

DON'T LABEL IT!

July/August 2009

Cho 'Nuff!

*Xanna Don't
chats up
comedian, actress,
producer, director,
author and
renaissance
rocker*

Margaret Cho

plus

IMAGINARY BITCHES

**& The Daytime
Emmy Awards**

CLUB BITES:
North Carolina BBQ
@ Paris, Decatur

Your Personal
Forecast:
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Xanna Don't?*

*Win ATLANTA
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Cho 'Nuff!

CHO DOES IT ALL

by Xanna Don't

A Jane of all trades, **Margaret Cho**, is as busy as she wants to be. With a new television series shooting just outside of Atlanta debuting this month, she diligently peppers her hectic filming schedule with standup comedy work outs at The Vortex's Laughing Skull Comedy Lounge and culls collaborations with local pop/rock luminaries in anticipation of a new musical comedy record album next year. She's the definition of a working performer and an artistic master of many mediums.



XANNA DON'T: In your new television show, ***Drop Dead Diva***, premiering **July 12** on **Lifetime**, you play the adept assistant of a smart yet confused-by-way-of-reincarnation lawyer. In its pilot episode, your character administers a spray of aerosol cheese to her panicky boss, causing the attorney to exclaim, "That stuff is like xanax!" Have you ever been rescued in an unconventional way? Is there a person helping you with your day-to-day life, formally or informally, and have you been able to relate their experiences to your new role?

MARGARET CHO: I have a few people who help me out a lot with the day-to-day stuff, and they rescue me all the time. I certainly use my experiences with them as a jumping off point for my character, however, she is a lot wilder than anyone I have worked with. In future episodes, you'll get to see

my character grow into more of a wild child than we initially thought, so it's super exciting, sexy and fun.

XD: Your next project is **Wedding Palace**, a film starring and produced by **Brian Tee** of Starz' television version of the Oscar-winning movie, *Crash*. When he was in Atlanta for our film festival in April promoting *Deadland*, a film he also stars in and produced, he told me his Korean-American family storyline is winding down on that show next year and that *Crash* will be less ensemble-oriented overall. When George Lopez got the news that his sitcom was cancelled, he publicly commented, "TV just became really, really white again." Do you think TV has gotten better or worse at representing minorities with front burner storylines and in lead roles since you debuted your history-making sitcom, **All-American Girl** in the mid-1990s?

MC: I think things are slightly better, but not all that great. There was the massive popularity of [the Oscar-winning film] *Slumdog Millionaire*, but Bollywood has been around almost as long as Hollywood has. Even though it was thrilling to see Asian faces at the multiplex, I have been a Bollywood fanatic forever. So the only thing that was new to me about it was the mainstream finally acknowledging its existence. George Lopez is right, but it didn't just get white when his show got cancelled. It's been white all along.

XD: When *All-American Girl* got picked up as a series, you became plagued with body issues, trying to fit in as a part of super-skinny Hollywood. One critic posed, "Isn't it true that the network asked you to lose weight to play the part of yourself on your own TV show?" You describe that period of trying to appease them as, "chasing the phen phen dragon." I know you went jogging frequently with **Amanda Palmer** of *The Dresden Dolls* during your participation in the first **True Colors** concert tour two years ago. As you continue to work as an actress, how do you balance body image and health today?

MC: I just try to dance as much as I can. That to me isn't working out, it's just having fun. I am a dancer by nature, so embracing that side of myself keeps me healthy and strong. Otherwise, I don't think about it much. As I get older, body issues are less and less important, which is wonderful. I am so glad to be free of that insanity.

XD: How would you describe the influence of the GLBT community upon your life? In your standup routines, you refer to it as "our community," even though you are a married heterosexual woman. Growing up in San Francisco, your first after-school job was in a gay

leather/sex shop. As the most legendary of fag hags, when did your indoctrination into the community really begin? How did that evolve? It's as if you were raised by wolves and, although not a biological member of the species, you can still pick up the scent and run with the pack, at times even leading it. Is that a fair analogy?

MC: I always had boyfriends, little boys who would follow me around in the nursery, in the playground, then later through the hallways, to my locker, to where kids were smoking cigarettes – then after high school they all started coming out! So I am not sure what it was about me that was so attractive to gay men, but it has been with me my entire life. I do identify as queer, because that is what is most truthful to me; I have had many relationships with men and women, so my sexuality is certainly queer. But I feel that my identity is clearly and solidly “fag hag.” And I run with the wolves for sure.

XD: With the familiarity she gained through her daughter's reality TV show, **Kathy Griffin's** mother eventually became a regular part of her standup act. But your mother has always been a part of your act, long before her backstage cameos and lobby appearances in your concert films (*“Do you know me? I am so famous!”*). You began performing at comedy clubs at the age of 16, but when did you first realize that your mother was comedy gold?

