kept around even after Seymour discovers the plant's curious appetites. The play takes the same basic plot as the film but adds a chorus of three black singers, Chiffon, Crystal, and Ronnette, and a peculiar romance between Audrey and a sadistic dentist. It also adds several inches to Audrey's bustline, completely changing the impact of the character.

One would think that with so many changes for the worse from a poor film to a play, the play would be even worse. Not so. The play's spontaneity and immediacy compensate for a multitude of sins. One really does not expect much plot from a musical play and the plot which is a little sparse for a film fits the medium of stage musical like a glove. The songs are witty and the jive-talking Audrey II is pure pleasure. The  L i t t l e S h o p o f H o r r o r s is a pleasure to visit as long as one doesn't stay for dinner.

