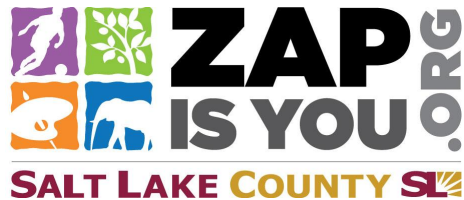


# ***The Rocky Horror Show***

Music, Lyrics, and Book by Richard O'Brien  
Directed and Choreographed  
by Karen Azenberg

**Oct 20 - 31, 2023**

**SPOTLIGHT STUDY GUIDE**  
For Teachers and Students



Pioneer Theatre Company's Student Matinee Program is made possible through the support of Salt Lake County's Zoo, Arts, and Parks Program, The Simmons Family Foundation, and The Meldrum Foundation Endowment Fund.



# What in the World is *The Rocky Horror Show*?!

What in the world is *The Rocky Horror Show*? Well, first of all it isn't of this world—meaning the main character, Rocky, is an alien from outer space: visiting the planet from another galaxy called Transylvania.

Drawing inspiration from B-movies and science fiction, *The Rocky Horror Show* is now an internationally recognized musical, both as a stage show and film.

With music and visuals inspired by glam rock, it tells the story of a newly engaged couple getting caught in a storm and coming to the home of scientist, Dr. Frank-N-Furter, who unveils his new creation, Rocky, a monster in the form of a tanned, blonde muscular man.

*The Rocky Horror Show* first premiered in 1973 in a small space at the Royal Court Theatre and was influenced by, and also an influence on, counter-cultural movements that followed in the 1970s and 1980s. It was one of the first musicals to openly depict liberated LGBTQ+ characters.

In 1975, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*—a movie version of the musical—was released. It was filmed in the United Kingdom.

Though the film was initially reviewed negatively, it found a loving audience who regularly attended screenings and productions, often dressing as characters. This interactivity, where fans can have an active role in celebrating *Rocky Horror* helps to explain its long-running appeal over 50 years.





## SYNOPSIS:

Brad and Janet, squeaky clean college sweethearts, get stuck with a flat tire during a storm on their way to meet their old friend and science teacher, Dr. Scott. The couple discovers the eerie mansion of Dr. Frank-N-Furter. As their innocence is lost, Brad and Janet meet a houseful of wild characters, including a rocking biker and a creepy butler. Through elaborate dances and rock songs, Frank-N-Furter unveils his latest creation: a muscular man named "Rocky."

## CHARACTERS...



Illustration: Marylou Faure

**BRAD:** Overly optimistic all-American college guy in love with his girlfriend Janet Weiss.

**JANET:** Good, innocent girl who is madly in love with Brad.

**RIFF RAFF:** Frank's shady personal butler and brother to Magenta; he always seems to be up to something.

**COLUMBIA:** One of Frank's ex-girlfriends who is also his most loyal servant and groupie.

**EDDIE:** A former delivery boy who was Columbia's ex-boyfriend.

**DR. SCOTT:** Brad's former science teacher and close friend who ends up at the castle while looking for his nephew, Eddie.

**FRANK 'N' FURTER:** Master of the castle and a bit of a mad scientist from the galaxy, Transylvania.

**ROCKY:** Frank's creation and idea of the "perfect man."

**MAGENTA:** A domestic worker from the the galaxy Transylvania who keeps Frank's castle clean and prepare all meals.

<https://rockyhorror.co.uk/about>



Illustrations: Jane "Gumball" Walker

# The Creation of the Show

During one winter of the early 1970s, Richard O'Brien began writing the script for *The Rocky Horror Show*, originally called *They Came From Denton High*, to keep himself busy between acting gigs. At one of O'Brien's auditions, he met with theater director Jim Sharman, and eventually showed Sharman the 10-page script he had been working on and played a few songs from the musical.

The concept of the show included things that O'Brien and Sharman both loved from their childhood like B-movies, science-fiction, and rock 'n' roll, as well as O'Brien's struggles with his identity. Sharman loved the concept and reserved a space upstairs in the Royal Court Theatre for O'Brien to bring the show to life. The first production was in 1973. (Happy 50th Birthday *The Rocky Horror Show*!)



