

SPECIAL THANKS

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*also members of the Student Curators of Cal Performances

This event is generously supported by The Wallace Foundation and Chevron. Based in New York City, The Wallace Foundation is an independent national philanthropy dedicated to fostering improvements in learning and enrichment for disadvantaged children and the vitality of the arts for everyone. It seeks to catalyze broad impact by supporting the development, testing, and sharing of new solutions and effective practices. For more information, visit wallacefoundation.org.

Cal Performances' suite of student life and learning programs, including **Front Row**, is made possible, in part, by Chevron.

Cal Performances produces and presents performances of the highest artistic quality, enhanced by programs that explore compelling intersections of education and the performing arts. Founded in 1906, Cal Performances fulfills this mission by presenting a diverse range of more than 100 music, dance, and theater performances each season, as well as creating a context for the work through supporting education and community programs.



FRONT ROW

WITH **MARGARET CHO**
AND FRIENDS

BY UCB STUDENTS,
FOR UCB STUDENTS



ALI
WONG



APARNA
NANCHERLA



HARI
KONDOBOLU

RACE. IDENTITY. POWER.

A once-in-a-lifetime experience. Only at UC Berkeley.

MARCH 21 | 7–8:30PM
ZELLERBACH HALL

*Front Row is generously supported by
The Wallace Foundation and Chevron.*

calperformances.org/front-row



I'd love to create an event where we talk all about race in entertainment. So much has changed since I started doing 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!

—Margaret Cho

We developed **Front Row** to celebrate and engage UC Berkeley's most defining and prized resource—its student body. It is a privilege each day to work in an environment steeped in the possibilities of the future, surrounded by the individuals who will make that future manifest. With this in mind, we at Cal Performances are thrilled to play our part in the stewardship of student life and learning by providing access to the greatest living performing artists, the centuries of knowledge, progress, and innovation they represent in their practice, and the human inspiration they provide through their gifts.

In creating **Front Row**, we took our inspiration directly from the students of UC Berkeley. In 2015–16, the inaugural season of this program, we recruited a rare and talented band of undergraduates to consider this new program and help develop a plan. We started by asking the question: "If you could invite any national or international artistic/cultural figure with direct ties to the Bay Area to make a show with you, who would you ask and why?" After developing a list of nearly 40 possibilities, we began to narrow the list by asking, "What if the show we make is not only about the actual work of the artists we select, but about what goes on inside their head? What if we populate the stage with who and what they find interesting?"

Those questions, in the hands of a different set of student curators each year, are what make **Front Row** unique—a one-night-only insight into the mind of an artist who has shaped a generation, based exclusively on months of that artist sharing stories and staying in dialogue with us, as well as participating in deeply personal interviews created and conducted by the student curators. Together, they create the frame that will hold the show together, as well as the format for an evening that, by its very nature, could never occur again.

Of course this can't work unless the selected artist is willing to join this process with commitment and enthusiasm. At this moment, we want to thank Margaret Cho for her dedication to this project and its subject matter. She brings her staggering intelligence, hilarious sense of humor, profound insights, and unmistakable style to the mix. We also would like to thank Ali Wong, Aparna Nancharla, and Hari Kondabolu for taking part as Margaret's guests, making this a star-studded event, indeed.

The final element in this project is you, the students and community of UC Berkeley. Your time, interest, and presence here are why we do this work. It is particularly rewarding for us—and for your peers—to be involved with such an event. Go Bears!

—Rob Bailis,

Associate Director, Cal Performances

From the Student Curators

We've only lived so long, as children who were raised in the shadow of 9/11 and who came to consciousness during the time of our first black President. We've seen the impact our voices can have on society, but we've also had our idealism shocked by the polarizing forces that have divided a nation. It seems particularly important right now that we examine the issues that have brought to light these fissures in our national identity—race, identity, and power. Power is at the crux of our discussion: Who has power? What does it mean to hold power in our society? What does it mean to feel powerless? How do we, as students—many of us minorities—gain power and agency? Because the core of **Front Row** is a celebration of who we are—as citizens of the Bay Area and as a vibrant and complex student body—this can be the ideal public platform on which to tackle these ideas.

