

# Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

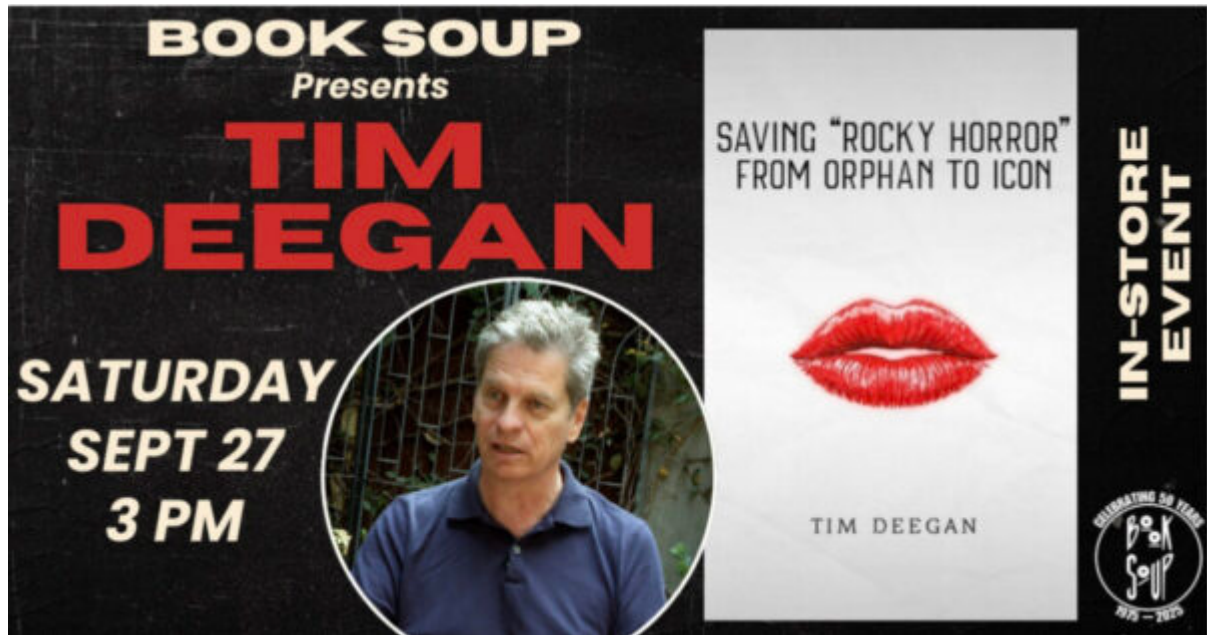
## Rocky Horror

Elisa Leonelli · Monday, October 13th, 2025

Cult movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* opened at the UA Westwood theater in Los Angeles on Friday September 26, 1975.



I became aware of this 50th anniversary because Tim Deegan, my friend from the Beverly Hills Bridge Club, wrote a book about it, *Saving "Rocky Horror" — From Orphan to Icon*. On September 27, I went to [buy it at Book Soup](#) and started reading it.



I learned the fascinating behind the scenes story of how music producer [Lou Adler](#) saw the stage musical *Rocky Horror Show* in London and booked it for his Roxy nightclub on the Sunset Strip, where it opened on March 21, 1974.

20th Century Fox, where Deegan was a marketing executive, agreed to turn *Rocky Horror* into a movie, as a negative pick-up, with a budget of \$1.3 million, and the same team that had created the musical moved back to London to shoot it. [Richard O'Brien](#) wrote the music and lyrics, co-wrote the screenplay with director [Jim Sharman](#), British actor [Tim Curry](#) played Dr. Frank-N-Furter.



Nuart (c) Elisa Leonelli 1979

Deegan explains how the movie was quickly shelved, as was the soundtrack album, but he was the one to convince new studio head [Alan Ladd Jr.](#) (Laddie) to re-release it as a midnight event, since

he had witnessed the success of *Pink Flamingos* (1972) by John Waters at the Nuart in Los Angeles. Deegan chose the *Waverly* in New York's Greenwich Village as the best venue, where *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* opened on Saturday April 3, 1976.



Laverne Cox as Dr. Frank-N-Furter © Fox

I must have seen *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* in 1975, since I had moved to Hollywood on May 20, 1973 and went to see practically every movie, but I have the 25th anniversary DVD on my shelf and watched it again in 2016, as I was writing an article (read it at [this link](#)) for the Golden Globes website about the TV movie *The Rocky Horror Picture Show: Let's Do the Time Warp Again*, directed by Kenny Ortega, after we interviewed Laverne Cox, who played the “sweet transvestite from the planet Transsexual, in the galaxy of Transylvania.” Tim Curry, who had suffered a stroke in 2012, provided the narration.





