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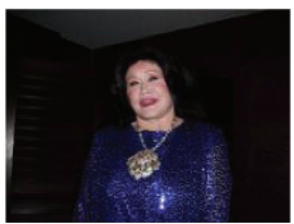
BWW Reviews: Red Hot Mama Barbara Van Orden Returns to Cabaret @ Sterling's

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Monday, November 8, 2010; Posted: 04:11 PM - by [Don Griware](#)

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On Sunday November 7 **Barbara Van Orden** made a splashy return to the world of cabaret @ Sterling's Upstairs @ Vitello's after a three year absence in a new show directed by the ever resourceful Joe Giamalva. Van Orden belongs to the cabaret world of days gone by, when Sinatra was king and when tasteful music reigned supreme. Promising her audience at the top nostalgia and 'one exciting ride', she proceeded to captivate with a genuine warmth, fine voice and campy style of humor.

The show's shining moments lie in Van Orden's ability to tell a parody or anecdote in her delicious way and in engrossing her audience - her roosters and chickies, as she nicknames them - in her delightful game play. For example, she has great fun with the gentlemen sitting up front by asking them to crow like a rooster: cock-a-doodle-doo! This is one hilarious bit!

Yes, she can be very funny. The Mae West segment at the end with two boys covering her with feathery fans to the strains of "You've Got to See Mama Every Night, or You Can't See Mama At All" and her strutting around in a white fox fur stole is a campy sendup of old Hollywood. It's outrageously theatrical!

One lovely highlight is the story about her friend Kathy whose saga of love becomes a three act play with "50%", "Guess Who I Saw Today" and finally "I'm Crazy" followed by "Bewitched, Bothered and Bewildered". Other standouts include "Diamonds Are a Girl's Best Friend", her parody of *Fiddler on the Roof* combined with *The Exorcist*, where she begs the spirit to put the spark back into her man's lovemaking. Also, there's a lovingly heartfelt tribute to her real life husband with the medley: "It Had to Be You", "Where or When" and "The Nearness of You". Another cute parody tells of sexpot Sally who knows how to make her stocks rise in "Stock Market Song". Musical director Ron Snyder's always dependably sterling sounds back her nicely throughout. Van Orden talks through many of the numbers, which is AOK, but when she cuts loose, her vocal instrument sounds pretty terrific.

Overall, the hour set is very entertaining with Van Orden winning us over with her sheer magnetism.

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