

Songs of Cheer

The Cabaret Season Heats Up for Holidays With a New 2nd Ave. Venue, Mama Rose's

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For this holiday season, there's a new club downtown — way downtown on Second Avenue between 13th and 14th Streets — aptly named Mama Rose's (219 Second Ave., 212-533-0558, mamaroses.net) after Gypsy Rose Lee's fame-hungry mom. MAC and Bistro award-winning singer-director Lennie Watts books the new room, and what a roster he's attracted.

From Dec. 1 to 3, you can see a new two-hour Irving Berlin show starring Mark Nadler and KT Sullivan of *American Rhapsody/George Gershwin* fame (a preheater tryout, perhaps?), followed by soap-opera doyenne Eileen Fulton's shows Dec. 12-14.

Then Watts and fellow MAC/Bistro winner Scott Coulter duet for *A Christmas to Remember* from Dec. 15 to 21, with Christine Pedi bringing in her acclaimed Comden and Green tribute to ring in the New Year (Dec. 27-31).

"Mama Rose's has the best sound system around," coed comedienne-songwriter Joanna Parson, who just did her hugely successful two-hander,

of Reddy's songs than he thought." The show's been well received and will play a New Year's gig in Rochester, NY.

Parson also heads up the Happy Hour Salon (joannaparson.com) at the funkier room in town, Siberia (356½ W. 40th St.). Salon is a variety show encompassing all genres from literary to magic, with an emphasis on the comic in both words and music.

"I was booked into Don't Tell Mama right after 9/11 and I just didn't feel like doing a one-woman comedy show, so I turned my spot into a variety benefit and realized I was good at it," she said. "We're in our second year at Siberia and going strong."

Even farther downtown, at the very unfunky but equally eclectic Joe's Pub (425 Lafayette St., 212-539-8778, joespub.com), Betty rules on Sundays in December, and John Epperson takes the stage minus *Lypsinka* in an autobiographical evening entitled *Show Trash* (Dec. 15).

Then Nina Hagen sprecht Deutsch on Dec. 18, and LaChanze visits for two shows on Dec. 22. After you celebrate New Year's with Eartha Kitt, come back on Jan. 19 for four Mondays of Jackie (*Hairspray*) Hoffman's *The Kvetching Continues*.

Back uptown on Cabaret Row, Danny's Skylight Room (346-48 W. 46th St., 212-265-8133, dannysgrandseapalace.com) features a few great dames in its December lineup, among them the charming "Evening with Brett (*Match Game*) Somers" (Dec. 2, 9, 23, and 30), Joyce Breach Remembering Mabel Mercer (Dec. 6, 12, 13, and 19), and the incomparable Blossom Dearie back at her early Sunday night home.

Blossom Time continues Saturdays and Sundays all through January and February, with a special Valentine show on the 14th.

Other New Year's possibilities include the 35th annual Bobby Short Bash at the Carlyle (35 E. 76th St., 212-744-1600, thecarlyle.com), now through Dec. 31, and Steve Ross at the Stanhope (995 Fifth Ave., 212-774-1234), now through Jan. 3.

Over at Feinstein's at the Regency Hotel (540 Park Ave., 212-339-4095, feinsteinsattheregency.com), the great Michael himself performs now through Dec. 27, or you can choose to "Swing in the New Year" with Ann Hampton Callaway at the Regency Ballroom. Either one is a winner. ■



Parson: Channels Helen Reddy and graces Siberia

Reddy or Not, at the new spot before playing two more shows on Dec. 11 and 18 at the Duplex (61 Christopher St., 212-226-5438, theduplex.com).

Reddy or Not is a comic fantasy cabaret cooked up by two obsessive Helen Reddy fans who are accidentally booked into the same club on the same night.

"Lance Werth [her costar-writer] and I got together after he heard me sing Helen Reddy's 'Keep on Singing,' and he realized that he knew a lot more