

Go Ahead, Touch Someone. You Just Might Take Her Home

By Neil Genzinger



photos by Yana Paskova

Roslyn Hart, as a sex therapist, pairs up audience members in her one-woman show, "Never Sleep Alone," at Joe's Pub.

Usually when a couple say they met in the theater, they mean they were in the cast or on the stage crew together. Patrons who venture to the show at Joe's Pub on Thursday night may find themselves constituting a different class entirely: audience members who were more or less ordered to couple up by the performer.

The show is called "Never Sleep Alone," and that performer may look familiar to Joe's Pub devotees. She is Roslyn Hart, who since 2007 has been turning up periodically on the pub's stage in a one-woman comedic soap opera called "Shells." For her new production she has shelved that character and rolled out a new one: Dr. Alex Schiller, a brassy, foul-mouthed sex therapist who is determined to make sure that those on the prowl find one another and know what to do once they connect.

Judging from the first "Never Sleep Alone," on Nov. 10, Dr. Schiller is darned good at what she does. It was a raucous evening in which people ended up on strangers' laps, chanted ribald phrases, found themselves onstage doing unseemly things.

"It was beyond my wildest expectations," Ms. Hart, who also wrote the show, said of that first performance. "I mean, I knew it was going to be a good show, but I didn't know it was going to be that good of a social event." Her director, Peter James Cook, was also a bit surprised. "It really felt like you were at the Roman circus," he said.

The bookers at Joe's Pub took notice. Initially slotted as a monthly show — Thursday night's performance will be the second — "Never Sleep Alone" has already been penciled in to go weekly in March.

The conceit is simple: Dr. Schiller is hawking a sex-advice book whose title can't be printed here, and the audience is hearing her promotional lecture. But this lecture is nothing like those dry ones your college professors delivered. There is singing. There are on-stage encounters in which strangers get to know one another really, really quickly. There is an after-party.

And above all there are abbreviations. Dr. Schiller favors the alphabet-soup approach to sex therapy, serving up a saucy collection of abbreviations that will be burned into theatergoers' brains by the show's end. Some are reinventions of familiar Internet shorthand, beginning with the show's title: "Never Sleep Alone" — N.S.A., more commonly used to mean "no strings attached," which is the kind of liaison Dr. Schiller recommends. Others the doctor created herself. To repeat them here would spoil the fun, and besides most are unprintable.

The therapy seems to be effective: Ms. Hart, who encourages audience members to report back on any dates that resulted from the show, said that as of this week she had heard of 46 "hook-ups" — define it however you like — that resulted from that Nov. 10 performance. (The club, which seats 192, was full for the first show.)

continued on the next page

"People have been leaving me voice mails, actually, almost like they're in character, but with their true stories," she said. "It's like, 'Hey Dr. Alex, it's a me, a single male....'"

One such story belongs to Valissa Yoe, a 28-year-old fashion stylist in the East Village who has now had two real-life dates with a man Dr. Schiller paired her with onstage. "She liberated me," Ms. Yoe said of the doctor's therapy.

Ms. Hart's earlier show, "Shells," which she wrote with Nick Chase, involved the love life of a character named Michelle Hoffman, a self-absorbed woman whose preoccupation with one particular date she had bordered on obsession. Fans of "Shells," which had a bit of audience participation, may be surprised at just how much more of that there is in the new show, and at the contrast between the inward-looking Shells and the brazen Dr. Schiller.

'Shells' always ended in a puddle of shame," Mr. Cook said. "Something we decided in working on this show is that this character was going to be a winner. That this woman had a product that she was very proud of." And Dr. Schiller is certainly proud, and fearless. A cage match between this woman and Fiona Wallace, Lisa Kudrow's character on "Web Therapy," wouldn't last two minutes. In a production this free form, traditional rehearsals can take the performer only so far. Ms. Hart, 30, said she ran the show a couple of times for an audience of supporters and crew members (she has a number of interns from New York University), but the live show ended up being a different animal.

"Everything that happened onstage the night of the show happened totally differently than it ever happened in rehearsal," she said.

Mr. Cook said that he had tried to anticipate a problem — a timid audience — that ended up not being a problem at all.

