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SAN FRANCISCO SYMPHONY

Merry-making in the holiday season

On the Town

by **Donna Sachet**

Published 12/13/2007

We returned from a relaxing vacation in Puerto Vallarta to the whirlwind of San Francisco holiday events. The Richmond/Ermet AIDS Foundation's *Help is on the Way for the Holidays* at Herbst Theatre continued the incredible tradition of gathering a bevy of nationally-known singers in a well-paced, colorful show. This year's event benefited Positive Resource Center and Meals of Marin. There was truly something for everyone, including local favorites **Wesla Whitfield**, **Meg Mackay**, and **Tim Hockenberry**, *The Color Purple*'s **Jeanette Bayardelle**, Broadway's **David Burnham** and **Vicki Lewis**, and *American Idol*'s **Justin Guarini**, **La Toya London**, and **Anthony Federov**. The crowd favorites, however, were superstars **Mary Wilson** and **Carole Cook**, both dressed to kill and masterfully seducing their listeners. As with all *Help is on the Way* events, the show was followed by a reception where many performers mingled with their fans, giving the evening a more personal feeling. There is something magical about having your picture taken with an original Supreme and two shirtless Santas, with a magnificently lit City Hall in the background.



Francis Delgado and David Burnham at *Help is on the Way for the Holidays*. Photo: Steven Underhill

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That same day, we joined the birthday celebration of our fellow columnist **Sweet Lips** at Ginger Trois downtown. In addition to official recognition in the form of a certificate from Assemblyman **Mark Leno** delivered by **Anna Damiani**, there were good wishes from **Charlotte Coleman**, **Roberta Bobba**, **Steven Rascher**, **Cynthia Laird**, and others. It sounds like we may soon be losing this last gay bar in the downtown financial area, and it will be missed.

We were delighted to assist in the lighting of the

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Paul Stankiewicz, Donna Sachet, Jeff Cotter, Mark Leno and Greg Sherrell at the City Hall tree lighting. Photo: Steven Underhill

Tree of Hope in the rotunda of City Hall last week along with **Greg Sherrell** of 92.7FM radio. Created by the Rainbow World Fund, organized by **Jeff Cotter** and **Paul Stankiewicz**, this stately tree is covered with sparkling white lights and meticulously folded origami cranes and stars, each of which contains a personal wish written by contributors from far and wide. The **San Francisco Boys' Chorus** sang, and Commissioner **Audrey Joseph** read some of the touching, humorous wishes as part of the lighting ceremony, ending with a fierce message from **RuPaul**. After a beautiful song

from Bishop **Yvette Flunder**, the tree burst into light to the awe of the hundreds gathered around. A reception followed in the cavernous rotunda, with refreshments and sultry music from **Veronica Klaus**.

With so many entertainment options in town, it is hard to choose between them during the busy holiday season, but we were determined to see Carole Cook's *Dress Up* at the New Conservatory Theatre Center. This legendary performer shared personal stories from her life, particularly her friendships with **Ethel Merman** and **Lucille Ball**. A handful of delicately delivered songs rounded out a lovely picture of a charming, funny, rollercoaster life, spent in front of many loving audiences. What a lady!

Trax bar in the Haight welcomed its loyal customers for a holiday party last Sunday afternoon with bountiful food, a smorgasbord of music, and generous cocktails. We were greeted at the door by a round of applause led by buddy **Joe Mac**, who also tirelessly decorated the bar. By nightfall, there was laughter, music, and holiday spirit all around, and no question that there is a great destination for our community in the Haight.

Tonight we'll be emceeding the grand reopening of the Sundance Kabuki Theatres with a screening of the new movie *The Walker* and an exciting auction benefiting the LGBT Center at 7 p.m. Tonight's also your first chance to catch the **Gay Men's Chorus' Home for the Holidays** concert at the Castro Theatre. They will also perform there on Christmas Eve at 5, 7, and 9 p.m., with special guests at each concert. Look for this intrepid reporter at 9 p.m.

Friday night, find out *How Tilly Stole Christmas* at the new Metro City Bar, featuring **Cockatielia, Suppositori Spelling, Mercedes Munro**, and many others. Mayhem is bound to ensue.

Over the weekend, catch **Sharon McNight** at the New Conservatory, and Mary Wilson at The Empire Plush Room. Between all the holiday house parties, don't miss Fresh at Ruby Skye on Sunday. They promise special seasonal surprises in addition to the great spinning of DJ **Kimberly S.**

Finally, please join us for the 15th annual *Songs of the Season* produced by **Richard Sablatura** at the Empire Plush Room, Mon.-Wed., Dec. 17-19. We are particularly proud of the talent assembled for this year's shows, including Sharon McNight, **Connie Champagne, Kathleen Antonia, Irene Soderberg, T.J. & Sheba!**, and recently added international recording artist **Abigail**. A champagne reception sponsored by Barefoot Winery follows each night's show, and net proceeds benefit the AIDS Emergency Fund. Visit www.donnasachet.com for tickets and more information.

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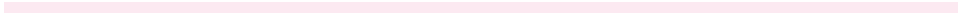
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