Richard Hartley and Richard O'Brien writing the Rocky Horror Show



Richard O'Brien (left) as Riff Raff, Jonathan Adams as the Narrator and Patricia Quinn as Magenta, in the original production at the Royal Court

The original script for the show was only 40 minutes long, but no one seemed to mind since the cast and crew were focused on having fun rather than turning *The Rocky Horror Show* into a big hit.

*The Rocky Horror Show* premiered in a small 60-seat venue but quickly moved to the 230-seat Chelsea Classic Cinema on King's Road before finding a quasi-permanent home at London's 500-seat King's Road Theatre.

## What is a B-Movie?

A film originally made, especially in Hollywood in the 1940s and 50s, as a supporting film to be shown with a major feature film - in a cinematic evening called a "Double Bill." B-movies were usually produced quickly and cheaply and are often considered to have little artistic value. However, now they are considered their own style of film

# *The Rocky Horror PICTURE Show* - a Movie

The musical comedy horror caught the attention of Ode Records owner Lou Adler who decided to purchase the U.S. theatrical rights to the show after watching it. Lou Adler and Michael White loved the musical so much that they believed it could be adapted for the screen.



20th Century Fox didn't have much faith in the project, so they gave *Rocky Horror* a small budget of \$1.6 million and a very short period to film the movie. Most of the original cast from the show in London starred in the film, but the studio demanded that two American actors fill the leading roles of Brad and Janet.

<https://nofilmschool.com/rocky-horror-picture-show-best-cult-classic>

## The Success of Being a Failure

Movie adaptations are either love and adored or shunned by the fanbase. When movies are shunned it's usually because of meddling studios, or because the film didn't respect the creator's original intent. *Rocky Horror* stayed true to the creator's vision, and the studio didn't care about the film at all, so what happened?

In September 1975, *Rocky Horror* premiered at Westwood Theatre in L.A., and the studio realized that many of the people coming to these sold-out shows were audience members who were returning. But other test screenings were not doing as well. With ugly reviews from critics pouring in, the film's national release was canceled.

As a way to save the film, a young advertising executive for the studio managed to talk to Bill Quigley who happened to work for the company that owned the Waverley Theater. The Waverley was and is still a well-known arthouse theater that specializes in midnight showings, and the young executive thought that *Rocky Horror* could do well in that setting. Little did anyone know, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* became the midnight movie to watch.



# *The Rocky Horror PICTURE Show - a Movie (cont.)*

## **The Fans Kept the Fire Burning**

Although the midnight screenings saved *Rocky Horror*, the fans and their traditions are what kept the film alive after all of these years.

*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* screenings are, in a sense, a festival. Fans that attend the screening and sit in the same seats every time, making friends with the other loyal fans who do the same. This led to the creation of a community within the theater that would make inside jokes that only true fans would understand.

It started on Labor Day in 1976 when Louis Fariz yelled at the screen, “Buy an umbrella!...,” to Janet (Susan Sarandon) as she held a newspaper over her head to block the rain. This callout forever changed how fans interacted with the film. Fariz coined this playful heckling as counterpoint dialogue or commentary.

Audiences would wait for the perfect moment to yell quick quips and funny remarks, hoping to get a laugh out of the audience. This evolved as fans brought props for certain scenes and threw items like rice during the wedding scene. The next natural progression was dressing up as the characters, and some fans would walk up the screen, dressed as the character being projected above them, and would lip-sync like they were the actors. This act created famous people in the fandom.



The word about the Waverly Theater’s antics got out, and other people wanted to have fun too. Midnight screenings started to pop up all over the country, creating new traditions and new loyal fan bases wherever the film was shown.

### **Activity: *Rocky Horror* as Ritual**

When the "Midnight Movies" emerged, they were sometimes compared to other forms of rituals. There are certain gestures, lines, and actions which are repeatedly performed, taking on special meaning and significance to those who repeat them week after week.

Can you think of any other type of “ritual” a group of people do around other types of entertainment? Why are these practices important to that group?

# Be a *Rocky Horror Show* Participant



Rocky has the accolade of being the longest continuously running contemporary musical anywhere in the world with many fans seeing it tens or even hundreds of times. But there will always be people who've never been to a live performance before.

If this is you: the main thing to remember is to have fun and let loose. *Rocky Horror* is all about embracing the unconventional and having a great time. Immerse yourself in the experience, sing along and even dance (just make sure you follow the theatre's guidelines and treat the performers and other audience members with respect).