"The thing I kept saying in rehearsal is, 'Well, if nobody gets up, if nobody volunteers, we should do this, that or the other,'" he said. "The thing that shocked me was how readily people leapt into what for all they knew was the abyss."

Part of the success involved seating: audience members can buy a ticket for the "singles" section, up front, or the "voyeurs" section, in the back. No shy people in the prime seats, please.

"I tell people, if you're sitting up front, you may get pulled onstage," Ms. Hart said. "You may be asked to touch someone. You may be touched. So be O.K. with that."

Some of those interns, dressed as Dr. Schiller's lab assistants, help set the tone with a preshow survey of the audience that signals this is not a place for inhibitions.

"Most people can't help but giggle through their answers," said Marc Sauv , a lab assistant at the November show. "Equal parts blushing, laughing out loud and getting down and dirty."

Ms. Hart said the unpredictability of the evening was, for her, the appealing part.

"One of the reasons I stopped trying to do straight musical theater or straight stand-up and why I'm more attracted to cabaret is that it's not perfect," she said. "It is different every time. I like not knowing what's going to happen as a performer."

For Mr. Cook, the after-party, which for the first show was at Pravda, a nearby bar, held as many surprises as the performance did.

"It was a real wild, swinging after-party," he said. "I guess I didn't realize to the degree Ros realized that there are people who wanted this event to be real, and that they therefore treat it as a real event, and that it therefore becomes real."



Spectators are game at Roslyn Hart's one-woman show, "Never Sleep Alone."



Audience members at "Never Sleep Alone," at Joe's Pub.

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http://www.nytimes.com/2011/12/01/theater/never-sleep-alone-leads-to-audience-relationships.html?_r=3

10 Tricks *and* Treats for Halloween

Never Sleep Alone

Written by Neil Genzlinger

10/23/2015



In this recurring show at Joe's Pub, Roslyn Hart assumes the character of Dr. Alex Schiller, a fake relationship expert, and proceeds to play a ribald version of cupid, making it her mission to hook up people in the audience. Costumes are encouraged at Halloween night's show, which starts at 9:30, and at the after-party, where the hooking up becomes more aggressive. Terror rating: 9.9, because what's scarier than starting a new relationship, especially on Halloween?

Read full article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2015/10/23/theater/10-unconventional-halloween-diversions.html>

Starring Me!

A Surreal Dive Into Immersive Theater

Written by Sarah Lyall

01/07/2016

...and I could not have dealt with having a companion along for "Never Sleep Alone," a singles evening featuring graphic sex advice from a faux sex therapist at Joe's Pub. Her job, she declared, glaring predatorily at us from the stage, was to "get you laid tonight." We had to yell "Yes!" all at once when she told us that we were hot. We had to pair off and discuss our sexual tastes with one another. We — luckily only some of us, not me — had to get onstage and demonstrate pickup lines and, with the help of bananas, watermelon wedges and strangers' laps, oral sex techniques. Would I have wanted anyone I knew to see me doing that? No.

Read full article: <https://www.nytimes.com/2016/01/08/theater/starring-me-a-surreal-dive-into-immersive-theater.html>



50 Funniest New Yorkers

See our list of the very best comedians—and most hilarious stand-up comics, writers, improvisers and more—living in Gotham

August 11 2015



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Roslyn Hart

Roslyn Hart is not your standard cabaret talent; she's a smart character performer with a lot of well-packaged, good ideas. She'll belt her way through covers and unexpected pop mash-ups, sure, but her creations—the lovelorn lush Michelle "Shells" Hoffman and her latest, "sexual psychologist" Dr. Alex Schiller—keep audiences captive before turning them into cultish fans. It's no wonder; Hart loves audience interaction and makes sure that the heartsick and lonely of New York have a chance at public catharsis. —ML



• Irresistibly funny. But, above all, effective. With the show at Joe's Pub in New York, the stand-up comedian Dr. Alex Schiller spreads her sexy mantra: "Never Sleep Alone". Which is now a self-titled book (simonandschuster.com)

• Irresistibilmente divertente. Ma, soprattutto, efficace. Con gli show al Joe's Pub di New York, la stand-up comedian Dr. Alex Schiller diffonde il suo sexy mantra: "Never Sleep Alone". Che ora diventa un omonimo libro (simonandschuster.com)

THE POWER OF STYLE

Never Sleep Alone and Dr. Alex Schiller (aka Roslyn Hart) recently went viral in Italy because of a humorous posting Dr. Alex wrote urging single women looking for mates to go to Napoli, Italy.

