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SEPTEMBER/OCTOBER 2008 VOLUME 3 #4

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A Really **Big** Cho

Jane and Jane's favorite bisexual Asian American comedian talks about her new VH1 show, same-sex marriage, and the transformative power of reality TV. **BY HEATHER CASSELL**

■ MARGARET CHO is sitting pretty and having a lot of fun these days with a currently touring hit show, *Beautiful*, appearances in Logo's *Sordid Lives: The Series*, and now her very own television series, *The Cho Show*, which she describes as a "sitcom starring real people"—namely, Cho and her friends—scheduled to begin airing on VH1 in late August.

And for those of you who remember Cho's last attempt at a sitcom based on her own life—just know that this time it's going to be different. Mainly because the VH1 show isn't just loosely inspired by her life, it really is her life, with all the crazy characters that entails: Sandra Bernhard, Joan Rivers, even her mother, a favorite subject of imitation (or is it flattery?) in her stage shows. "I really love it," says Cho. "I'm just in a place in my life where my work has become so exciting and fun. I'm just very fortunate."

Like Cho herself, her Hollywood entourage is unconventional. Cho's parents will be seen frequently in the new show: hanging out at her Los Angeles mansion, shopping with her assistant, joining her on the red carpet.

Her parents, Cho says, are tagging along to quite a few celebrity events these days, which she says is reviving her enjoyment of show business. "They just love it," she says. "It's kind of given me a whole new outlook on show business ... because I'm bringing them to it. It's new for them, so it's fun for me."

The Cho Show shot many of its promos recently in San Francisco, Cho's hometown. Although she calls Los Angeles the city by the bay, where she grew up during the tumultuous '70s and '80s, and which had a "tremendous influence" on her comedy and perspective on life, she says.

"It really helped shape my world view [and] helped me

pick up the community that would be my home, the gay community," says Cho. "It helped me understand politics in a compassionate way ... because it is the way that San Francisco is."

Recently, San Francisco officials deputized Cho to officiate over weddings for same-sex couples. Married herself (to artist and writer Al Ridenour, of whom she has reportedly explained: "It's not a traditional situation. It's not a committed marriage. We're just friends who share space."), she is glad that California legalized marriage equality and looks forward to being able to marry happy brides and grooms in Los Angeles soon, where she is in the process of becoming ordained.

"Family is important," says Cho, who believes that the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community needs family more than anyone. "We deserve to have family, and marriage is an important part of that."

And now she's geared up to fight Proposition 8, which threatens to amend the state's constitution by defining marriage as only between a man and a woman, before it goes before California voters in November. "It's important that we stay focused," says Cho, about her plans to organize a huge fundraiser for Marriage Equality USA, a same-sex marriage advocacy group. "It's really great getting this invisibility over with," Cho says about recent media attention of LGBT issues, especially as it relates to bisexuality. And she credits reality TV as being a part of this increasing visibility.

Due to the nature of reality TV, which Cho says she is a huge fan of, the programs have to be inclusive. Because "you are actually dealing with the real world," she says, "you have to include people who are in it."

Girl's got a point. After all, what would *Top Chef* be without all the lesbians?

"It's a wonderful step in the right direction," says Cho. ♀♀