MC: I actually did impressions of my mother very early on, like maybe at 7 or 8. It was funny to me then, and it is still very funny to me now. I think that when you are Asian-American, you want to break free from traditional culture by mocking it, so my mother was an easy target. She's got a great sense of humor and always laughed at my impersonation, mostly because it's so dead on.

XD: You attended and performed for the **Bonnaroo** music festival last month and had occasion to chat up **Robert Kennedy Jr.** on environmental issues. Recycling is mandatory in California, but here in the southeast, it's often neglected and ignored. What are your views on individual responsibility towards the environment?

MC: When you think of how staggering the amount of waste that even the most basic need – drinking water – produces, it's astounding. The overuse of plastic water bottles is scary. I have been using and reusing the same Fiji water bottle for months. I still need to get an aluminum water bottle. I get super freaked out when I think about what plastic water bottles are doing to our planet.



XD: In addition to acting as a producer on your concert films and your campy narrative feature, *Bam Bam & Celeste*, you beautifully directed **Jill Sobule**'s moving video for the song, *San Francisco*, currently available for viewing on YouTube. What motivated you to do it? Any plans to direct more music videos or direct in other mediums?

MC: I love Jill Sobule and I love San Francisco. All the people in the video are very close friends of mine who represent the city to me. I wanted to put them all together like it was a commercial for tourism in the city. I love to shoot and edit, and I am learning as I go. I have some plans to make videos for other artists this fall, once I am done shooting *Drop Dead Diva* in Peachtree City, GA.

XD: When your concert films *I'm The One That I Want* and *Notorious C.H.O.* debuted at film festivals, you personally ripped tickets presented by audience members streaming into the theater. Will you do the same thing when you have a record release party next year for your new comedic musical album, *Guitarded*? With writing collaborations that include Grant Lee Phillips ("*Eat Shit and Die*," already available as an mp3 on your web site), Amanda Palmer, Tegan & Sara, Patty Griffin, Jon Brion, Girl In A Coma, and Australia's Ben Lee, what can we expect the album to be like?

MC: I am hoping the album will be very close to what I do as a standup comic, but also be beautiful music as well. I am lucky because I get to work with some of my favorite artists. Playing music with people is so different than anything I have done. When you are playing and singing together, something you have written together, it feels so magical. It really feels like making love. It's so moving and grand.

XD: You're hitting the road this fall to do your classic standup and introduce a few songs from the new album. You'll be in the southeast in September; can we look forward to Atlanta being on your touring calendar?

MC: I know I am going to be in Athens for sure. Hopefully Atlanta will also be included, but I may save it for the really, really big tour in 2010. I have come to feel very much at home here!

***Drop Dead Diva* debuts July 12 at 9 p.m. EST on Lifetime.**

***Margaret Cho: Beautiful* airs July 3—August 4 on Showtime. www.margaretkho.com**

Sean Ehrman contributed to this article.

Photos by Pixie Vision Productions.

CLUB BITES *by Megan St. James*



New York has the Statue of Liberty, London has Big Ben, and now **Paris, Decatur** has hickory-smoked North Carolina-style barbecue.

Owner **Susan Bird** recognized that the City of Decatur had a void in its culinary selections—no barbecue. North Carolina barbecue dates back to the 1500s when the Spanish introduce the pig. It quickly flourished making North Carolina the cradle of barbecue. Its unique style of slow cooking at low temperature over a prolonged time creates juicy, flavorful meats dry rubbed with spices and vinegar-based seasonings.

Each morning, self-taught chef **Dawn McCullouch** gets the smoker going and fills it with pork shoulders, beef briskets, whole chickens, and of course, ribs. Her cooked-to-perfection, juicy Pulled Pork Sandwich retains its smoky, savory flavors. Try this with house-made Tabasco-tomato sauce, a side of potato salad with a touch of mustard, and an ice-cold Red Stripe beer. The Pulled Chicken Sandwich on a Kaiser roll with sweet and sour Hawaiian sauce is a perfect blend of white and dark meats. Creamy, sexy yams with cinnamon undertones and a glass of the elegant 2007 Ecco Domani Pinot Grigio matched nicely. Thinly sliced Beef Brisket served on Foccacia bread coupled with a Bourbon sauce had rich hickory flavors. A side of Mac 'n' Cheese made with a blend of cheddar, mozzarella, and asiago cheeses was yummy! The 2007 Doña Paula Los Cardos Malbec's rich, brambly black fruit aroma with lingering currants, spice and herbs is a perfect wine for this down home barbecue. Delightful fall-off-the-bone ribs went perfectly with a soy-based Asian Sauce and a side of heavenly smoked beef collards. The dark black fruit aromas and blackberry, spice and pepper of the 2005 McWilliams Shiraz went well with these finger-licking good babies. One other dish of mention is the Fish Fry Rice consisting of strips of Whiting blended with summer vegetables. It only needs a Corona with lime and a sunset to complete that want-to-be-at-the-beach experience.