The posting was titled: [Have a Vagina? Want To Use It? Go to Napoli.](#) Though most readers understood Dr. Alex's hyperbolic statements were intended to entertain and bring tourism to the city she loves, thousands took the posting seriously, and it sparked a fierce national debate about sexuality, morality and gender politics. Check out the hundreds of comments from Italian readers!

The article was translated and featured in countless Italian media outlets, and made the front page of [Il Mattino](#) and [Corriere Del Mezzogiorno](#). Il Corriere also did a video about Dr. Alex and Never Sleep Alone, which you can watch by clicking [HERE](#).

Vogue Italia featured Never Sleep Alone in their February 2015 issue, calling the book and show, "Overwhelmingly hilarious. But, above all, effective."

Due to her thousands of new Italian-speaking fans, and her intense love for Italy—where she resides half the year and hopes to one day become a permanent resident— Dr. Alex is now doing her [blog in Italian](#), as well as in English.

She intends to bring her live show to Italy within the next year. Each show will be followed by an after-party where Dr. Alex will be signing books and greeting fans. The book will be packaged along with the show ticket—If people want to attend the show, they must also buy the book.

To watch a short video of the live show, click [HERE](#).

Keep in mind, all of those people were strangers when they walked into the theatre.

A full-length video is available upon request.

NEVER SLEEP ALONE BECOME THE ONE EVERYONE WANTS

HOME • COME TO THE LIVE SHOW • ABOUT NSA • BUY THE BOOK • CONTACT DR ALEX • MAKE AN APPOINTMENT WITH DR. ALEX

NSA LIFESTYLE

Have a Vagina? Want to Use It? Go to Naples.



Photo Credit: Federica Di Lorenzo

If you are a single woman who loves men, motorcycles, and music, go to Napoli, Italy. Not only is it one of the most beautiful and magical cities on this planet, not only is it on the most stunning part of the Mediterranean, not only is it the best pizza and pasta in the world, not only is it way cheaper and sexier than Rome, Milano or Florence, not only is it a short train ride or motorcycle ride to Vesuvius, Pompei, the Amalfi Coast, Rome, and a million other things you must see before you die- the big secret about Napoli that none of the guidebooks mention is-

There are about 10 single men for every single woman.

And they are all beautiful. And they all know how to cook. And they all know how to sing. And they all know how to kiss you. **And they all want to kiss you.**

Everywhere.

Napoli gets a bad rap because of graffiti and Gomorrah, but I have been living here off and on for almost 2 years and I have NEVER once felt unsafe.



Photo Credit: Federica Di Lorenzo

Sure, the scugnizzi like to throw water on you when you're wearing a white shirt, but just kick their ass in soccer once and you'll become their best friend. If you decide to come to Napoli, write to me and I will help you create a kickass itinerary, take you around the city myself, or have one of my beautiful and magical Neapolitan friends do it. To discover the magic of Napoli, you only need to know the right people. You know me. And I know people.

Where To Stay: NSA at my best friend's B and B. This was the first place I stayed in Napoli.

‘Never Sleep Alone’: A naughty lesson in sealing the deal lands at Gypsy Sally’s

By Lavanya Ramanathan

Sexually, are you a conservative or a liberal?

If you’re solidly in the latter category — and if you’re willing to go on the record in front of a crowd of 200 with the naughty details of your, ahem, political leanings — this weekend brings a show made for you.

“Never Sleep Alone,” the popular cabaret in residence at Joe’s Pub at New York’s famed Public Theater, is making its D.C. debut Friday at Gypsy Sally’s. The show is so forward about its intentions that it first asks theatergoers to choose seats based on relationship status, and then abandon their inhibitions for an hour-long session of theatrical foreplay.