## Audience participation

Audience participation started with audiences attending the film screenings but is now a big component at stage productions.

## Dressing the Part

It's definitely not a must to dress up, but so many theatregoers really embrace the spirit of the show and wear costumes inspired by the characters. If you're a little shy you can go preppy and sensible like Brad and Janet or don a black jacket and trousers (and sport a hunchback) for Riff Raff. If you're a little braver go as a French maid à la Magenta or hit the sequins for Columbia.

# Be a *Rocky Horror Show* Participant (cont.)

## Props

While differing by venue/screening, *Rocky Horror* prop kits sometimes include: rubber gloves, playing cards, newspaper, balloon and toilet paper. Pioneer Theatre Company will be selling their own Prop Kits for anyone interested.

The gloves are obvious (you can match Frank's snapping of them during and after the creation speech) but the others perhaps not so much.

Here is a guide for **Pioneer Theatre Company's Prop Kits**:

1. **BLOW THE BUBBLES!** - as the new Bride and Groom leave the church.
2. **COVER YOUR HEAD WITH A NEWSPAPER AND THROW STREAMERS!** - During a terrible storm Brad and Janet's car gets a flat and they decide to walk in the rain.
3. **CRACK AND WAVE THE GLOWSTICKS!** - When you hear the Chorus sing "There's a light over the Frankenstein place..."
4. **PUT ON AND SNAP YOUR RUBBER GLOVES!** - When Frank puts on and snaps his rubber gloves.
5. **BLOW YOUR NOISEMAKER!** - During Frank's creation speech when Transylvanians express their approval with noisemakers.

Props should be tossed in the air, towards the center of the audience, not into the aisles, at the stage, or at others or actors. Look for cues from the Narrator and the Transylvanians on stage. And if you miss a cue, throw it anyway!

Make sure to check the guidelines for the particular theatre you are going to.



6. **TOSS THE TOILET PAPER UP INTO THE AUDIENCE!** - When Dr. Scott enters the lab and Brad cries out, "Great Scott!"
7. **RING THE BELL!** - During "Planet Schmanet Janet" and when Frank asks Janet, "Did you hear a bell ring?"
8. **THROW THE HOT DOG IN THE AIR!** - When Magenta sings "You're a hot dog..." (Or at any other mention of a hotdog.)
9. **TOSS THE CARDS UP IN THE AIR!** - As Frank emotes his feelings about going home, he sings "Cards for sorrow, cards for pain."



# Be a *Rocky Horror Show* Participant (cont.)

## Dancing

Time Warp is the most famous song of the show. It is the only song that has set moves so it is natural that this has the most participation. You simply follow the instructions!



## Call-outs

These are ad-libs that the audience might 'call-out' in response to specific lines or events that occur in the production. There are a vast number of traditional call-outs. Join in with the audience responses and interactions.



# *The Rocky Horror Show: A Cult Classic*

## What is a Cult Film?

A cult film is a film that originally did not do well at the box office or with mainstream audiences but later found success through a dedicated, passionate, cult-like fanbase. These fanbases, also known as cult followings, enjoy repeated viewings of the film where they quote the dialogue and have moments of audience participation.

## **Rocky Horror Returns to the Stage**

By the 1980s, it had been performed across Europe, with productions in Copenhagen, Madrid, Paris, the Netherlands, Barcelona, Oslo and Ghent. *The Rocky Horror Show* also went beyond Europe, with shows in Japan, Mexico, Brazil, Canada, Australia and more.

After its 1975 Broadway run and many National and International productions, Frank-N-Furter and his crew did the "Time Warp" on Broadway in a 25th anniversary Broadway revival in 2000 - complete with sass from the audience, cascading toilet paper, and other audience participation props. The revival was nominated for four 2001 Tony Awards®, including Best Revival of a Musical.

## **What Makes *The Rocky Horror Show* a Cult Classic?**

Today, *The Rocky Horror Show*—both the musical and film—are cult classics, still performed and screened around the world. *The Rocky Horror Show* is campy, glamorous, influenced by the 50s, 60s, and 70s, a parody and a tribute to B-movies, and a message to people who feel like they don't belong. We can't overlook the importance of *Rocky Horror* for members of the LGBTQ+ community. The film gave people the courage to be who they were on the inside. Representation on the screen allows people to see themselves in roles of empowerment and freedom that they don't feel in their everyday lives. *Rocky Horror* is that light for people who feel outside of social norms.

