

Dance: Tap Revue, 'New Sole Sisters'

By JENNIFER DUNNING

JANE GOLDBERG is giving a tap party these days at La Mama E.T.C. Anyone is likely to drop in and dance, from the veteran "grandes dames" of tap to what Ms. Goldberg calls the "prima tapernas" of today. And the results were good, funky fun on Sunday night.

Ms. Goldberg's revue, which she calls "New Sole Sisters," is actually a tightly structured romp through tap. Murray Horwitz and Susan Woolhandler have come up with a script that touches on contemporary politics and social mores with dark and amiable humor. The thread on which the revue hangs is Ms. Goldberg's search for a tap partner, an odyssey on which she is accompanied by Harriet Browne, an enchantingly sweet-tempered and pragmatic "fairy godmother."

But the scenario is really just a pretext for the dancing, which is not only great fun and often virtuosic but unusual in that here women are performing a traditionally male art form. Each of the six tappers gets at least one solo, and among them there are some standout star turns.

Ms. Browne contributes a dreamy sand dance, for instance, and Josephine McNamara twinkles through an Irish step dance. There is an uncharacteristic and unforgettable "lullaby" from Brenda Bufalino, as rapid-fire a tapster as there ever was. The drop of a pin could have been heard over the sound of her feet, which danced out a tap text of a Jamesian complexity.

Another highlight of the show was "Dancin' Is My Game," a funny, gamey, rap-tap number choreo-

graphed and performed by the glamorous Frances Nealy. Miriam Greaves-All teaches the Sole Sisters the South African gumboot dance, in which the beat is stamped out in rubber boots with anklets of bells, in a number that is itself worth a trip to the theater. There were lyrical flying turns from Ms. Goldberg in another solo. Sarah Safford contributed a charming "Post Partum Blues" number, in which she was backed up by an amusingly raffish trio of would-be mothers. And Dorothy Wasserman got the sisters dancing with "The Dorothy Shim Sham."

Accompanied by the bassist Koren Korsmeyer, Joyce Brown sang and accompanied the tappers on the piano as a kind of wry presiding eminence. There are invited guest performers each night, with an invitation extended to members of the audience. On Sunday, the guests were Jennie Lane and Erika Waring-Miller. A solemn, expert, 11-year-old tapper, Ms. Waring-Miller nearly stole the show.

"Sole Sisters," directed by Constance Vails-Hill, will be performed through Nov. 2 at La Mama, 74A East Fourth Street.