Roslyn Hart, center, plays Dr. Alex Schiller, a dominating sex therapist at the center of the New York cabaret show “Never Sleep Alone,” which comes to Washington for the first time on Friday. Choose a “singles” ticket, and you’re signing on for a firsthand lesson in the seductive arts from Dr. Alex Schiller, a flag-waving sexual evangelist who, like a one-woman Tinder, pairs off couples to teach them the fine art of making connections. Decide you’re demure, and you’re directed to the back with all the other “voyeurs,” who’d rather watch than join in. To determine how the show will play out, theatergoers are asked to arrive early for a blush-inducing “socio-sexual evaluation” and mingling; afterward, everyone is ushered to an after party where the lessons are expected to be put to use.

Behind this spoofy bit of down-market theater is performer and comedian Roslyn Hart, 34, who plays Dr. Alex. Hart launched the show in 2011 as an interactive faux seminar that would resonate with anyone who’s ever tried to meet anyone in the offline world. But Hart, who is based out of New York and Naples, Italy, quickly found an audience for Dr. Alex’s particular brand of pillow talk. A book, written in the voice of Dr. Alex, is in now the works, and Hart is D.C.-bound to test the logistics of taking her show on the road.



Roslyn Hart, center, plays Dr. Alex Schiller, a dominating sex therapist at the center of the cabaret show

Friday’s performance, Hart says, will mimic the Joe’s setup, from the lighting and cabaret seating to the pop music, which is performed live by Hart’s four-piece band from New York.

Before “Never Sleep Alone” lands at Gypsy Sally’s, we talked with the performer by phone from New York about the show, and whether zipped-up Washington will want any part of all this crass fun. Edited excerpts from the interview are below.

How did you create the show? Did you hole up for a year with “Mars and Venus” books or were you working from your own observations about sex and dating?

Hart: I was sort of a late bloomer about sex and dating. I didn’t come into my own till I was in my late 20s, and it kills me to see people wasting the best years of their lives being awkward and scared and not realizing how magnificent they are. I’ve been a performer my whole life, and I’ve been a cabaret performer for years, and I hate people going to the theater and wanting to talk to each other but just not. I started to think about

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what people want when they go out at night, and what people want is to meet someone. I intended the show to just be absurd, to be a satire of a dating seminar with an overall theme: "You could die tomorrow. How do you want to spend your last night?" It's an amalgam of everything I've been exposed to my whole life. It's part Dr. Phil, part Suze Orman of sex, part Joyce Meyer, who is a TV evangelist. I love her style and I love the way she talks to people.

Each section of the show is accompanied by a song. What kind of music are you using?

We use pop songs, and we project all the lyrics so people can sing along. I think it's important because when you go out to a bar and you see people connecting, it's usually because of music. There's a sort of mass hypnosis that occurs at a pop concert that's always been really interesting to me. You can't help but come together when you're all singing Madonna mashed up with Nirvana, and Dr. Alex doesn't give you a choice. She says, "Sing or leave." That's why it works. We're all in it together.

Let's say you buy a singles ticket. What happens to you when you walk in the door?

You give yourself over to Dr. Alex. You are asked the questions, and you mingle with everyone, whether they're in the singles section or the voyeurs section. Everyone is told that if you're sitting in the singles section, you're agreeing to be an active participant. They'll get different questions if they're in a couple; we try to make everyone feel included. If you're sitting in the singles section, you are basically agreeing that you may get pulled onstage for an onstage blind date. You may kiss a stranger. You are becoming an active part of the show. [If you're single] be cool with being uncomfortable, too. Because at any second, I could pick you, or one of my "research assistants" could pick you. You'll come onstage.

It's not a sex show. It's not a Bangkok-style gross thing. You're on a date with someone, and you may want to kiss them, and the whole audience sure as hell wants you to kiss them. So why don't you kiss them? You've got nothing to lose.

What do you know about D.C.? I don't know if this will play here.

I know nothing about D.C., and I'm absolutely apolitical. I know the venue is very enthusiastic, and I have fans in D.C., fans of my blog who've seen the show in New York. I would estimate 50 to 100 people in the audience will have seen the show before. I know nothing, and that's why I decided to do it. It's logistically sort of a nightmare, but it's an interesting experiment to see how D.C. will take to it. Because what's not to like? Someone's introducing you to a lot of other great single people, you're going to laugh,



"You give yourself over to Dr. Alex," says Roslyn Hart of her show, a spoof on a dating seminar.

you're going to drink, we're having an amazing after party. Who knows?

