

THE BOLD AND THE “BEAUTIFUL”

MARGARET CHO BRINGS BEAUTY AND SASS TO CHICAGO FOR HER LATEST ONE-WOMAN SHOW



PHOTOGRAPH BY DAVID C. LEE

After packing 2007 with the True Colors tour and her own burlesque show, “The Sensous Woman,” Margaret Cho is even busier in 2008. She’ll star in her own VH1 reality show this July, *The Cho Show*, and tour the world with her first one-woman stand-up show in three years, “Beautiful.” We spoke to the comedienne about the show, certain infamous politicians and the Oprah effect. —DON BAIOCCHI

What can we expect from your new show, “Beautiful?”

It’s this idea that started when I did this interview with a radio DJ. He asked me, “What if you woke up tomorrow and you were beautiful?” And I was like, “What do you mean, ‘What if?’” And he was like, “If you were blonde, had blue eyes, were 5’11”, weighed 100 pounds and you were beautiful, what would you do?” And I said, “Well, I probably couldn’t get up because I’d be too weak to stand.” How could anybody ask me that? And that’s horrible—that that’s the only person he would think is beautiful. So this whole show is talking about beauty, talking about how we feel affects what we do in the world. I think it’s really important to feel beautiful.

Is “Beautiful” more personal or political?

This is probably more personal *as* political. There’s more personal content, there’s more talking about things that have happened to me, [as well as] some political stuff and stuff about the upcoming elections, so there’s a mix of things. I think it’s really funny and really exciting. I think it’s the best show that I’ve done.

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Who do you think is the most beautiful person in the world, however you want to define “beautiful”?

I think that everybody is. I don’t think that there are people who are more or less [beautiful]; it’s just that everybody expresses it differently.

I know you talk about disgraced Senator Larry Craig in your show. Is he just as beautiful as anyone else?

Absolutely. I think he’s more tragic, though, because it’s like he’s not really able to express his gayness. He’s just such a sad queen without a piano bar. To me, I feel sorrow for him more than anything else. He’s a tragic person who can’t come out of the closet. To me, it’s tragic and beautiful.

That’s such an expansive vision of beauty. So is President Bush beautiful?

Yeah, because, again, there’s this sort of tragedy about him. Just the fact that it’s too bad, he could have done such great things and he wasn’t able to. It’s tragically sad and it’s beautiful in that sadness.

So when do you feel the most beautiful?

Generally all the time. I just feel good when I’m working; I feel good when I’m able to do something that I think is worthwhile, which I think working really is for me. I really enjoy being able to tour and travel the world with my work. So I feel beautiful a lot of the time.

I read you were a fan of some reality makeover shows like *How to Look Good Naked*.

I really like that show. I also like Tim Gunn’s show [*Tim Gunn’s Guide to Style*]. I think he’s really great. There’s kind of a trend of people embracing their looks and feeling good about themselves. I mean, we’ve kind of been going there for a while with Oprah. She’s always been a champion for women and helped women feel good about themselves. So I think that it’s just something that’s growing.

Margaret Cho plays the Chicago Theatre (175 N. State, 312-902-1500) April 26; thechicagotheatre.com