When creating this year's **Front Row**, we dove into the diverse narratives of Berkeley students, highlighting our racial diversity and expanding on our more nuanced stories about our identities, communities, and personal narratives. Our small team represents a microcosm of our campus, hailing from many intellectual and cultural backgrounds. We are tied together by our love for the arts and our understanding of the arts as a tool for social change.

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Hari has also performed at such notable festivals as the HBO Comedy Festival, South by Southwest, Bumbershoot, Sasquatch Festival, the Aspen Ideas Festival, and Just for Laughs in Montreal and Chicago.

When in New York City, Hari co-hosts the mostly improvised talk show *The Untitled Kondabolu Brothers Project* with his younger brother Ashok ("Dap" from the hip-hop group Das Racist) as well as *The Untitled Kondabolu Brothers Podcast*. He also wrote the cover story for *Spin* magazine about Das Racist in November 2011. He was a former video blogger for *World Compass*, a joint initiative between WGBH Boston, PBS, and the Corporation for Public Broadcasting.

Hari was born and raised in Queens, New York City. He went to Townsend Harris High

School, and the school's mascot, "Hari the Hawk," was named after him during his senior year. (He sometimes fears that his greatest achievement was accomplished at the age of 17.)

Hari attended both Bowdoin College and Wesleyan University, graduating from the former institution with a BA in comparative politics in 2004. A former immigrant-rights organizer in Seattle, Hari also earned a master's degree in human rights from the London School of Economics in 2008, writing a merit-earning dissertation entitled "Mexican Returnees as Internally Displaced People: An Argument for the Protection of Economic Migrants Under the UN-Guiding Principles on Internal Displacement." This is, by far, the least funny thing he has ever written... including this bio.

continued from inside front cover

We are intensely aware of how different we are, and conversations about our identities fueled our curatorial process. Eventually they brought us to the incredible Margaret Cho.

We all see attending this large research university as a major opportunity, but life here can also feel overwhelming and impersonal. We can, however, connect over our struggles as children of immigrants, people of color, victims of oppression and marginalization, and allies in the movement to make our world more inclusive. Here is our contribution to that movement—an all-Asian-American show that offers four artists of color a unique platform within an industry that is often unwelcoming.

Over the past months, we've pondered these serious topics in great detail, and we've had the pleasure of doing so with levity that only comedians can bring. Humor has a spe-

cial way of showing us what is important, placing in stark relief the larger issues at hand. Perhaps, and more importantly, humor brings us together—laughter opens hearts, and with open hearts, we can more fully appreciate the perspectives of others. As you leave tonight, we hope you think about who you are and what forms your identity, but most of all, what that means beyond yourself. How can you make a difference?

Thank you, Margaret, for the years of inspiration and laughter that led us to selecting you for this year's **Front Row**, and for these months of amazing planning that dealt with challenging subjects. To Ali, Aparna, and Hari—thank you, thank you, thank you for sharing your time and talent with us. You will make this a night to remember!

ABOUT THE ARTISTS

Ali is currently shooting ABC's new sitcom *American Housewife* as well as writing on *Fresh Off the Boat*. She has performed on *Late Night with Seth Meyers*, *The Tonight Show with Jay Leno*, *John Oliver's New York Stand-up Show*, and *Comedy Underground with Dave Attell*. Ali has also appeared in Oliver Stone's *Savages* and was a series regular on NBC's *Are You There Chelsea?* and the ABC drama *Black Box*, opposite Vanessa Redgrave and Kelly Reilly. Ali makes regular appearances on Chris Hardwick's late-night game show *@midnight*, as well as on *Inside Amy Schumer*.

On September 11, 2016, Wong spoke at and walked the runway during New York Fashion Week for the Opening Ceremonies show. She has also joined the cast of Kate Spade's *MISS ADVENTURE* films. Tickets to see Wong headline live are now known to sell out within two minutes. Ali was recently profiled in *The New Yorker* by Ariel Levy.