What boundaries, what walls do people have up when they come? I imagine you have an overview, from the stage. Can you see their hangups?

Yeah, I can see everybody. There's a part where everybody has to hold hands with each other, and people are afraid to do that. You can see people looking around, like, "Who am I going to hold hands with?" People don't even want to make eye contact with each other. So we start very easy. We say, look another human being in the eyes, and do not look away.

"Never Sleep Alone"

Friday at Gypsy Sally's, 3401 K St. NW. 202-333-7700. www.gypsysallys.com. Pre-show begins at 8:30 p.m. \$15-\$25. 21 and older.

<http://www.washingtonpost.com/blogs/going-out-guide/wp/2014/06/04/never-sleep-alone-a-naughty-lesson-in-sealing-the-deal-lands-at-gypsy-sallys/>

Never Sleep Alone

Roslyn Hart's new cabaret crafts laughs to get you laid.

By Matthew Love



Roslyn Hart in Never Sleep Alone Photograph: Pavel Antonov

The woman next to me is laughing a little too loudly. We're talking about the minutiae of our respective entrances: the champagne we were given, the mysterious seating arrangements, the hot young things in lab coats who handed us masks of different colors after prodding us with suggestive questions. When my fellow showgoer puts her hand on my arm, her eyes giving just a flash of interest, I realize that Dr. Alex Schiller is already working her magic, and her self-help seminar hasn't even officially begun.

Comedy rarely has an overt mission; most performers are satisfied to point out the absurdities of the world and the way we live in it without prescribing a course of action. Never Sleep Alone, a new comedic cabaret created by and starring the dynamic Roslyn Hart, is different. It wants to get its audiences not just chuckling but copulating.

The show's title gives a clue to its modus operandi: In Dr. Alex's world, the colloquial meaning of the acronym NSA (no strings attached) goes one cheeky step further. When she hits the stage, evoking at once an authoritarian evangelist and

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a smoldering hot boss in business formal, she belts pop mash-ups in between a series of rigorous experiments in what one might call inhibition reduction—and in doing so, wins over both the crowd’s participants and “voyeurs” (those seated safely away from the stage) to the cornerstone principles of her forthcoming book *Get Laid or Die Trying*.

The laughs arrive in two varieties. The first is a response to the jokes, including more absurd acronyms—BDSM, for example, does not mean what you think—which mock the bullet-point mentality of so many learning seminars held in hotel ballrooms. The second is a knee-jerk reaction to discomfort, the sort of laughter that wards off nervousness when one is made to, say, sit on a stranger’s lap or point to someone in the crowd they find hot. This is Dr. Alex’s brand of therapy: helping the crowd to lower their guard, come together and prepare for, if not a bacchanalian rite, then at least the possibility of snogging a proximate pan.

All this encouragement and potential grappling is especially interesting when considering Hart’s last project. Her highly successful recurring serial, *Shells*, trailed a shiraz-swilling New York career gal who pined for Mr. Wrong and took loving abuse from her fans when she called or texted him from the stage. Though she swears *Never Sleep Alone* is not a direct reaction to *Shells*, the steely “sexual psychologist” running the show is in many ways a photonegative of her earlier creation. Whereas *Shells* the character was a pitiable, drunken mess seeking corroboration from drinking buddies, Dr. Alex is a laser-focused, sober taskmaster making demands of new true believers.

What emerges has been strangely helpful in delivering on the morale-boosting promises of the programs it satirizes. “Originally, Dr. Alex was not supposed to be so effective. She was supposed to be kind of a fool and every exercise was built to fail,” says Hart. “I expected people to laugh, not to be quoting my advice back to me.” That said, part of Hart’s mission was to see New Yorkers—primarily in the show’s target age group of 21 to 45—overcome their awkwardness, be bold and make some kind of connection without expectation. “If you are looking for the one, I can’t help you,” Hart says. “But tomorrow, no one will want to touch you. While they still want to, you should let them.”

