



Contact: Helene Davis, 212 .920-5477  
Helene@helenedavispr.com  
Helene Davis Public Relations

**Eddie Cooper and Joe Grifasi**  
join  
**Ellen Greene, Jake Gyllenhaal and Taran Killam**  
in  
***Little Shop of Horrors***

**Book and Lyrics by Howard Ashman; Music by Alan Menken**  
**Directed by Dick Scanlan; Choreography by Patricia Wilcox**

**The Second Production of the 2015 *Encores! Off-Center* Season**  
**Jeanine Tesori, Artistic Director; Chris Fenwick, Music Director**

**July 1-2 at New York City Center**

New York, N.Y., May 11, 2015 – **Eddie Cooper** and **Joe Grifasi** will join the previously announced **Ellen Greene, Jake Gyllenhaal** and **Taran Killam** in the *Encores! Off-Center* concert production of **Howard Ashman** and **Alan Menken’s *Little Shop of Horrors***, running for three performances, July 1-2, 2015 at New York City Center. (**NOTE: Eddie Cooper** replaces his father Chuck Cooper, who will be starring in the upcoming Broadway musical *Amazing Grace*.) The production will be directed by **Dick Scanlan** with choreography by **Patricia Wilcox**. **Jeanine Tesori** is the Artistic Director of *Encores! Off-Center* and **Chris Fenwick** is Music Director. The show will mark the musical theater debuts of both Gyllenhaal and Killam.

***Little Shop of Horrors*** is a sci-fi musical about Seymour Krelborn (**Jake Gyllenhaal**), a hapless florist shop worker who pursues a doomed romance with his ditzzy, lovable co-worker Audrey (**Ellen Greene**) by acquiring an R&B-singing plant (**Eddie Cooper**) that feeds on human blood. The production also stars **Taran Killam** as Audrey’s sadistic dentist boyfriend Orin Scrivello and **Joe Grifasi** as Mushnik, the owner of the florist shop. An R&B girl group, The Urchins, provides commentary on the action and will feature **Tracy Nicole Chapman, Marva Hicks** and **Ramona Keller**.

***Little Shop*** is based on Roger Corman’s 1960 black comedy film by the same name. With book and lyrics by **Howard Ashman** and music by **Alan Menken**, the show premiered Off-Off-Broadway in 1982 before moving Off-Broadway to the Orpheum Theatre, where it played 2,209 performances, winning the Drama Desk, Outer Critics Circle and Drama Critics’ Circle Awards for Best Musical. It was revived on Broadway in 2003, playing 372 performances at the Virginia Theatre.

**New York City Center’s** acclaimed ***Encores! Off-Center*** series returns for a third season of landmark Off-Broadway musicals, opening on June 24, 2015 with **William Finn** and **James Lapine’s *A New Brain*** starring **Jonathan Groff**, directed by **James Lapine**. **Andrew Lippa’s *The Wild Party***, starring **Sutton Foster** and directed by **Leigh Silverman**, wraps up the season, opening on July 15.

## THE CAST

**Tracy Nicole Chapman** (Chiffon) was in the original Broadway casts of *The Lion King*, the 2002 revival of *Into the Woods*, the 2000 revival of *The Music Man*, *The Who's Tommy*, *The Life and Caroline, or Change*. She also appeared on Broadway in *How to Succeed...* Her first national tours include *Jelly's Last Jam* and *Once on This Island*, and she has toured with Jessica Simpson, Vanessa Williams and Heather Headley. Regional credits include *Running Man*. Her film and television credits include *Across the Universe* and "The Wrong Coast."

**Eddie Cooper** (Audrey II)'s television credits include ABC's "Forever," the recurring role of Fat Au on Cinemax's "Banshee" and the soon to be released HBO series "Crime." Raised in Hell's Kitchen, Eddie is a proud graduate of LaGuardia High School for the Performing Arts and holds a BFA from Ithaca College.

