

# Show Your Affection (or Test Your Love)

WITH same-sex marriage working its way into the mainstream of American life, straight people aren't the only ones figuring out just how boring wedded bliss can be. So what's a couple to do when the flames of romance sputter? Several events in New York City this Valentine's Day weekend offer unconventional, dramatic and tasty ways for couples — married or not, gay or otherwise — to kindle or rekindle a love story.

ERIK PIEPENBURG

## For Secret Note Passers

**'Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812'**

This weekend only, audience members at this "War and Peace"-inspired pop opera at the Kazino tent on West 46th Street in Manhattan can have cast members personally deliver hand-scripted notes to their tables during the performances. Before the show, ticket holders should visit the show's website, where they can write a 50-word message that will be copied onto keepsake parchment.

## For Big Spenders

**'Queen of the Night'**

Prices start at \$135 and can reach over \$500 for seats to this extravagantly designed theatrical experience, which features circus acts, one-on-one performances, dancing, drinks and a full meal, including roast suckling pig and lobster. To add dazzle to dazzle, the show is at the renovated Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe nightclub in the basement of the Paramount Hotel in Midtown.

## For the Sweet Tooth

**'Beertown' and 'The Chocolate Show'**

A sugar rush awaits at two new audience-participation shows. "Beertown," from the company Dog & Pony DC, asks theatergoers to bring desserts for an onstage potluck. Butter cookies and brownies were shared at a recent performance, at 59 E 59 Theaters. At "The Chocolate Show," a musical by Laura Goldfinger and Alan Golub at the 47th Street Theater, audience members get the chance to win chocolate prizes. Premium tickets include treats from the New York chocolatier 2beans.

## For Old-School Romantics

**'Seven Chances'**

This weekend, Nitehawk Cinema in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, features matinee showings of Buster Keaton's 1925 silent-era romantic comedy "Seven Chances," about a young financier, a \$7 million inheritance and a wedding deadline. Part of the theater's Live + Sound + Cinema series of silent and cult films, the screenings will include brunch and a live score performed by Bradford Reed tette.

## For the Sex Starved

**'Intimacy' and the Museum of Sex**

Because Valentine's treats are almost by definition not vanilla flavored: Thomas Bradshaw's sexually frank comedy "Intimacy" at the Acorn Theater in Clinton, featuring pornography, nudity and masturbation, is a voyeur couple's perfect date-night play. And it ends with the whole cast in one big bed. Then there's the Museum of Sex in Manhattan, which is offering cocktails and a six-course tasting menu dinner for couples at its recently opened Play Bar. The doggie bag includes a sex kit.

## For Bad Boys (and Girls)

**'True Romance'**

A one-hour open vodka bar precedes Friday night's screening of the darkly comic action film "True Romance" (1993), directed by Tony Scott, from a screenplay by Quentin Tarantino, at Tribeca Cinemas. The film stars Christian Slater and Patricia Arquette as lovers on the run, and will quench any aspiring gangster's thirst for sex and violence.

## For Girls and Boys

**Who Like Boys**

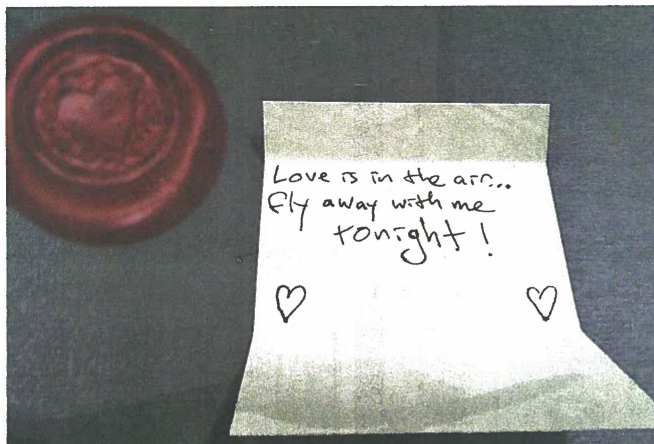
**'Sex Tips for Straight Women From a Gay Man'**

Based on the popular sex advice book, this show, at the 777 Theater in Manhattan, offers "foolproof moves and insider advice" on heterosexual sex from a tell-it-like-it-is source: gay men. There's no nudity but there is Stefan, a shirtless stage assistant. Straight girls aren't the only ones getting help; the Foreplay Bar & Lounge, open an hour before the performance, might be a good place for single gay men to meet.

## For the Horror of It

**'Your Vice is a Locked Room and Only I Have the Key' and Blood Manor**

As part of its Anti-Valentine's "salute to all the things that make love so awful," the Spectacle Theater in Williamsburg, Brooklyn, will show this dark 1972 giallo from the Italian director Sergio Martino. It features creepy dolls, death by scissors and a cat named Satan. For a more interactive experience, the haunted attraction Blood Manor is offering guests black roses, posters and T-shirts as part of its Bloody Valentine's Weekend packages.