Joe’s Pub has held only three shows so far, but the word is out: Each show has been packed and, thanks in great part to the after-parties, which take place at a secret location after each show, attendees have ample chance to practice what Dr. Alex preaches. Hart has even established an anonymous “hookup hotline,” which gets flooded with messages praising the name of this new guru. (One from a caller identified as “Emma,” shyly details a post-show experience with a “smoking hot Brazilian” before announcing, “Clearly, [Dr. Alex’s] advice really worked.”)

Thanks to its success, *Never Sleep Alone* is moving to a weekly schedule in March. Each Friday, Dr. Alex will spread her gospel to any number of lost souls burned out by Internet dating. I’d reveal more, but Hart reminds me that NSA also stands for no spoiler alerts; surprise is essential, both in comedy and in an evening with the potential to change your sleeping habits.

Never Sleep Alone: A Cabaret Show That Could Actually Get You Laid

by Charli James Producer, HuffPost Live



Dr. Alex. Photo: Pavel Antonov

Much of Dr. Alex's advice is absurd and offensive. Near the beginning of the show she announces she "does not help ugly people" and commands anyone that doesn't like her methods to "get the hell out." But the audience plays along -- laughing, following her instructions and growing more bold as the show continues. Somehow her twisted wisdom contains undeniable truths when put into practice. It actually seems to help people overcome their inhibitions and connect with each other. Wholesome-looking women are quickly on the laps of the dashing Italian men a table over with a just a little prodding and instruction from Dr. Alex.

After NSA's first run, people started buying tickets expecting more than a comedy show, says Hart, and the line between real and fake is growing ever more blurry. She is now writing a faux self-help book (also called "Never Sleep Alone") that her character uses in show, after audience members kept asking for it at the swag table. "People are always asking where they can buy the book and wanting to hire me for one on one consultations. I tell them, "You do realize I'm not a real doctor" and they say, "I don't care. Your advice actually works," reports Hart.

Sitting in the singles section means you get a ticket discount (and a free glass of champagne), but you better be open to some participation. Dr. Alex doesn't let her patients be shy. When I attended with a group of girlfriends during the show's spring run, my blonde friend was coaxed up on stage and happily schooled at oral techniques while Dr. Alex sang a Miley Cyrus song to her as inspiration. (Don't worry, there's a voyeurs-only section as well.) Ticket cost also includes admission to the after party, where attendees are encouraged to put their earlier flirting lessons to use. Dr. Alex even has a Hook Up Hotline (917-830-3672) for reporting successes back to her.

Part of what makes the faux seminar work is that Hart performs with completely uninhibited confidence, and it's obviously contagious for the audience. You learn about (and see) much more of Dr. Alex's body than you'd expect from your typical self-help instructor, which makes kissing a total stranger in front of a crowd seem less risqué.

I found myself blushing multiple times during the show, but I also couldn't help thinking Dr. Alex's tip about my BFF also being a cock block may actually be right.

Electronic version: http://www.huffingtonpost.com/charli-james/never-sleep-alone-a-cabar_b_1873680.html

Forget online dating! Meet the “sex doctor” who turns theatre into a venue for love - teaching singles how to Never Sleep Alone

By Rachel Quigley



In with the new: Run by Dr Alex (center) Never Sleep Alone - part cabaret, part dating seminar spoof show - is currently taking New York by storm and will soon be coming to a city near you.

Online dating is so last season.

It used to be so fashionable, so adventurous, so 21st Century - some even considered it so risqué. Now it's just another tried and tested way of dating, and singletons are bored.

Unusual and exciting ways for everybody to try and find a 'somebody' have been popping up everywhere, whether it be a long-term partner, one-night stand or even just a friend with benefits.

One desperate woman used her grandma as her wing woman - it worked. Just this week a couple got married after meeting on Chatroulette - a site which allows users to chat to total strangers via a webcam.

Then of course there are the apps for smart phones that enable users to cruise people in the same area - also known in the legal and criminal world as stalking.

But what about going back to basics? What about meeting someone on a good old-fashioned night out? Actually meeting someone in the flesh and thinking: 'Wow, I feel some chemistry here', or 'I find you really attractive/interesting/funny/sexy.'

It's hardly a new concept, but one 'sex doctor' is putting a new and unique spin on that by combining a new kind of dating with a new type of theater - and it's working.

