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Courtesy 20th Century-Fox

After 10 years, audiences still 'toast' cult horror spoof

By Lise Olsen
Senior Reporter

This marks the 10th anniversary of the cult horror film "The Rocky Horror Picture Show."

The film, which has played at the midnight show at Lincoln's Plaza Four Theater every Friday and Saturday for the last eight years, still draws crowds of 100 people or more, theater officials at the theater said.

Seventy-five percent of the audiences have seen the movie at least one time before, said Lance Purdy, assistant theater manager.

Former UNL student Steve Kirby, 20, is one of those regulars. Kirby said he's seen "Rocky Horror" 45 times.

"It's not really the movie itself," he said. "The movie is kind of stupid."

Kirby said he hated "Rocky Horror" the first time he saw it three years ago. It's the audience participation that brings him back, he said.

"Rocky Horror" fans do things like hold newspapers over their heads and squirt waterguns during an on-screen rainshower.

During the wedding scene, audiences pelt each other with rice. Slices of

toast fly through the theater as the stars give a toast. Most stand to do a "pelvic thrust" and dance in the "Time Warp." Others dress up as one of the film's characters and act out scenes. A few run through the theater in their underwear.

Theater officials agree that "Rocky Horror's" popularity has stabilized. For every tired fan, there seems to be a fresh high school or college student to take his or her place, they said.

The movie, which to date has grossed about \$60 million, cost only \$1 million to make in 1975.

The movie tells the story of a young "I like Ike" couple, Brad (Barry Bostwick) and Janet (Susan Sarandon) who are lured into the castle of the immoral Frank N. Furter (Tim Curry), a mad alien scientist from the planet Transylvania in the galaxy Transylvania.

"Rocky Horror's" roots actually are older than 10 years. A show, based on a book written by Richard O'Brien, (who plays "Riff Raff" in the film) opened in London at the Royal Court's experimental theater as a six-week workshop project in June 1973.

The show, proof of horror stories and the sexual revolution, quickly developed

a large following and found a permanent home at the 500-seat King's Road Theatre. It still plays there nightly.

The show was named "Best Musical of 1973" in the London Evening Standard's annual poll of drama critics.

Filming of "The Rocky Horror Picture Show" began in October 1974 at Bray Studios. Part of the movie was filmed at an 19th century chateau, which once served as a wartime refuge for French General Charles DeGaulle.

The film was directed by Jim Sharman, who also directed "Hair," and "Jesus Christ Superstar." Strains of the other rock operas, some believe, can be found in "Rocky Horror."

This past weekend, Halloween weekend, is typically one of the busiest and rowdiest "Rocky" nights of the year.

Most of the time, "Rocky Horror" audiences don't cause any damage, Purdy said. However, stains on the screens, shredded seats and rips in the curtains have been found after some showings.

When occasional damage is discovered, theater officials sometimes threaten to replace "Rocky Horror."

The threats are probably idle however, because the theater has a six-month contract for the film, Purdy said.

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