<https://nofilmschool.com/rocky-horror-picture-show-best-cult-classic>

## *The Rocky Horror Show Has Been...*

PERFORMED WORLDWIDE IN

**30**

**COUNTRIES**

HAS BEEN TRANSLATED INTO

**20**

**LANGUAGES**

SEEN BY

**30M**

**THEATREGOERS**

# Meet Our Equity Cast



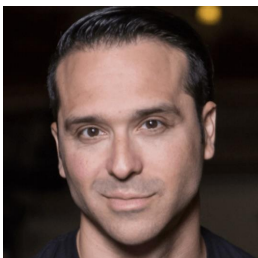
**DAVID BEACH\*** (Dr Scott) is happy to be returning to Pioneer's *Rocky Horror* for the third time. Broadway: *Something Rotten, It's Only a Play, Fish in the Dark, Mamma Mia!, Urinetown,* and *Moon Over Buffalo*. TV/Film: *New Amsterdam, VEEP, Elementary, The Dangerous Book for Boys, The Good Wife, The Post, Person of Interest, Submissions Only, Delocated, Blue Bloods, The Sopranos, Law & Order, [Untitled], Firetrap* (HBO), *I Hate Valentine's Day, Rescue Me, Dharma & Greg, Malcolm in the Middle,* and *Ed*, among others. Off-Broadway/Regional: Claudia Rankine's *Help* (The Shed), *Slow Food* (Adirondack Theater) *Flea in Her Ear, Room Service* (Westport). *Damn Yankees, Great American Mousical* (Goodspeed). *Opus* (Primary Stages), *Art* (Cape Playhouse), *Ying Tong* (Wilma), among others. Education: Dartmouth College and London Academy of Music and Dramatic Art



**GINGER BESS\*** (Magenta) is ecstatic to be reprising her role as Magenta on the PTC stage. Ginger has recently been touring the country with her vintage jazz band. Ginger received national recognition as the mezzo-soprano soloist in Bernstein's *Mass* with the Utah Symphony. She was featured in record breaking runs of *Les Miserables* at PTC as well as in *Rent*, and *Sunset Blvd*. Favorite regional theatre roles include: Svetlana (*Chess*), Magenta (*The Rocky Horror Show*), Baker's Wife (*Into The Woods*), Clara (*Passion*) Roxie Hart (*Chicago*), Mary Magdalene (*Jesus Christ Superstar*), Mrs. Walker (*Tommy*), Susan (*Tick, Tick...Boom!*), Betty Haynes (*White Christmas*), and Sally Bowles (*Cabaret*). Ginger is a private voice teacher at Weber State University and a proud member of Actors' Equity. Love to Daniel, Axel, and Jude. [GingerBessMusic.com](http://GingerBessMusic.com)



**MICHAEL DALKE\*** (Rocky) ...Ohhhhhh, Rocky!! Michael is excited to be in one of his bucket list shows! Favorite credits: 1st National Broadway tour of *Pretty Woman the Musical* (Happy Man cover/Ensemble); Regional: *Little Shop of Horrors* (Orin the Dentist); *The Wizard of Oz* (Scarecrow); *Chicago* (Billy Flynn). Much love to friends of Bill W. and the best friend a Poo could ask for...love you, Dana! Instagram: @DalkeKong



**JEREMIAH JAMES\*** (Frank) is a Broadway and West End performer and international recording artist. He is also an award winning lead producer, writer and director. As a performer, Mr. James has shared his talent with well over 170 professional productions. As a recording artist (TEATRO), he has a UK Gold Record, Number 1 albums in two countries as well as performances for HRH Queen Elizabeth. As lead producer, his original musical *It Happened in Key West* (a project he conceived and is co-book writer) had its world premiere on London's West End in 2018 (with a live cast album on all streaming services) and will be making its US premiere at The Fulton Theatre in Jan 2024. His latest project *The Last Match: A Pro Wrestling Rock Experience* with a concept album starring Ramin Karimloo on all streaming services (also a show conceived, co-written, as well as directed by James) is a multiple award-winning, fully-immersive pro wrestling rock show, and will be launching its world tour in spring of 2024. Jeremiah is thrilled to be making his Pioneer debut in a role he has always wanted to play. Thank you Karen and Bob for the opportunity.



