

CONTACT: **Louisa Spier**
Cal Performances
(510) 643-6714
lspier@calperformances.org

Jeanette Peach
Cal Performances
(510) 642-9121
jpeach@calperformances.org

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: February 14, 2018 ****Updated March 21 in red**
[Press Room](#)



Images of Margaret Cho, Ali Wong, Aparna Nancherla, and Hari Kondabolu are available for download from the Cal Performances [press room](#).

**CAL PERFORMANCES AT UC BERKELEY
AND THE STUDENT CURATORS OF CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENT
FRONT ROW WITH MARGARET CHO AND FRIENDS
WED, MARCH 21 AT 7PM IN ZELLERBACH HALL**

Cho leads a program about race, identity, and power in the entertainment industry, with guests **Ali Wong**, Aparna Nancherla and Hari Kondabolu

Berkeley, February 14, 2018 — Cal Performances at UC Berkeley presents the third annual *Front Row* event, Wednesday March 21 at 7pm in Zellerbach Hall, created for UC Berkeley students by UC Berkeley students. Presented in association with the Student Curators of Cal Performances, a group of UC Berkeley students mentored by Cal Performances associate director Rob Bailis and staff, *Front Row with Margaret Cho and Friends* will feature the popular, influential, and outspoken comedian along with fellow Asian-American comedians **Ali Wong**, **Aparna Nancherla** and **Hari Kondabolu** in a program of performance and conversation centered on issues of race, identity, and power.

“For this third installment of *Front Row*, we are thrilled to welcome Margaret Cho as host of this special evening of performance and conversation,” says Bailis. “Each year, our student curators work hard to select an inspiring host for this event, and this year, the support for Cho was unanimous. Yes, she’s a popular comedian and actor, but just as important is the leadership she has shown generations of Asian-Americans and cultural activists across so many segments of society. We laugh with her because she dares to tell the whole complicated truth in a totally original way—one that has been a constant source of inspiration for so many on campus. We’re honored to welcome Margaret Cho to *Front Row* 2018.”

Cho, who in 2017 was named one of the 50 Best Stand-Up Comics of All Time by *Rolling Stone*, has enjoyed a far-ranging career in television, film, music, and theater. She has been a pioneer in her field, frankly addressing LGBT issues, racial stereotypes, bullying, and feminist concerns like body shaming in her sell-out comedy shows since the early 1990s. Born and raised in San Francisco, Cho has earned a cult audience following for her breakthrough comedy shows *I’m The One That I Want* and *Notorious C.H.O.*, and her network television programs *All American Girl*, *The Cho Show*, and *Drop Dead Diva*.

The Student Curatorial Committee was eager to invite Cho as this year’s featured guest because many of the social and cultural issues she has confronted throughout her career have great resonance with them and their peers on the UC Berkeley campus. The committee wanted to engage with Cho’s “powerful, enduring presence in the arts, culture, and activism,” and call on her as a self-proclaimed “patron saint of outsiders,” to offer her perspective on some of the challenging and divisive issues their generation is confronting. Cho is eagerly anticipating this appearance, and says, “I’d love to create an event where we talk all about race in entertainment. So much has changed since I started comedy in the 1980s, and I’d love to take a look at it from all different sides. I’m thrilled to have an opportunity to bring this special show to Cal.”

Together with the student curatorial committee, Cho invited comedian, actress, and writer **Ali Wong**, comedian, writer, and performer Aparna Nancherla, and comic Hari Kondabolu to join her in an evening of performance and conversation. **Noted for her acclaimed Netflix stand-up special, *Baby Cobra*, Wong is currently starring in ABC’s *American Housewife* and writing for *Fresh Off the Boat*. Wong has performed on *Late Night with Seth Meyers* and *Comedy Underground with Dave Attell* and made**

regular appearances on *Are You There Chelsea?*, *Black Box*, and *Inside Amy Schumer*. In addition to stand-up television appearances on Comedy Central's *Meltdown* and TBS's *Conan*, Nancherla has written for *Late Night with Seth Meyers* and *Totally Biased with W. Kamau Bell*, and has been featured in Netflix's *Master of None* and *Love*, HBO's *High Maintenance*, and Comedy Central's *Inside Amy Schumer*. Kondabolu, who the *New York Times* has called "one of the most exciting political comics in stand up today," has performed on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, *Conan*, and *Jimmy Kimmel Live*; has written for *Totally Biased with W. Kamau Bell*; and is a regular on the public radio circuit, including appearances on *Fresh Air with Terry Gross*, *All Things Considered*, and *Morning Edition*. Of her colleagues, Cho says, "I'm a longtime fan of both Hari and Aparna and I'm thrilled to be able to work with them on this event. Being a minority artist in a very monochrome entertainment world is tough and I know that we will have so much to talk about!"

Front Row is a key program of Cal Performances' Berkeley RADICAL (Research and Development Initiative in Creativity Arts and Learning) initiative, which cultivates the artistic literacy of future audiences and connects some of the most innovative artists in the world with the intellectual capital of UC Berkeley. The Student Curators of Cal Performances conceive and participate in all aspects of producing *Front Row*, with the aim of engaging the UC Berkeley student population in cultural issues that interest and concern them. Under the mentorship of Cal Performances staff, student curators select and recruit the headline artist, drawing from a wish list of acclaimed Bay Area-based artists. The inaugural *Front Row* event in 2016 was hosted by Metallica drummer and co-founder Lars Ulrich, and in 2017 Daniel Handler, A.K.A. Lemony Snicket, hosted the second annual event. Once Cho's participation was confirmed this season, a collaborative process began to bring the shared vision of the featured artist and the curatorial team to the stage. The students conducted a series of Skype interview sessions with Cho over the course of a semester, during which she presented her interests for the event, and proposed a selection of guests to invite as participants.

The Student Curators of Cal Performances are a diverse group of 9 undergraduate students at UC Berkeley representing a wide range of academic pursuits. The declared majors of those on the curatorial team include economics; theater, dance and performance studies; media studies; anthropology; mathematics; biology; peace and conflict studies; English; and business. This year's group includes two returning members from the 2017 *Front Row* curatorial cohort, and one student who has been involved since the program's inception in 2016. New members of the committee were

recruited in an open call to campus by Cal Performances, and all students on the curatorial team volunteer their time.

Front Row is made possible with the support of a generous multiyear grant from the Wallace Foundation under the Building Audiences for Sustainability initiative, and through support from Chevron.

Ticket Information

Tickets for *Front Row with Margaret Cho and Friends* on Wednesday, March 21 at 7pm in Zellerbach Hall are \$5 and are available exclusively to current UC Berkeley students. There is a ticket limit of one per person online at calperformances.org or via telephone at (510) 642-9988. An additional ticket may be purchased (for a maximum of two per person) in person at the Zellerbach Hall Ticket Office with a valid UC Berkeley ID. Tickets are general admission.

#

CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Wednesday, March 21, 7pm

Zellerbach Hall
Bancroft Way at Dana Street
UC Berkeley campus

Special Event

Front Row with Margaret Cho and Friends

Program: Cal Performances presents the third annual *Front Row* event, curated by a team of UC Berkeley students. Provocative, pioneering comedian Margaret Cho is joined by fellow comedians **Ali Wong**, Aparna Nancherla and Hari Kondabolu for a performance and discussion of race, identity, and power in the entertainment industry designed specifically for UC Berkeley students by UC Berkeley students.

Tickets: Tickets for *Front Row* are \$5 and available exclusively to current UC Berkeley students.

– Cal Performances –