NATASHA, PIERRE AND THE GREAT COMET OF 1812

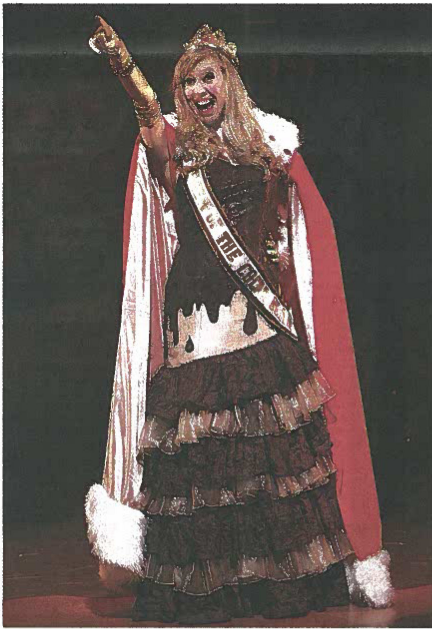
Audience members at "Natasha, Pierre and the Great Comet of 1812" can have love notes delivered to their tables.



Left, a scene from Andrzej Zulawski's 1981 film "Possession," being shown at Anthology Film Archives. Right, Condola Rashad and Orlando Bloom in the play "Romeo and Juliet." The stage production, which was recently seen on Broadway, will receive a high-definition broadcast in movie theaters.

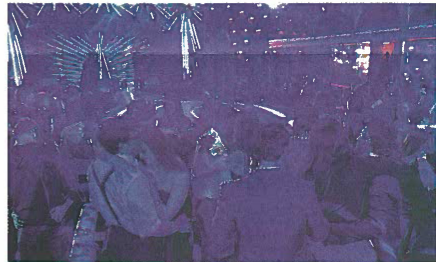


LEFT, BLEEDING LIGHT FILM GROUP; ABOVE, SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES



CAROL ROSEGG

Emily McNamara in "The Chocolate Show," a musical at the 47th Street Theater, in which audience members get the chance to win chocolate prizes.



SARA KRULWICH/THE NEW YORK TIMES

Audience and cast members of "Queen of the Night" dance at the end of the show, at Billy Rose's Diamond Horseshoe club in the Paramount Hotel.



KINO LOEBER

The Nitehawk Cinema in Brooklyn will show the 1925 silent-era romantic comedy "Seven Chances," directed by and starring Buster Keaton, center.

## For Sourpusses

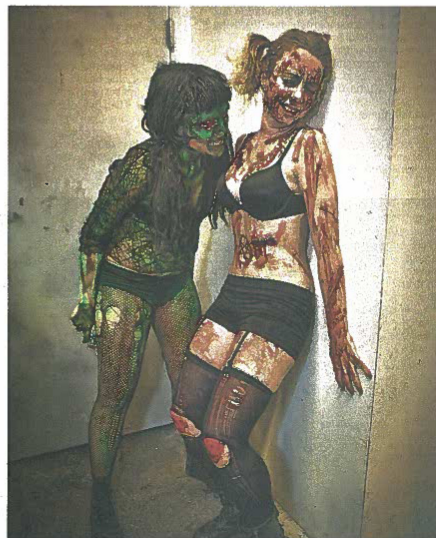
**'Valentine's Day Massacre'**

This three-film series at Anthology Film Archives in the East Village on the pitch-black side of love includes Maurice Pialat's "We Won't Grow Old Together" (1972), about a doomed love affair; Andrzej Zulawski's "Possession" (1981), about a disintegrating marriage; and Albert Brooks's "Modern Romance," about relationship regrets. "If you see all three films in a row and your relationship survives," the theater's website advertises, "you've truly found your life partner."

## For Broadway Lovers

**Song and Poetry From Stars**

Andrea McArdle, the star of the original "Annie" on Broadway, performs Friday at 8 at the supper club 54 Below in Midtown, which is featuring a Valentine's Day prix fixe menu with rack of lamb and chocolate truffles. At 11, Michael McCorry Rose and Tiffany Haas, who co-star in "Wicked," will perform a show of Broadway love songs. On the big screen, a high-definition broadcast of the recent Broadway production of "Romeo and Juliet," starring Orlando Bloom and Condola Rashad, will be shown at several theaters in New York City and across the country, Friday through Feb. 19.



HECTOR FARRILLA/SPS PRODUCTIONS

An image from the haunted attraction Blood Manor. The show is offering black roses, posters and T-shirts in a Bloody Valentine's Weekend package.