**Ellen Greene** (Audrey) is perhaps best known for creating the lovable Audrey in the Off-Broadway, Los Angeles and London productions of *Little Shop of Horrors*; she reprised the role in the 1986 film made at Pinewood Studios in the UK. Ellen's Broadway credits include *Rachael Lily Rosenbloom and Don't You Ever Forget It, Threepenny Opera* (Tony Award nomination), *The Little Prince and the Aviator*, and *Three Men on a Horse*. Some of her Off-Broadway credits include *In the Boom Boom Room*, *The Sorrows of Stephen*, *The Nature and Purpose of the Universe* and *Teeth and Smiles*. Her many films include *Léon: The Professional*, *Talk Radio*, *One Fine Day*, *The Cooler* and *Next Stop, Greenwich Village*. Her TV credits include "Glory! Glory" for HBO, (Cable Ace Award nomination), "Dinner at Eight," "Pushing Daisies" and "Heroes." In 2009, she played Miss Adelaide in the all-star Hollywood Bowl staging of *Guys and Dolls*. Ellen's debut solo album *In His Eyes* was named the vocal recording of the year by *Playbill*, and this Thanksgiving she released a new Christmas album, *Songs for a Winter's Night*, to rave reviews.

**Joe Grifasi** (Mushnik)'s Broadway credits include *The Mystery of Edwin Drood*, *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*, *Dinner at Eight*, *The 1940's Radio Hour*, *Happy End* and *The Play's the Thing*. His Off-Broadway credits include *The Boys Next Door* (Drama Desk Nomination) and *Golden Boy* directed by Joanne Woodward. His fifty-plus film appearances include *Presumed Innocent*, *The Deer Hunter*, *Big Business*, *The Naked Gun*, *Natural Born Killers*, *F/X*, *Benny & Joon*, *The Pope of Greenwich Village*, *Brewster's Millions*, *Batman Forever*, *The Flamingo Kid*, *Ironweed* and *Splash*. His television work includes "The Bronx is Burning" (as Yogi Berra), "Law & Order," "ER," "LA Law," "Chicago Hope," and "Hill Street Blues," among many others.

**Jake Gyllenhaal** (Seymour) made his Broadway debut this season in *Constellations*. He was seen Off-Broadway in Nick Payne's *If There Is I Haven't Found It Yet* (Lucille Lortel and Drama League nomination) and in London in Kenneth Lonergan's *This Is Our Youth* (Evening Standard Theatre Award). His film credits include Ang Lee's *Brokeback Mountain* (Academy Award nomination, BAFTA award, National Board of Review Award), Dan Gilroy's *Nightcrawler* (Golden Globe nomination, SAG nomination, BAFTA nomination, Independent Spirit Award nomination), Denis Villeneuve's *Prisoners* (National Board of Review Ensemble Award), David Fincher's *Zodiac*, Sam Mendes' *Jarhead*, Richard Kelly's *Donnie Darko* (Independent Spirit Award nomination), Denis Villeneuve's *Enemy*, David Ayer's *End of Watch*, Duncan Jones' *Source Code*, Edward Zwick's *Love & Other Drugs* (Golden Globe nomination), Jim Sheridan's *Brothers*, Miguel Arteta's *The Good Girl* and Roland Emmerich's *The Day After Tomorrow*. His upcoming films include Antoine Fuqua's *Southpaw*, Baltasar Kormákur's *Everest*, and Jean-Marc Vallée's *Demolition*.

**Marva Hicks** (Crystal)'s Broadway credits include *Motown the Musical*; *Caroline, or Change*; *The Lion King*; and *Lena Horne: The Lady and Her Music*. She has appeared Off-Broadway in *Thunder Knocking on the Door* and *The First Breeze of Summer*. Regional work includes *Thunder Knocking on the Door* (Helen Hayes Award), *Cuttin*

*Up, The Women of Brewster Place* (Suzi Award), *Crowns* and *Sophisticated Ladies*. She played Bess in the Zach Theatre's Jazz/Blues production of *Porgy and Bess* (B. Iden Payne Award). Her films include *Labor Day*, *Virtuosity* and *Preaching to the Choir*. She has toured with Whitney Houston, Stevie Wonder and Michael Jackson, and has recorded on Polygram Records.