Never Sleep Alone is a show currently taking New York by storm and will soon be coming to a city near you.

Part cabaret, part dating-seminar-spoof show, it is run by Dr Alex Shiller - a sexual psychologist and music therapist who brings the hot, the single and the curious together for a night of delirious laughter, awesome music and socio-sensual interaction.

Dr Alex insists that her audience be filled with the sexy and seeking because she is going to introduce them to a new type of dating.

The show is divided into 'singles' - people who want to meet or hook-up with someone, and 'voyeurs' - those who want to see the action but aren't looking for a hook-up.

The concept goes like this: The singles are seated closer to the stage at communal tables, so before the show even starts attendees are forced to mingle with perfect strangers.

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When it does start, Dr Alex - played by Roslyn Hart - springs on to the stage like a foxy dominatrix-come-sexual evangelist who everyone in the room is going to listen to and obey, such is her stage presence.

And obey they do. Walking through the 'singles' section of the audience, she picks random strangers and tells them to kiss each other, swap phone numbers, sit on knees - whatever she feels is appropriate, or more likely inappropriate.

Punctuating the show with mash ups of current music and old favorites, Dr Alex also dispenses advice from her upcoming dating book *Get Laid Or Die Trying* to ensure that everyone in the audience will 'Never Sleep Alone'.

Belting through the songs and getting the audience to chant dating mantras, this is as interactive a show and dating experience as anyone will ever encounter.

Strangers kiss, cuddle, caress, play games and do lots of other things that strangers should not do to each other. And they enjoy it. What ensues is an hour of raucous laughter, sexual chemistry, boundary pushing and a lot of 'Oh my gods' and 'LOLs'.

Complimentary Champagne, love questionnaires and theatrical masks a la *Eyes Wide Shut* help to add to the party atmosphere, which is all drawn to a conclusion at the secret after party - where audience members can seek out each other in the hope of *Never Sleeping Alone*.

Some people would balk at the idea of having to interact with a total stranger on stage in front of a room full of people. Some singletons don't even have the nerve to go up and talk to perfect strangers. But the beauty of the show is that Dr Alex encourages audience members to cross their boundaries and do things they would never imagine.

Roslyn Hart explains the concept: 'Imagine a Learning Annex Seminar that's happening at a Mega-church. Except you're allowed to drink and you're encouraged to fornicate. Dr Alex is preaching the gospel of getting it on.'

'So, if you are tired of boring internet dating, you can come to an event where people are there for the same



New way of dating: Lucky (and single) audience members are plucked from obscurity and brought onstage by Dr Alex as she encourages them to do things strangers probably should never do.

reason as you - because they are looking for a hook-up. 'I tell people, if you're sitting up front, you may get pulled onstage. You may be asked to touch someone. You may be touched. So be O.K. with that.'

'I thought of doing the show after chatting with friends and listening to people talk about how difficult it is to date or hook up with someone. Even online dating seems to have lost its sparkle.'

'Once we tried it once, we realized that the format actually worked. For days after every show, we had audience members calling the (anonymous) "Hook Up Hot Line" to tell us about the person they went home with, kissed, swapped numbers with or whatever'

Roslyn said she hopes to take the show on the road in the near future - to different cities across America and also to different countries.

'I'd really love to take it to London and see how it works there. And I have a love affair with Italy at the minute, it would be really great to bring it there. I think the Italians would love it.'

In 2010, Roslyn Hart was named one of the Top Ten Live Performers by *Time Out New York* and was recently a guest star on HBO's comedy *Bored to Death*. Once a monthly show, *Never Sleep Alone* has now moved to a weekly slot on Saturdays at Joe's Pub (Public Theatre) in New York.

Successful attendees are encouraged to anonymously report their NSA hook up to the hotline on 917-830-3672. Every show has been sold out days in advance.

Never—Ever—Sleep Alone: Where We Hook Up With Dr. Schiller and Her Waiting Room of Singles

By Alice Riley-Smith



Photograph: Pavel Antonov

“Have you ever been handcuffed to a radiator?” A young man in a laboratory coat introduced himself to The Observer last Friday evening as we took our seats at the opening of the fall run of alternative singles night, Never Sleep Alone. Our reaction, or lack thereof, must have been transparent. “Sorry, I just need to ask you some basic erotic questions.” Oh, alright, get on, then.