Aparna Nancherla started out doing comedy in her hometown of Washington DC and now resides in New York City. *Elle's* "Women in Comedy" issue (2016) featured her as one of the most exciting new voices to hit the comedy scene. She is a series regular in the debut season of Comedy Central's *Corporate* and has reprised her role in Season 2 of HBO's *Crashing*. Aparna is also featured in the second season of Netflix's *The Standups*. Other television credits include Netflix's *Master of None* and *LOVE*, HBO's *High Maintenance*, Comedy Central's *Inside Amy Schumer*, appearing as a US correspondent for Dave's (UK) *Unspun with Matt Forde*, and Hulu's *I Love You, America with Sarah Silverman*. In 2018 she makes her feature debut in the Paul Feig movie *A Simple Favor*. Her television stand-up appearances include *Seeso's* stand-up series *Night Train with Wyatt Cenac*, Season 2 of Comedy Central's *Meltdown*, and *Adam Devine's House Party*. In 2013 she made her late-night stand-up debut on *TBS's Conan* and was one of the breakout *New Faces* at the prestigious Just for Laughs Festival in Montreal. Her television writing credits include *Late Night with Seth Meyers* as well as being a regular

correspondent/writer on *FX's Totally Biased with W. Kamau Bell*. Aparna is also an alumna of the NBC *Stand Up for Diversity* program and currently headlines throughout the world. She has been seen at a number of festivals including Comedy Central's Clusterfest, Portland's Bridge-town Comedy Festival, Moontower, SF Sketch-fest, DC's Bentzen Ball, Outside Lands, Bonnaroo, and Dublin's Vodaphone Comedy Festival. Aparna has been featured on and in NPR, *Reader's Digest*, *The Huffington Post*, *The Washington Post Magazine*, *XM Radio*, and *Slate V*. She can regularly be seen performing at the Upright Citizens Brigades in Los Angeles and New York City. Her debut album, *Just Putting It Out There*, was released in July 2016 by Tig Notaro's label Bentzen Ball Records and hit the Number 4 spot on the *Billboard* comedy chart.

Hari Kondabolu is a Brooklyn-based, Queens-raised comic whom the *New York Times* has called "one of the most exciting political comics in stand-up today." In March 2014, he released his debut standup album, *Waiting for 2042*, on the indie-label Kill Rock Stars. He was NYU's APA Institute's artist-in-residence for the 2014–15 academic year.

Hari has done standup on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, *Conan*, *Jimmy Kimmel Live*, *Live at Gotham*, and *John Oliver's New York Stand-up Show*. His *Comedy Central Presents* half-hour television special debuted on the network in February 2011. Hari was also a writer and correspondent for the Chris Rock-produced *Totally Biased with W. Kamau Bell* on FX.

In 2014 Hari was interviewed on *Fresh Air with Terry Gross* on NPR. A regular on public radio, he has also appeared on *Morning Edition*, *All Things Considered*, *Studio 360*, *Bullseye*, and *Soundcheck*. Hari has appeared on popular podcasts like *WTF with Marc Maron*, *You Made it Weird with Pete Holmes*, and *Too Beautiful to Live with Luke Burbank*.

In the UK, Hari has established himself with appearances on BBC 3's *Russell Howard's Good News*, *Live at the Electric*, and Channel 4's *8 Out of 10 Cats*. He also performed at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival in 2011.



C A L P E R F O R M A N C E S P R E S E N T S

FRONT ROW

90 Minutes, No Intermission

Comedians in Conversation with Margaret Cho

Ali Wong

Aparna Nancherla

Hari Kondabolu

Lighting design by Blake Manship

#CalFrontRow

The taking of photographs and video during the show is strictly prohibited.

But be part of the action! Tweet your questions before the show and again when Margaret invites you to. Participants will answer as many questions as possible during the discussion.



Members of the Student Curators of Cal Performances

Student Curators of Cal Performances

Anna Bruns
(Applied Mathematics)

Dianne Chung
(Integrative Biology and
Peace and Conflict Studies)

Shannon Hong
(Developmental Studies and Data Science)

Salwa Meghjee
(Undeclared)

Kate Montana
(Anthropology and Integrative Biology)

Lila Mullins*
(Theater and Performance Studies)

Jessely Serrano*
(Media Studies)

Dylan Stover
(Molecular Environmental Biology)

Jing Wen
(Economics)

*Member since 2016

If you would like to join the Student Curators of Cal Performances for the 2018–19 academic year, please email gpxaton@calperformances.org by April 15, 2018.