Paris brings the casual social event of barbecue for your pleasure Monday through Friday, 11AM to 5PM, with extended hours on Friday serving until midnight. Carry out orders can be faxed in advance. Be ready to lick your fingers!

www.parisdecatur.com

BE SCENE



Liz McGrath of the band Miss Derringer, Girl In A Coma, performing members of The Glitterati, and Hotlanta Softball League's Wolverines fundraiser @ F.R.O.G.S.

encounters

July 6

new! soulMATIC Mondays @ Club Vice:
music / spoken word / neo soul / hip hop

www.viceatl.com

July 10

The Femme Mafia *presents*
Femmes of Power @ Bellissima, ATL

www.myspace.com/femmefafia

July 12

Cat Power & The Dirty Delta Blues
@ The Earl, ATL

www.myspace.com/catpower

July 20—26

Girls Rock Camp ATL

www.girlsrockcampatl.org

July 23—26

Hal Sparks @ The Vortex's
Laughing Skull Comedy Lounge, ATL

www.vortexcomedy.com

July 25

African Musical Landscapes
Vocal Workshop by Elise Witt *with* Katia
Leonard @ Pine Lake Clubhouse, ATL

www.elisewitt.com

Poetry Slam Fundraiser @ Apache Café,
ATL www.roughlanguage.com

July 26

The Old 97's @ Variety Playhouse, ATL

www.myspace.com/theold97s

July 27

Star 94FM Starfest with Jason Mraz, Plain
White T's, and G.Love & Special Sauce @
Verizon Amphitheater, ATL

www.myspace.com/glovespecialsauce

July 30

The Bridges @ Smith's Olde Bar, ATL

www.myspace.com/thebridgesmusic



July 31

Grupo Fantasma
@ Variety Playhouse, ATL

www.myspace.com/fantasmatics



August 7

Julie & Julia starring Meryl Streep & Amy Adams opens www.julieandjulia.com

August 16

Unplugged In The Park
with **Sonia Leigh** - FREE ADMISSION
@ Park Tavern, ATL www.99x.com



August 21

John Oliver (*The Daily Show*)
and Seth Meyers (*Saturday Night Live*)
@ The Ferst Center for The Arts, ATL
www.ferstcenter.org

Blue October @ Masquerade, ATL
www.myspace.com/blueoctober

August 22

Sister Hazel @ Center Stage, ATL
www.myspace.com/sisterhazel

SISTER HAZEL



R E L E A S E

August 28

AGLCC Awards Dinner
@ Georgia Aquarium
www.atlantagaychamber.org

August 30

The Daytime Emmy Awards on The CW
www.soapcentral.com

September 1

Whitney Houston's new album drops
www.whitneyhouston.com



DON'T LABEL IT!

Personal Forecasts

JULY
2009



What would Zoey do?



What would Xanna don't?

CANCER	The solar eclipse on July 21 gives you the courage to get your stethoscope back and excel at work. Yes! <i>You can do this job!</i>	Don't resist new approaches with someone. The changes you make early on will have you humming in harmony at month's end.
LEO	It's a good time to bring that friendly muffin basket to work and schmooze with fellow staff. You sparkle in social settings.	Don't sweat the big stuff; eventually you'll see that you're doing just fine. Trust the universe and put yourself out there.
VIRGO	Your bedside manner is perfectly tuned and you say all the right things. It's a good time to interview for a promotion or a new job.	Don't know what that electricity in the air is all about? It's about you. You're positively charged and creating a beautiful buzz.
LIBRA	You dreamed of this, but now that it's proven to be more challenging than you envisioned, you have doubts. Stick to it! Keep trying!	Don't misinterpret that itch to make changes. It really means you should recommit to your existing situation and refocus your efforts.
SCORPIO	The lunar eclipse on July 7 will present you with an interesting case; it may not be an emergency, but you should get on it, stat!	Don't overanalyze that which tantalizes you; Margaret Cho wants you to run with the wolves and you're ready to sprint. How!
SAGITTARIUS	Your flow with a partner will change, challenge and reward you. When Nurse Jackie says jump, you'll know how high.	Don't hesitate to restructure a partnership to your needs. You've got a better handle on things than anyone suspects. Step up.
CAPRICORN	You're at the epicenter of solar and lunar eclipses, so expect your triage duties to be revealing and perhaps shocking. Prioritize!	Don't bat your eyelashes like you've never encountered such things—you've seen it all. You're practicality makes you rock steady.
AQUARIUS	Review your Lippincott Nursing Manual and stick to known procedures. Focus on your resting heart rate and administer xanax prn.	Don't spin out of control trying to reinvent the wheel. A trusty mare will get you there feeling fine. Stick with the tried and true.
PISCES	Your doctor assignments this month will set the tone for your experiences for months to come. You'll know what's expected of you.	Don't be intimidated by current trials and tribulations; you can swim with the sharks and still maintain a sweet sense of self.
ARIES	As your schedule changes, remember that nurses deliver quality care no matter what shift, doctor, or patients they're assigned.	Don't put your vintage David Bowie albums into storage just yet—"ch ch ch changes" on every forefront deserve a hearty sing along.
TAURUS	Update patient files now or they will pile up. If your good heart finds you picking up extra shifts, be sure to bank that overtime pay.	Don't allow minutia to overwhelm you. The wife and I believe in making lists. We love lists! Just write it down and it'll all get done.
GEMINI	An RN earns more than an LPN, so plan accordingly. But whatever letters follow your name, your personal life is, like, glowing!	Don't miss the soaring season of you! Pay your bills, of course, but summer presents waves of popularity for you, week after week.