Elisa Leonelli, Laverne Cox © HFPA 2016

I watched the 1975 movie again, after reading the book by Tim Deegan, and looked up the lyrics of some of the songs.

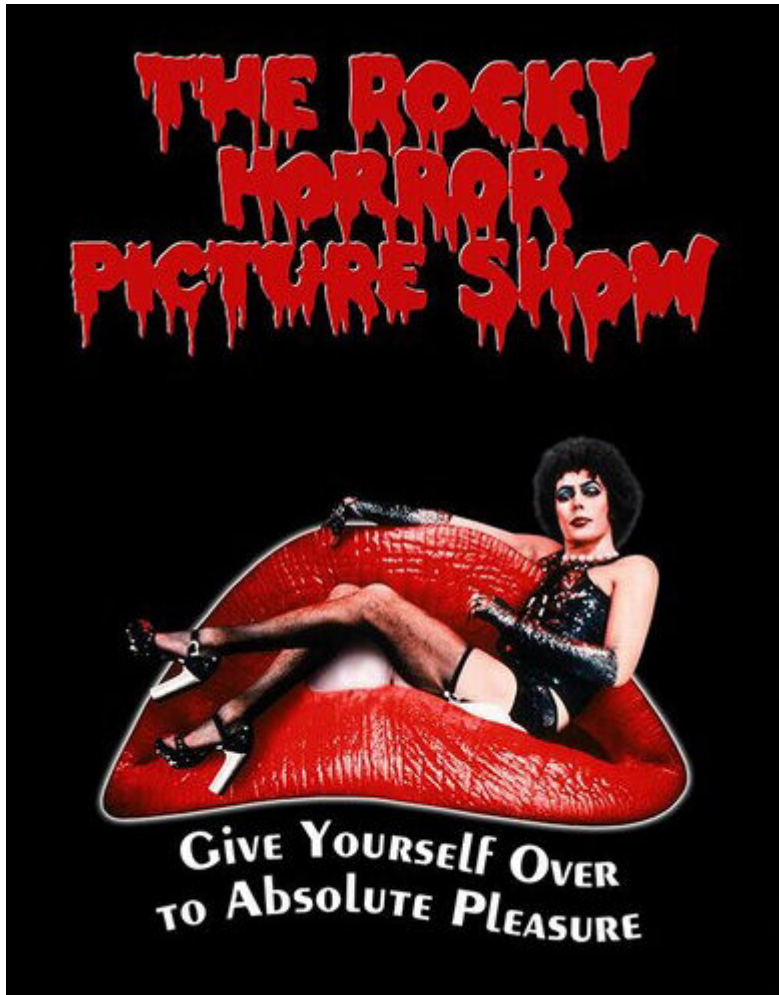
In “[Science Fiction/Double Feature](#)”:

Several movies are mentioned: *The Day the Earth Stood Still*, *Flash Gordon*, *The Invisible Man*, *King Kong*, *It Came from Outer Space*, *Forbidden Planet*, *Tarantula*, *When Worlds Collide*, etc.



The most obvious references are *Bride of Frankenstein* (1935) by James Whale with Boris Karloff as the Creature, since Magenta (Patricia Quinn) shows up at the end with the same hairstyle of Elsa Lancaster, and *The Curse of Frankenstein* (1957) with Peter Cushing and Christopher Lee, since Dr Frank (Tim Curry) brings to life Rocky Horror (Peter Hinwood) as a blond, tanned and muscular boy.

On October 6, I was invited to the premiere of *Frankenstein* by Guillermo Del Toro at the Academy Museum, and interviewed the writer-director, who stated that his version of the *Mary Shelley's 1818 novel* is all about forgiveness, acceptance, and our common humanity. Therefore I had done research on the other Frankenstein movies.



Here's some lyrics from "Don't Dream It, Be it!":

*Give yourself over to absolute pleasure  
Swim the warm waters of sins of the flesh  
Erotic nightmares beyond any measure  
And sensual daydreams to treasure forever  
Can't you just see it?  
Don't dream it, be it!*



On Friday September 26, 2025, the [Academy Museum](#) presented a 4K remaster of *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*, with Tim Curry attending in a wheelchair along with Lou Adler, Barry Bostwick (Brad), Patricia Quinn (Magenta) and Nell Campbell (Columbia).

Susan Sarandon (Janet), [interviewed](#) on March 7, 2025, said “Everyone should have the opportunity to dress up however they want and find a community that accepts them.”

As the creator of the HFPA Digital Archives from 2011 to 2023, I retrieved interviews and photos of Tim Curry.





