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Informative Piece: Movie Review/How To

How to: Attend an Interactive Movie Experience

Rice. Hot dog. Toilet paper. Toast. Deck of cards. Grocery List? No. Participation kit for the midnight showing of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” at the Frank Banco Alehouse Cinema at SteelStacks in Bethlehem.

To stay up past midnight when one is over 40 takes stamina, grace, and a nap. Additionally, there needs to be a super-doooper great occasion for subjecting oneself to this anomaly. This Halloween season brings just the right venue: “The Rocky Horror Picture Show.”

“I would like, if I may, to take you on a strange journey.” (Criminologist: Charles Gray)

Join me as I set the stage for equipment, attendance, and after-glow of “The Rocky Horror Picture Show” (“TRHPS”).

Pre-Viewing Groundwork

“The Rocky Horror Picture Show” is not your traditional horror flick. In fact, it is a mix of old-time science-fiction and horror. It’s not just a movie; it’s an experience.

Preparing oneself to see “TRHPS” is just as important as making a list for the supermarket. You wouldn’t dream of going in cold to purchase your weekly groceries; thus, you don’t just walk into “TRHPS” production ill-equipped.

“The Rocky Horror Picture Show” is an interactive show and audience participation is not suggested; it is mandated.

First, you need to decide if you are going to “dress up” as a character in the movie. Many “virgin” attendees do not dress up because they need to experience the evening at least once in order to figure out who they would even want to mimic. Thus, my suggestion is to wear comfortable, casual clothing; however, nothing with a hood.

Additionally, you will need a medium bag to carry in your props. Some cinemas like Frank Banco do not allow the squirt guns with water; however, that is not a deal breaker.

You will need to pack the following items in your bag:

- A bag of rice to throw at the beginning of the film during the wedding scene
- A newspaper to shield from the rain
- A squirt gun with water (if permitted) to reproduce the rain storm in the theatre
- A flashlight to use during “There’s a Light” verse of “Over at the Frankenstein Place” song

- A pair of rubber gloves to snap when Dr. Frank-N-Furter puts on his gloves and snaps them three times
- Noisemakers for the applause at the end of the Creation Speech
- Confetti to join at the end of “Charles Altas Song” as Frank and Rocky head toward the bedroom
- A roll of “Scotts” brand toilet paper to throw when Brad says, “Great scott!”
- A slice of (dry) toast to throw when Frank offers the dinner toast
- A party hat to wear when Dr. Frank-N-Furter puts on his hat to wish Rocky a happy birthday
- A bell to ring when Frank sings “Did you hear a bell ring?” during the song “Planet Schmanet Janet”
- A set of playing cards to throw during the song “I’m Going Home” when Frank sings, “cards for sorrow/cards for pain”

Some people will also bring hot dogs and prunes to throw during the movie at the appropriate times; however, these are not necessary, as it does get a bit messy.

Even in Germany, audience participation is encouraged. The film has been screening once a week since June 24, 1977 at the Museum Lichtspiele Cinema in Muenchen, Germany. They offer guests “TRHPS Kits,” so they can partake in the celebration. The kit includes:

A biscuit for the toast

Rice for the wedding

A whistle for the celebration

A candle for “There’s a Light” song

A sheet of paper with the instructions for “Time Warp” (IMDb)

Thus, gathering your gear in order to participate in this movie extravaganza is imperative.

Knowing the Plot (and the puns)

As a newbie of “TRHPS,” you need to realize that non-virgin viewers will be yelling out inappropriate wisecracks and jokes throughout the show. You will not know when to do this, so just sit back and enjoy the naughtiness.

“The Rocky Horror Picture Show” is a sexually kinky, satirical musical motion picture based on the 1973 British stage musical “The Rocky Horror Show.” This film features Tim Curry, known for his Cheshire cat grin, as the transvestite scientist Dr. Frank-N-Furter. “Frank” is an alien from the galaxy Transylvania. Dressed in fishnet stockings, a black, lace bustier, and platform heels, he is a sight to behold.