**Ramona Keller** (Ronnette) made her Broadway debut in *Smokey Joe's Café* and later toured with the show in Germany. On Broadway, she originated roles of in *Caroline, or Change* (also in London) and *Brooklyn*. Some of her regional credits include the female lead in *Handel's Messiah Rocks!*, two productions of *Dreamgirls*, *Lonestar Love*, *Beehive*, *The Buddy Holly Story* and the musical revue *In Time* with Hugh Jackman in Las Vegas. Ramona has also performed with New York Pops, Sioux City Orchestra, Bay Atlantic Symphony and Grand Rapids Orchestra.

**Taran Killam** (Orin Scrivello) is currently in his fifth season on "Saturday Night Live." His many celebrity impressions include Brad Pitt, Ashton Kutcher, Eminem, Paul Ryan, Piers Morgan and Rush Limbaugh. Taran established his comedy career in Los Angeles as a main company member of the acclaimed comedy troupe The Groundlings and co-starred in the play *Three Companeros* at the Upright Citizens Brigade Theatre. He has appeared on episodes of "How I Met Your Mother," "Community" and "Scrubs," and voices the character of Frantic in the Hulu original animated series "The Awesomes," created by Seth Meyers. His feature-film work includes *The Heat*, *Grown Ups 2* and *12 Years a Slave*. He can also be seen opposite Brooklyn Decker in the upcoming film *Casual Encounters*. In 2013, Taran released "The Illegitimates," a comic book miniseries focusing on a team of illegitimate children tasked with replacing their father, a James Bond-esque superspy.

#### **THE CREATIVE TEAM**

**Howard Ashman** and **Alan Menken** (Music, Lyrics, and Book) first teamed up in 1978. Their first collaboration, *God Bless You Mr. Rosewater*, opened Off-Broadway in 1978 and was followed by the hugely successful *Little Shop of Horrors* in 1982. Ashman and Menken wrote the music and lyrics for the Disney films *The Little Mermaid* and *Beauty and the Beast*. Howard Ashman became ill during the creation of the Disney film of *Aladdin*, and died in 1991, before the film was released. Three of his songs are in the film and the current Broadway show. Ashman and Menken's many hit songs include "Under the Sea," "Beauty and the Beast," "Be Our Guest," "Arabian Nights" and "Little Shop of Horrors."

**Dick Scanlan** (Director) co-authored *Everyday Rapture* with and for Sherie Rene Scott. He received 2010 Tony and Drama Desk awards for his work on *Rapture*, which was produced Off-Broadway at Second Stage and by the Roundabout Theatre Company on Broadway. He wrote the book and lyrics for 2002's Tony Award-winning Best Musical *Thoroughly Modern Millie*, with music by Jeanine Tesori. His wholly rewritten version of *The Unsinkable Molly Brown* received rave reviews for its world premiere at the Denver Center Theatre Company in September 2014, directed by Kathleen Marshall. Last year, Mr. Scanlan served as Script Consultant to the legendary Berry Gordy in connection with *Motown The Musical*. Mr. Scanlan's novel, *Does Freddy Dance*, was published in 1995 by Alyson Publications. He has published numerous articles and essays in *The New York Times*, *The New Yorker*, *Vanity Fair*, and many other publications.