Merritt Wever, whose film credits include *Signs*, *Michael Clayton*, and *Into The Wild*, appears as *Zoey Barkow* on Showtime's *Nurse Jackie*. www.sho.com

With a little imagination...

by Xanna Don't

When **The Daytime Emmy Awards** air August 30 on The CW, **All My Children** (AMC), a daytime drama that was once the most "taped" program in America (remember VCR's?), will publicly enjoy a miraculous comeback. Last year, AMC was at the bottom of the Emmy nominations list, followed only by *Passions*, a show that was being cancelled. After riding high for decades, it seemed that new nomination rules designed to give more shows a chance had finally killed the titan that gave us daytime's most recognized character, **Erica Kane**, played by daytime's highest paid actress, **Susan Lucci**. Lifelong fans were crushed. But not only does AMC have the most number of nominations this year, one of them is in a fairly new category that serves as a progressive precursor for all of daytime. The *New Approaches* category, according to Emmy, "emphasizes innovative production techniques and the use of media enhancement." AMC cast a real life Iraqi war vet to portray a sensitive storyline much like his own and executed it beautifully. Also nominated in this category is web series **Imaginary Bitches** starring AMC's **Eden Riegel**. After winning her own Emmy in 2005 for playing Erica Kane's lesbian daughter, she shares this year's nomination with her real life family and IB's production staff: her husband, brother, and openly-lesbian sister. This lesser known category has become the one to watch in 2009.



www.imaginarybitches.com

DLI's SUPER SUMMER SPORTY-SPICE SWEEPSTAKES!



Be among *the first 25 people* to email their NAME and ZIP CODE to dontlabelit@gmail.com for the random drawing of 2 Atlanta Braves tickets for Sept. 4th. This Friday night game features fireworks and a live music performance by **Sonia Leigh**. Email us with "**vine ripe**" in the subject line!
Good luck!

text messages from hell

me (06/02, 9:42 pm):

Did you get home without incident?

scott (06/02, 9:47 pm):

Yeah. But they were pretty buzzed.

me (06/02, 9:48 pm):

I know! She threw up in the ladies room.

scott (06/02, 9:50 pm):

Are you fucking kidding me? I dropped her off at another bar!

me (06/02, 9:52 pm):

This would be great for "text messages from hell."

scott (06/02, 9:53 pm):

It so would!

me (06/12, 11:03 am):

We just heard about the deck collapse at MSR on CNN--12 people went to hospital? Are you OK? Were you working?

kathryn (06/12, 11:14 am):

Yeah. I'm fine. All the injuries were minor. I was on the deck, but not the part that fell.

me (06/12, 11:16 am):

Whew! Thank gawd. Are you working tonight? Is it open?

kathryn (06/12, 11:19 am):

Not sure. I'm waiting to find out.

me (06/12, 12:35 pm):

I just got you on the guest list plus one for girl in a coma tonight at masquerade. If you're not working, come out and I'll buy you a couple of beers.

kathryn (06/12, 12:41 pm):

Cool, thanks.

steve (06/27, 7:22 pm):

The code to the "room" is 7-8-2-2. Legs up in the sling?

me (06/27, 7:29 pm):

Did you just send this to everybody you know? You might wanna change that code now.

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Previously published in the 1990's in Austin, Texas, this 'zine began simply as my band's newsletter and evolved into a regional Texas publication. Since the demise of Atlanta's lesbian magazine and as its former Entertainment Editor, I've revived the concept of cross-pollinating on paper the worlds I've always lived in: the live music scene, film happenings, and the **gay community**.

Within these pages, they co-exist in harmony.

Thanx for picking us up! *Xanna Don't*

www.dontlabelit.com

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