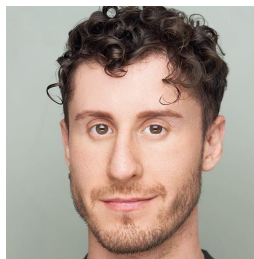
**ANDRÉ JORDAN\*** (Eddie) (He/Him/She/Her) Broadway: *Diana the Musical* (Colin/Ensemble) National Tours: *Shrek the Musical* (Donkey), *Joseph...Dreamcoat* (Zebulun u/s Joseph/Judah), *Legally Blonde* (Carlos), *Madagascar Live! UK* (Male Swing). Regional: *Shrek the Musical* (PCLO, Sacramento Music Circus, Tuacahn) *Working* (ACT of CT), *Smokey Joe's Café* (Riverside Theatre). TV/Film: *Diana the Musical* (Netflix), *Law & Order* (NBC). Web series: *The Queens Project* (YouTube). Instagram: @JerseyzAndreJordan TikTok: @AndreJordan08



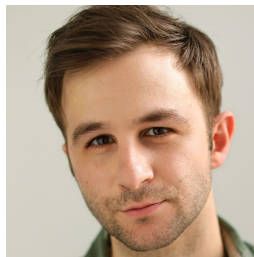
**MICKI MARTINEZ\*** (Columbia) is so excited to be back at Pioneer Theatre Company for *The Rocky Horror Show!* Other PTC credits include: *The Prom, Something Rotten!, Elf the Musical, Dirty Rotten Scoundrels, La Cage Aux Folles,* and *In the Heights* (Nina Rosario). Martinez holds a BFA from the University of Utah. She would like to thank her friends and family, especially her Aunt Connie, for their encouragement and support!  
@Micki\_Martinez



**ALANNA SAUNDERS\*** (Janet) made her PTC debut back in February of 2020 as Andrea in *Once on This Island* and could not be happier to be back near these beautiful mountains. Most recently, she had the honor of being part of the US premiere of *One Jewish Boy* at Theatre J in DC. Some other credits: *Harry Potter and the Cursed Child* (Broadway); *Scotland, PA* (Roundabout); *Into the Woods* (Fiasco's Natl. Tour); *Clue* (Paper Mill Playhouse); world premiere of *Joy* (George St. Playhouse); *Hair* (Weston Playhouse); *The Marvelous Wonderettes* (Alabama Shakespeare Festival); *White Christmas* (Berkshire Theatre Group). TV/film: CBS's *Bull, 18 1/2* (Bugeater Films); NBC's *Peter Pan Live!* (Tiger Lily); *Beau* (Asst. Choreo). Thank you to Karen for this opportunity. Love to her husband Samuel and her incredible family and tribe in NYC. More on Alanna's shenanigans: @alannasaun or [TheSaundersCollective.com/AlannaSaunders](http://TheSaundersCollective.com/AlannaSaunders)



**HERNANDO UMANA\*** (Riff Raff) Broadway: *Kinky Boots* (Angel). National Tours: *School of Rock* (Theo) and *Kinky Boots* (Angel). TV: *Project Runway* (model). Other credits include Pirelli in *Sweeney Todd* (The Muny), Jinx in *Forever Plaid* and more. Hernando is a Queer and HIV activist and has been featured on *Esquire* magazine, billboards across NYC, and more. As an entrepreneur, he co-owns CBD Dog Health, a line of CBD products for pets (CBDDogHealth.com). Huge thanks to everyone at CTG for their ongoing support. All the love to my family and chosen family. Find Hernando on all social platforms:  
@HernandoUmana



**ALEX WALTON\*** (Brad) Alex Walton is absolutely ecstatic about returning to the glorious Pioneer Theatre Company! You may remember him as dim-witted Octave from last season's *Scapin*, but he forgives you if you don't... Some recent credits include Stanley in *Brighton Beach Memoirs* (Maltz Jupiter Theatre), Henry in *Next to Normal* (Fulton Theatre), David in the feature film *Extra Innings* (AOD), and Mason on *FBI: Most Wanted* (CBS). Endless thanks to Karen, WTG, the entire PTC team, and his amazing, loving, wonderful, supportive family.  
@alexinwaltonland