**Patricia Wilcox** (Choreographer) has choreographed the Broadway productions of *Motown the Musical* (Astaire Award for Best Choreography) and *A Night with Janis Joplin*. Her Off-Broadway and national tour work includes *Children's Letters to God*, *Bowfire* (also PBS television special), *Blues in the Night* (NAACP Image Award nomination) and *Seussical*. Selected regional work includes *A Swell Party* (The Kennedy Center), *Guys and Dolls* (Paper Mill Playhouse) and *A Marvelous Party*, which Ms. Wilcox co-conceived and choreographed, and which won the LA Drama Critics Circle, San Francisco Bay Area Theatre Critics, Elliott Norton and JEFF Awards. Patricia has created numbers for several ice skating gold medalists and for ice dancing teams in the last three Winter Olympics.

**Chris Fenwick** (*Encores!* Off-Center Music Director) is currently the music director of Jeanine Tesori's and Lisa Kron's *Fun Home* on Broadway. He music directed the original productions of Michael John LaChiusa's *Giant*, *Los Otros*, *Queen of the Mist* and *See What I Wanna See*. Broadway credits include *Rocky*, *Grease*,

*Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *The Pajama Game*, *Wonderful Town* and *Elaine Stritch at Liberty*. Other credits include the Off-Broadway productions of *Hello Again*, *Here Lies Jenny*, *Road Show*, *Happiness* and *Mother Courage*, and concerts with Patti LuPone at Carnegie Hall, Ravinia Festival, and many more. Chris was music director of the *Encores! Off-Center* productions of *The Cradle Will Rock*, *I'm Getting My Act Together, tick, tick...BOOM!*, *Faust* and *Pump Boys and Dinettes*.

New York City Center's **Encores! Off-Center** series has been called "a summer theater highlight" by Charles Isherwood of *The New York Times* and "my favorite new arts institution" by Linda Winer of *Newsday*. The series presents Off-Broadway musicals that pushed creative boundaries when they were first produced. Filtered through the lens of today's artists, these shows are presented not as historical documents but as living, vital works that continue to resonate with audiences.

New York City Center gratefully acknowledges the *Encores! Off-Center* Founding Sponsors, Stacey and Eric Mindich and Stacy Bash-Polley; Leadership Sponsor, Nathalie and Pablo Salame; Series Sponsors, American Express, Luigi Caiola and Sean McGill, and Andrew Martin-Weber; with additional support provided by The Frederick Loewe Foundation, Paula and Ira Resnick, Alec Stais and Elissa Burke, and the Stephanie and Fred Shuman Fund for *Encores!* Support for *Little Shop of Horrors* is provided by Patricia Lovejoy.

**New York City Center** (Arlene Shuler, President & CEO) has played a defining role in the cultural life of the city since 1943. It was Manhattan's first performing arts center, dedicated by Mayor Fiorello La Guardia with a mission to make the best in music, theater, and dance accessible to all audiences. Today, City Center is home to many distinguished companies, including Alvin Ailey American Dance Theater, City Center's Principal Dance Company, as well as Manhattan Theatre Club; a roster of renowned national and international visiting artists; and its own critically acclaimed and popular programs. The Tony-honored *Encores!* musical theater series has been hailed as "one of the very best reasons to be alive in New York." In summer 2013, City Center launched *Encores! Off-Center*, a series that features landmark Off-Broadway musicals filtered through the lens of today's most innovative artists. Dance has been integral to the theater's mission from the start — and dance programs, including the annual *Fall for Dance* Festival, remain central to City Center's identity. Vital partnerships with arts organizations including Jazz at Lincoln Center and London's Sadler's Wells Theatre enhance City Center's programmatic offerings. City Center is dedicated to providing educational opportunities to New York City students and teachers through programs such as *Encores! In Schools* and the Young People's Dance Series. Special workshops cater to families, seniors, and other groups, while events such as the *Fall for Dance* DanceTalk series offer learning opportunities to the general public. In October 2011, City Center completed an extensive renovation project to revitalize and modernize its historic theater.

*Little Shop of Horrors* will play three performances: July 1 at 7:30 pm and July 2 at 2 pm and 7:30 pm. at New York City Center (West 55th Street between 6th and 7th Avenues). [www.NYCityCenter.org](http://www.NYCityCenter.org)