Beginning with her early days as a rising stand-up comedian in San Francisco, **Margaret Cho** has always been the Agent Provocateur of entertainment. Never one to shy away from any topic, Margaret finds literally nothing off limits when it comes to sharing her views on family, gay rights, politics, sexuality, bullying, and oh-so-much more. Margaret's socially aware, no-holds-barred type of comedy has made her both a thought leader and a tolerant teacher for those with open minds and open hearts. An accomplished performer in all formats, she has conquered the worlds of film, television, books, music, and theater. She has been nominated for five Grammy Awards and one Emmy, and her comedy tours are always sold out, both here and abroad. She's had two shows debut Off-Broadway (*I'm the One That I Want* and *The Sensuous Woman*) and her last stand-up routine, *psyCHO*, was filmed at the historic Gramercy Theatre in New York City.

The film and DVD releases of Margaret's comedy shows have broken records as well, with *I'm the One That I Want* still holding the title for "Most Money Grossed Per Print" for an independent film. Her other releases, which Cho fans collect and swap with zeal, include *Notorious C.H.O.* (2001), *Assassin* (2005), *Beautiful* (2009), *Cho Dependent* (2011), and *psyCHO* (2015). Margaret has always been responsible for the distribution and sales of all her content via her own Clownery label, a move that was extremely forward-thinking when she made it in 1999.

Margaret has also made an indelible mark in television, starting in 1994 with the trailblazing network comedy *All-American Girl*. This was followed by the first "reality sitcom," *The Cho Show*, on VH1, six seasons on the Lifetime series *Drop Dead Diva*, one season of TLC's late night show *All About SEX*, a seat at the table as a special guest host of E!'s *Fashion Police*, and an Emmy nod for Outstanding Guest Actress for her hilarious turn as Kim Jong Il on *30 Rock*. She recently developed *Highland*, a dramedy for TNT about a woman fresh out of rehab who has to oversee her very needy, very dysfunctional Korean-American family.

Margaret's music career has been equally successful. The popular and critical acclaim for her Grammy-nominated *Cho Dependent* record

was well-earned, as Margaret took both vocal and instrumental lessons to make sure she could keep up with guest performers such as Tegan & Sara, Grant Lee Phillips, and Fiona Apple. Her follow-up release, 2016's *American Myth*, earned her another Grammy nomination for Best Comedy Album. With songs such as "Fat Pussy," "I Want to Kill My Rapist," and "Anna Nicole," *American Myth*, made with collaborator Garrison Starr, showcased Margaret's first efforts as a composer. She has described the album as a mixture of "Americana, Beatlemania, and 1990s riot girl."

With so much success in her creative life, Margaret has never turned away from causes that are important to her. She is incredibly active in anti-racism, anti-bullying, and gay rights campaigns, and has been recognized for her unwavering dedication over the years. Her involvement has earned her many accolades and awards, including the Victory Fund's Leadership Award, the first-ever Best Comedy Performance Award at the 2007 Asian Excellence Awards, the First Amendment Award from the ACLU of Southern California, and the Intrepid Award from the National Organization for Women (NOW).

Margaret was named one of the "50 Best Stand-Up Comics" by *Rolling Stone* magazine, which called her "the sort of funny, sex-positive feminist and LGBT activist younger comics continue to look up to." No surprise then that Margaret continues to innovate. Her *Fresh Off the Bloat* tour was all about the politics of disgust and what is disgusting about politics. In other words, classic Margaret Cho.

As she says, "It's meta. It's magical. It's me."

FRIENDS

Ali Wong is a comedian, actress, and writer living in Los Angeles. On Mother's Day 2016, Netflix released her first stand-up special, *Baby Cobra*, which was filmed when she was seven months pregnant. The special received wide critical acclaim, with *New York* magazine saying, "The special's arrival on Netflix is the sort of star-making moment that unites the tastes of the unlikeliest fans."