“There’s a Light”

Frank welcomes uninvited guests, Janet Weiss (Susan Sarandon) and Brad Majors (Barry Bostwick) to his annual convention of bizarre extraterrestrials from the planet Transsexual. The newly engaged, prudish couple arrives at the castle looking for a phone because Brad’s car

broke down.

"If only we were amongst friends...or sane persons!" (Janet)

The conglomerate of Frank's guests appropriately welcome the couple to the festivities with a rousing song and dance to "Time Warp."

"But it's the pelvic thrust
That really drives you insane
Let's do the time warp again!" ("Time Warp")

During the convention, Frank unveils his recent experiment, Rocky Horror (Peter Hinwood). Hinwood, a professional model when he was chosen to perform in "TRHPS," is Rocky, a man-made Adonis, who Frank created to provide him with absolute pleasure. However, Rocky, clad in only gold underwear and shoes, rebuffs Frank's advances. Thus, Frank seduces both Janet and Brad separately throughout the film. But ultimately, Janet ends up being the object of Rocky's attention, and they "do the nasty."

"Touch-a, Touch-a, Touch Me"

During the plot, viewers find out that Frank had a previous creation Eddie (Meatloaf). Frank kills Eddie because he was not good enough. Following, a rival scientist Dr. Everett V. Scott (Jonathan Adams) shows up at the castle looking for Eddie. It is revealed during the dinner celebration for Rocky that Frank killed Eddie; therefore, Frank corrals Brad, Janet, Dr. Scott, Rocky, and Columbia (Nell Campbell) by freezing them into mock naked Greek god statues.

"I'm Going Home"

Finally, Frank decides that he is going home to the planet Transsexual in the galaxy of Transylvania. However, his handyman Riff Raff (Richard O'Brien) and his domestic Magenta (Patricia Quinn) have other plans which include killing Frank and Columbia. In the meantime, Dr. Scott, Brad, and Janet make their great escape in torn and tattered clothing as the castle blasts off for outer-space.

Post Film Delight

Everyone has a different experience at "The Rocky Horror Picture Show." If you have an open mind, and a little warning, it can be a truly exciting evening, one never to forget.

"Wow," said Jennifer Maholick, "virgin" movie-goer of the evening, as she exited the theatre Saturday evening. "I didn't like having things thrown at me," said Maholick. However, Maholick stated that she would definitely go again, but she would not wear a hoodie because, "I seriously came home with a bag of rice in my hood."

"I would definitely go again," Jennifer Wescoe, avid theatre junkie, said in response to her Rocky experience. "I went to 'Rocky' the summer of 2000 at a small movie theatre in Encinitas, Calif. I would definitely see it again....[and] dress up as Magenta and participate in the interactive part," said Wescoe.

"I attended ["The Rocky Horror Picture Show"] about five times between 1980 and 1984," said George Ziegler, movie and theatre buff, about his past experiences at the movie. "[While I] enjoy the audience participation very much, [it] wears thin after a while. I never dressed up, but I would jump up and do 'Time Warp' in the aisle," said Ziegler as he laughs. "I would go again to take my teenage sons," said Ziegler.

Personally, it has been 20 years or more since my "virgin" trip to the show. Every time I think about the TRHPS, my mind goes directly to the signature song "Time Warp." I went with my boyfriend (now husband) to my first show at the Whitehall Cinema. There were many people dressed up, and I had no idea at all what it was about; this was pre-Internet. The characters stood below the screen and acted out the entire movie as it was playing. People in the audience participated as well by yelling out puns, singing, and throwing appropriate props. My experience 20 years later was similar; however, not as many people dressed up. I heard some movie-goers say, "If I knew people were going to dress up, I would have too." I, too, would like to dress up when I next attend "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."

Regardless of whether or not I dress as a character, I will be sure to have my props bag packed to the max. I hope this becomes an annual showing at the Frank Banco Alehouse Cinema.