

THE LITTLE SHOP OF HORRORS

Just when you thought it was safe to go back to the greenhouse, along comes *The Little Shop Of Horrors*, with Audrey II, its people-eating plant. Director Frank Oz (of *Muppets* fame) says cheerfully, "By the time we're finished, the entire cast is eaten. I know a lot of directors will envy that."

You probably would love Audrey II, if you could see her, but, until the movie is released, she's being kept under wraps.

"All I can say is she sings, she dances, she dials the phone, and she eats people," says Lyle Conway, her designer. Those who have seen her say she starts out small and sexy and, fed human beings, grows to truly huge proportions.

Audrey II first proved her popularity in the original *Little Shop*, a low-budget Roger Corman film made 25 years ago. ("We spent \$40,000 on ours," says Corman ruefully. "This one is \$20 million.") Four years ago, *Little Shop of Horrors* was resurrected as an off-off-Broadway musical comedy. Its success encouraged Warner Bros. to reprise it on film.

"It's not a big, splashy Hollywood musical," says Henson. "The music is an integral part of the story and moves the plot forward. We haven't opened up the plot so much as we've enriched it."

The action takes place in Mushnick's Flower Shop in a rundown part of town. Seymour (Rick Moranis), a nerdy floral assistant, buys a strange little plant and names it for his girlfriend Audrey.

Having no awe of the Hollywood star system, the plant snacks happily on cast members Steve Guttenberg, Bill Murray, Paul Dooley, Vincent Gardenia, et al—though not necessarily in that order.

—Joan Goodman

CLUB PARADISE

"None of us could wait to get down on location," says Twiggy, who stars with Robin Williams and Peter O'Toole in Harold Ramis' (*Ghostbusters*) new film *Club Paradise*.

"I had just come from a film set in England, where it was freezing cold," said the actress and former model who set the style for London's swinging sixties. "We all were so glad to be in the sun, we would have played the phone book. As it turned out, it was a very, very funny script, so we were lucky in all ways."

Club Paradise is a comic mixture of romance, revolution and seedy resorts, written by Ramis. "It also includes a smarmy Englishman, which I play," says Simon Jones (*Hitchhiker's Guide to the Galaxy*, *Brideshead Revisited*). "It's a

small but nasty part, and I liked playing it, especially in Jamaica.

Robin Williams plays the good guy. He's a fireman from Chicago who wisely decides he's had enough of cold and snow and fighting fires. He comes to Paradise, where he not so wisely decides to invest in a rundown resort hotel with Jimmy Cliff, who is having trouble with the local corrupt politicians. Along the way, Robin manages to attract the cook and first mate of my yacht to his enterprise. Since the mate is Twiggy, you can understand my deep resentment."

There's Peter O'Toole's sun-drenched Governor General, who hates to have his cushy life disturbed. And there's his girlfriend, a travel writer who wants to report on world events and sees her destiny in an island revolution.

"In fact, things were so complicated," says Simon Jones, "that Harold was the only one who knew what was going on."
—Joan Goodman

ALIENS

A summer film promising to be a special effects extravaganza is *Aliens*, sequel to 1979's monster hit, *Alien*. It brings back Sigourney Weaver as Ellen Ripley, sole survivor (with her cat) of the original.

It's seventy years after the events of *Alien*. Ripley is horrified to learn that the planet that held the alien derelict and eggs is being colonized. No one will believe Ripley's story... until contact with the planet is mysteriously lost. Sent back with a contingent of tough space marines led by Michael (*The Terminator*) Biehn, Ripley finds hordes of the toothy terrors and faces down their termite-like Queen in a finale that could make *Rocky IV* look like a patty cake contest.

—Michael Mayo



In *Aliens*, you find out why the title of this sequel to *Alien* is plural. Sigourney Weaver (center) returns as the self-reliant Ellen Ripley, sole survivor of the first film. Michael Biehn (left) co-stars.



AMERICAN ANTHEM

Combine a dazzling palette of colors, pulsating rock rhythms and music video stylistics, and the result is *American Anthem*, director Albert Magnoli's follow-up to the smash success, *Purple Rain*. The arena this time is the sport of gymnastics, where conflicts between relationships, goals and the competition provide the drama.

Olympic gold medalist Mitch Gaylord makes his motion picture debut opposite Janet Jones, the lithe young actress who burst on the movie scene with *The Flamingo Kid* and *A Chorus Line*.

Steve Tevere (Gaylord) faces a coming of age conflict (What an original concept for a youth film!). As he is launching his career in gymnastics, his father is laid off and he loses the strength and moral support he has known throughout his teen years. Enter Julie (Jones) an attractive, talented gymnast who has left her family and ventured West to challenge herself

competitively and emotionally. Together they work toward their mutual goal—the U.S. Gymnastics Championships and a shot at the Olympics.

These events provide the setting for the film's climactic finale, a spectacular display of vaults, twists, flips and all-around agility which features more than 100 top-level gymnasts from around the globe. Included in this group are world champions Steve Elliott and China's Li Yuejiu, and an additional seven members from the U.S. National team and two members of the Canadian National team.

American Anthem, filmed entirely on location in Phoenix and the aspen groves of northern Arizona, features vibrant visuals edited to the tempo of an incredible soundtrack, and offers sport fans a chance to watch some fine gymnastics.

—Vic Davis

(Left) In *Club Paradise*, when Robin Williams invests in a rundown tropical resort, he gets involved with reggae musicians, island politics and someone else's wife (Twiggy). (Right) Mitch Gaylord and Janet Jones play aspiring gymnasts battling personal and athletic challenges to make the Olympic team in *American Anthem*. Albert Magnoli (*Purple Rain*) directs.

