

# It's Love And Lust During One Steamy Night In Boerum Hill

**H**ome, a steamy story of love and sex on a hot summer night in Brooklyn, makes its New York debut at the Brooklyn Underground Film Festival this weekend.

The film is Matt Zoller Seitz's first foray into directing and was shot entirely in his Boerum Hill home. It explores the power of appearance, status, and testosterone in a world where art and money collide—a lust-filled party in downtown Brooklyn.

Seitz is a *New York Press* film critic and *Star-Ledger* television columnist.

The comic drama takes place entirely in one night. Using 24 characters in a complicated and interwoven tale, it tells the story of hook-ups, break-ups, flirtations and heavy loss of inhibitions among a set of twenty-somethings. Seitz also wrote, produced and edited the film.

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"It was originally going to be the first chapter of a movie about a couple over a few years," Seitz explained. But he soon realized he could tell the whole story in one night using many couples.

The film pays homage to the borough of Kings, as well as sex. "This is a Brooklyn movie," Seitz said. It was shot entirely here, with neighborhood people mixed in with professional actors. And there's countless references to things only Brooklynites might understand—how slow the G train is; Pip's Comedy Club in Sheepshead Bay; how the view from the Brooklyn Heights promenade isn't the same anymore.

"There's a lot of jokes that are just going to go totally over the heads of people who aren't from Brooklyn," Seitz admitted. "In fact, I

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Actors Jason Liebrecht and Nicol Zanzarella in the feature film *Home*, a film set at a steamy Brooklyn house party.

## Spending a Hot Summer Night At 'Home'

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think there are even jokes that people from Manhattan aren't going to get!"

There was some debate during the filming about how borough-centric the movie should be. The worry was that some of the references would be too obscure for a general audience to understand.

"I told 'em look, we're all from Brooklyn," Seitz said. "Anybody who watches this who's from Brooklyn is basically family, so why not throw in a couple of in-jokes for your family?"

After all, he said, "It's going to be like biographies if you're from Los Angeles, but whatever."

The borough also represents on the sound-track. Funk Nasty and King Bird have tracks, and while Spouse hails from Northampton, Massachusetts, their song "Love Can't Save This Love" happens to be an ode to Kings County.

Shooting in the director's home, between an apartment complex and a cathedral, presented a number of challenges.

On one muggy August night, when dialogue was barely audible because of air conditioner noise, an enterprising production assistant had to buy three hours of silence by going downtown, door-knocking out apples. The sweat paid off, though—Seitz pointed out how sexy the glistening-skin of his characters looks in the film.

"It's a great foreplay movie," Seitz noted. "Another night shoot was interrupted by a man with a crowbar chasing another man down the middle of the street."

But then again, where else can you walk into



Actress Nicol Zanzarella in a scene from *Home*, which makes its New York debut at the Brooklyn Underground Film Fest.

a deli and find an actress on short notice?"

"We used the neighborhood," he noted, from ambient sound from the bells of the cathedral near door to the people who inhabit the densely packed buildings around his home.

The crazy thing about the mixture of seasoned actors and local residents in the film, Seitz said, is that viewers often can't tell just who's who—maybe because people in Brooklyn are such characters.

Seitz also worked with the lead actors to craft the script. Stephen T. Neave, Jason Liebrecht, Minerva Scelzo and Nicol Zanzarella are among the principal actors.

Some parts were added—for example, the

psychiatrist who works at Rikers who came to audition for a part. Seitz wrote one in for him, where he interprets various characters' dreams in the backyard, in a Peanuts '5-cent psychiatrist's style. The dialogue is based on the psychiatrist's real interpretation of the director's dreams, communicated through emails.

The film was shot on digital video over an 18-month period.

"There's really no way that a movie like ours could have been done on such a small budget five years ago," Seitz noted. "That's the great thing about this technology." According to Jeremy Flanigan, public relations director for the fest, 60 percent of the work being shown is video.

If he had money for the project, though, it would only have taken six months, the filmmaker said. But the cast and crew worked around day jobs, having little money, and Seitz's five-year-old daughter to make the film.

"After a while, our five year old, Hannah, didn't think there was anything unusual about shooting a movie in your house," said Jennifer Dawson, Seitz's wife and a producer. "She knew when to be quiet on the set, and by the end of the shoot she was setting up craft service tables and fetching extension cords."

Many of the movies in the Brooklyn Underground Film Festival have a similar story, Seitz noted.

"They don't have money and they aren't doing it for money—they have some kind of vision," he said. He was eager for a chance to see the work of his peers, especially the shot by shot re-make of *Indiana Jones* by Chris Stropoulos, Eric Zala and Jayson Lamb.

"You have no idea how many times I fantasized about doing that when I was a kid," Seitz laughed. But in all seriousness, he acknowledged the huge amount of work that shooting films on a shoestring budget entails. He noted the *Indiana Jones* remake took over 10 years.

"By the time they were done, the cameras they used didn't exist," he said in amazement.

*Home* will be shown at 6:15 p.m. on April 21 at the Brooklyn Lyceum, 227 4th Avenue. For more information about the Brooklyn Underground Film Festival visit [www.brooklynunderground.com](http://www.brooklynunderground.com). For more information about *Home*, visit [www.brooklynunderground.com](http://www.brooklynunderground.com).

—Karen Zinick