

Singer Mary Lee to perform in Lou Rawl's Televised Special 'An Evening of Stars' at the Kodak Theatre.

PHOTO: GAYLE ANDERSON

By GAYLE ANDERSON

(Sept. 12, 2003) If you miss Mary Lee's debut tonight at the Kodak Theatre in Hollywood, you can catch her performance on television in January. That's when the networks will air the 25th Anniversary of "An Evening of Stars," Lou Rawl's televised special that caps off a year of fundraising for the United Negro College Fund.

Lee, an assistant administrative analyst in Regional Programming, will perform as a member of "The Voices of Free," an ensemble of 26 singers who will back up performances of Grammy Award-winning recording stars. Lee's daughter Dyee Dysart will also perform as a member of the ensemble.

The stars include Yolanda Adams, Donnie McClurkin, Shirley Caesar, Fred Hammond and Smokie Norful. Also performing solo, is a favorite of Lee's, Canadian superstar Celine Dion. "I admire her, not only for her talent, but for the warmth she projects," said Lee, who is looking forward to a backstage meeting.

Lee has been singing professionally since the age of 15, when she took third place honors at a talent contest staged at the Regal Theater in Chicago. She was nudged out of first place by The Five Stairsteps, who won the recording contract and the fame and fortune that followed.

As a teenager, Lee sang with the internationally renowned Wendall Phillips High School Acappella Choir, whose alumni included the late Nat King Cole and Sam Cooke.

Lee's vocal talents are soon to re-emerge, this time in Solomon Burke's new Gospel album "Angels of Victory," produced by Terry Young. In the album, Lee sings a duet with Grammy Award recipient Solomon Burke. Burke, proclaimed as the "King of Rock 'N Soul," won a Grammy in 2003 for Blues vocals.

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On the A-List: Singer Mary Lee, with backstage pass to Lou Rawl's 'An Evening of Stars,' performs tonight at the Kodak Theatre in an ensemble of voices.



Tickets (\$15-\$20) are available at the Kodak Theatre box office (doors close at 7 p.m.) or at Ticketmaster outlets: (213) 365-3500, ticketmaster.com or through kodaktheatre.com