Tim Curry © Sylvia Norris-HFPA 1978

On October 31, 1978, journalists of the Hollywood Foreign Press interviewed Curry, who was promoting his debut music album *Read My Lips* and the UK TV series *Will Shakespeare*.

We met Tim Curry again 1993 about *The Three Musketeers* where he played Cardinal Richelieu.





Tim Curry, Faye Dunaway © HFPA 1994

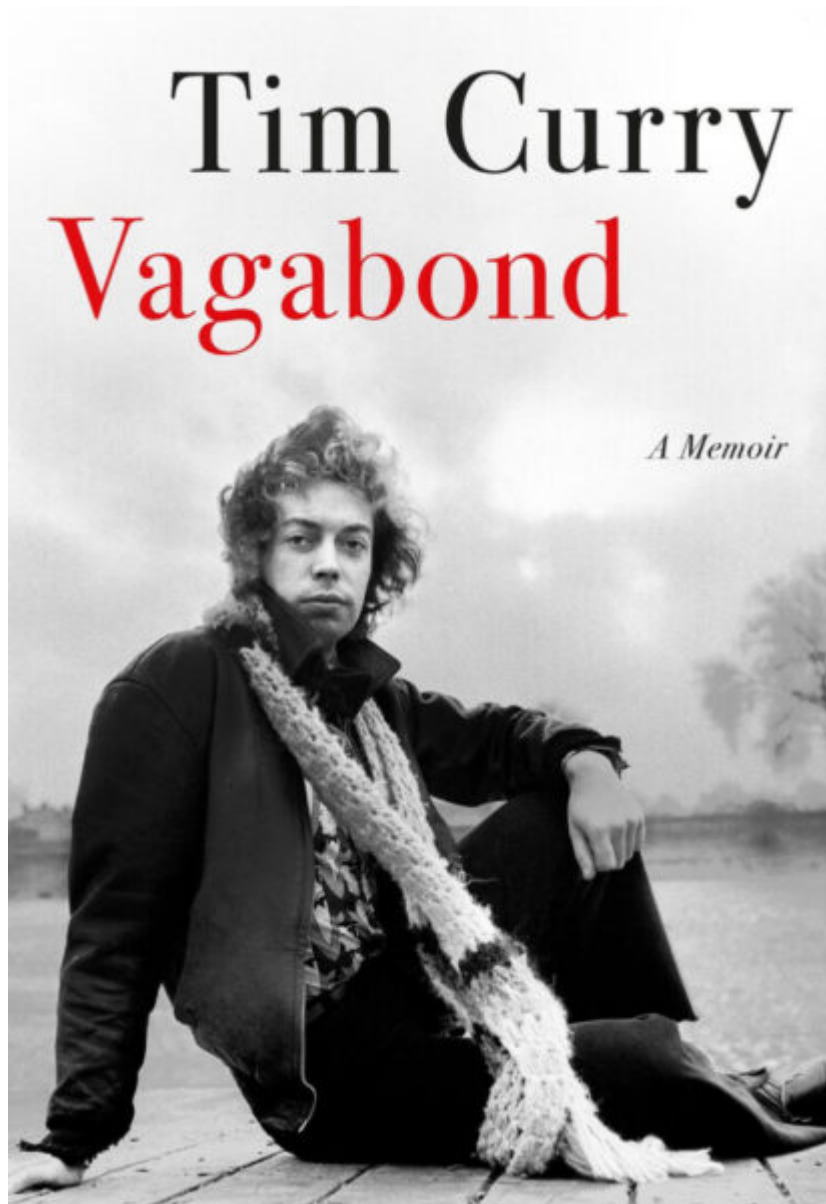
We then invited him as a presenter with Faye Dunaway at the 51st Golden Globes on Saturday January 22, 1994.

In Los Angeles, *The Rocky Horror Picture Show* has been playing at the Nuart on Saturday nights since September 14, 1986. You may book tickets at [this link](#). If you are too old to experience in person this wild party, dress up in costume as one of the characters, sing along and dance with hundreds of young people, queer and straight, you may rent the movie on streaming.



Tim Deegan is a columnist whose “Deegan on LA” is published on CityWatch LA. His [latest article](#) is “Los Angeles in the Shadow of (Mayor) Mamdani”

Tim Curry’s autobiography *Vagabond* was published October 14, 2025.



*The Rocky Horror Picture Show* will screen at the [Rome film festival](#) on October 20, 8.30pm.

Please click on underlined words for more info.

This entry was posted on Monday, October 13th, 2025 at 5:52 pm and is filed under [Theatre](#), [Film](#), [Music](#), [Dance](#)

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