

## LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS From Page 1C

and his dynamic presence can be seen all over New England advocating for social reform. Pearson first appears in the opening number as part of the ensemble, but right away, he has an astonishing presence and magnificent voice.

This production's Seymour is reason alone to come to this show! Director Matthew Robert explained that DiSandro has been doing the role for five days, never having done it previously. His movements, his characterization, his expressions are perfection personified. Without mugging for the audience as some Seymours do, he is entirely real, and in being so, he is hilarious. Totally, screamingly, funny!

The other thing that is screamingly funny (pun intended this time) is the script and the score. Howard Ashman's book and lyrics are unabashedly, tongue-in-cheek, a parody of all those B-rated horror movies. Ashman's collaboration with Alan Menken on the music is a huge part of the show's appeal. Ashman and Menken are the Disney team that brought us "Beauty and the Beast," "Aladdin," and "The Little Mermaid," but this raunchy and irreverent musical is arguably their best work.

The creative team consists of Director Robert (who also designed and built the set as well as the puppets of several versions of Audrey II), Assistant Director and Stage Manager Jade Evangelista, (who is also in charge of costumes and props), Music Director Donna Rendely Peeler, and Choreographer Bar (who is also the swing and will step in for anyone in the cast).

The coziness of this small group is entirely serendipitous. Robert and Evangelista collaborate easily and have a common vision and passion for the show, and Bar can easily step into any role be-



**Stephanie Dorcey, Camile Capers, Nick DiSandro, and Essence Cunningham practice the choreography for "You Never Know."**

Courtesy of Artistree

cause she has all the moves and music within her. This is also a very creative meeting of minds.

The set is starting to shape up with a plant display shelf stage right that turns around to become a city street or generic background with a dentist's office stage left and again using the space that is level with the second tier of audience — a good use of the Grange Theatre's small stage.

All of this has come about as a result of Artistree's new initiative, Artistree Collaborative Theater. Robert has described it as a sort of universal theater in that they are not casting just in New York or locally, but literally from all over, and no distinction is made between "professional" actors and those who are just starting out. The plays are cast from auditions awarding roles to the actors who are best suited to the parts for a variety of reasons. This provides opportunity both for the production to get the best cast possible and for the cast to be chosen solely on their merits and suitability for the role, not just on their past credits.

So this amazing group has come here for this experi-

ence of breaking boundaries and creating an over-the-top exciting show. DiSandro (Seymour) comes to us from Las Vegas where he lives. He has many credits, but his most exotic is "Christmas on Ice." McDougall (Audrey) came from New York, where she has appeared at Carnegie Hall. Pearson (Audrey II) has joined us from Rhode Island, where he is a writer, actor, singer, preacher and touring social activist.

Levison (Mushnik) grew up here in Woodstock in a theater family and she now works at Artistree as a Theater Educator, where last summer she directed the ACT Jr. Children's summer program. Alex Gossard (Orin/ensemble) is a New York based actor with many regional credits from Texas to Arizona, to New York, Washington, Florida, and Los Angeles, to name a few. Most recently, he played Gomez in Lost Nation Theater's Addams Family in Montpelier. Stephanie Dorcey (Crystal), born and raised in

New Jersey, has appeared in commercials and in print.

Camille Capers (Chiffon) has many regional credits and has played a variety of roles in the vicinity of New York. Essence Cunningham comes to us from Maryland, where she has been a dancer since she was two and where she choreographed the Miss World Maryland Beauty Pageant and played the role of "The Wiz" on the first audio-only adaptation of that musical.

Peeler is a former music teacher from Virginia who has since been building up credits as a Music Director for a variety of musicals. She will work with a pit band of local musicians. This is Barr's regional choreography debut.

It is all going very well indeed, and you get to be a part of this glorious new effort and this amazing production. Order your tickets now. Production dates are Oct. 19, 20, 21, 25, 26, 27 and 28 at 7 p.m., and Oct. 21, 22, 25, 28 and 29 at 2 p.m.

## Fire prevention

October National Fire Prevention Month and Fire Safety Week