It appeared that the point of this short survey was to detect our sexual energy, translated by the color of a mood mask we were given to wear for the duration of the evening.

The performance took place at Joe’s Pub, the quaint underbelly of the Public Theater—a low-lit, intimate space with a bar at one end, where the more reserved voyeurs sat, and a cluster of tables at the front, where brave singles positioned themselves vulnerably. The champagne flowed, a crucial aphrodisiac for the evening.

It quickly became clear that Dr. Alex Schiller, the sex therapist played by comedian Roslyn Hart, meant business. Dressed in black latex, there was no beating around her bush.

“NSA = NSA” appeared on a screen behind her, the opening chapter of the one-woman cabaret performance coming to life before us. “Never Sleep Alone equals no strings attached,” Dr. Schiller yelled in a broad Texan twang, “this is the number one principle.”

The audience cheered. Sleeping alone was out of the question.hook-up.

With one in two houses in Manhattan being occupied by a single person, and divorce rates on the rise, an increasing number of people are searching for new and exciting ways to meet others and, as the night evolved, it appeared that Never Sleep Alone was acting as a catalyst to the process. Joel Haberli, a gentleman in the audience, explained how “as a New Yorker, this is a chance to be wacky.” Every person in the room was prepared to go home with someone at some point during the night. And why shouldn’t they?

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They were amongst likeminded, young, beautiful people (many of whom had been scouted by Ms. Hart herself), who had been told, or rather commanded, by Dr. Schiller to “give each other the best possible times of their lives because—fuck it!—you’re young. Live!”

When The Observer piled into a limo with a transformed Ms. Hart once the show was over (think an older Audrey Hepburn; long black gloves, draping pearls), we asked why the online dating phenomenon wasn’t sufficient. She instantly referred to it as “bullshit ... people build up too many expectations before they meet and when they meet the chemistry is blocked by the expectation and that’s another reason why I created NSA. Chemistry is fate minus logic. It’s about interaction.”

While the audience interaction was high throughout the performance (be very aware if you buy a singles ticket!), this was taken to the next level at the after party where The Observer managed to intercept a few of its revellers. A friend of Ms. Hart, a male actor who would rather not be named for obvious reasons, explained how he used the show to hook up with girls who didn’t expect to be called the following day.

He admitted it was “partly selfish,” but that it was deemed acceptable here.

We were concerned that with so much focus on a no-strings-attached mentality: were people really building their confidence, or rather knocking it down the following morning?

Then we met Joshua Karchem and Liz Lee, who, clinging to each other for dear life, explained how they’d met at a show in June and were madly in love. “The first time I went, I made out with two random hotties. The second time, I met the love of my life,” gushed Mr Karchem.

“We didn’t think they’d approve but we’re in love,” Ms Lee told us, stealing her eyes from Mr Karchem for only a second.

The Observer mulled over this at the bar, taking in the scene as the dance floor emptied and couples ran up the stairs, hand in hand. Ms. Hart had not been lying when she’d predicted 60% of the club would go home together that evening. We noticed two lonely souls next to us and suddenly found ourselves playing cupid. Within minutes, the pair was chatting, at ease in their liquidated states, before sloping off into one of the discreet booths positioned around the club, and pulling the velvet curtains behind them.

THE BEST
EVENTS THIS WEEK

Never Sleep Alone

Written by Jennifer Picht

08/16/2016



Photograph: Courtesy Federica Di Lorenzo

The endlessly inventive character actor and cabaret comic Roslyn Hart plays “sexual psychologist” Dr. Alex Schiller in this interactive bash. The doctor’s goal: getting you in the mood with a few choice tunes and making sure all the single people in the audience hook up.

MORE
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ADVENTURES

Never Sleep Alone

Written by Jennifer Picht

09/20/2017



Pictured here: Dr. Alex Schiller, played by Roslyn Hart

Devilish sex mastermind Dr. Alex Schiller (played by nightlife doyen Roslyn Hart) brings you onstage to face off in gonzo challenges with strangers, which come in handy at the no-holds-barred after-party.

Trust your doctor.