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A.C.T. AMERICAN  
CONSERVATORY  
THEATER

SHIVER WITH

FALL  
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ANTICI...PATION!

SATURDAY NOVEMBER 2, 2019

JUST A

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# A.C.T.'S **FALL GALA**

EVENT CO-CHAIRS  
**Priscilla Geeslin & Catherine Geeslin**

## PROGRAM

**7 PM**

Drinks and Divas

**8 PM**

Laughter, Wine, Dinner, and Song  
Featuring

Three-time Grammy and Emmy nominee **MARGARET CHO**  
and  
Multi-disciplinary artist **STAR AMERASU**

**10 PM**

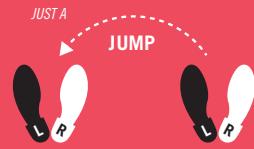
Sweets and Surprises  
After-Party Dancing

### *Gala Creative Team*

Andrew Russell – Director  
Dick Daley – Stage Manager  
Chris Lundahl – Lighting Designer

Creative Consultants from A.C.T.'s *Richard O'Brien's The Rocky Horror Show*

Sam Pinkleton  
Ani Taj  
Ada Westfall



TO THE LEFT



## EVENT CO-CHAIRS

Priscilla Geeslin & Catherine Geeslin

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Kimberly Hollkamp-Dinon

Nicholas Giovannoni

Cassandra Hunter

Dinah Berkeley

Eliza Kaye

Clint Bidwell

Breezy Leigh

Summer Brown

Jordan Maia

Zoe Chen

Zahan F. Mehta

John Chukwudelunzu

James Mercer

Jared Corbin

Mäkena Miller

Allen Darby

Matt Monaco

Evangeline Edwards

Rachel Morrison

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Grace E. Fojtik

Nicola Rinow

LeRoy S. Graham III

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Wesley Guimaraes

Sarah Traisman

Morgan Gunter

Emma Van Lare

Lily D. Harris

Kaiy Watts

Ashley Hicks

Jeff Wittekiend

Monica Ho

Madeline Yagle

## A.C.T.'S YOUNG CONSERVATORY PERFORMERS

Mia Bazo

Quincy Shaindlin

Helena Chuang

Janelle Soriano

Kamora Joseph

Lena Townsley

Marco Lizarraga

Rhea Vergehese

Luci Paczkowski

American Conservatory Theater thanks the following  
for their special assistance with tonight's event:

Blueprint Studios

Immersive Environments

Fred Levin

McCalls Catering & Events

And the entire team at A.C.T.!

# WELCOME

## ***Hot patootie, bless my soul...and welcome to A.C.T.'s Fall Gala!***

We are delighted to have you here with us this evening as we celebrate A.C.T. and its important role in the Bay Area. From bold and inspiring voices on its stages, to nurturing the next generation of artists, to providing life-changing arts experiences to 20,000 young people, families, and educators across the region, A.C.T. is a vital part of San Francisco's—and the country's—vibrant arts community.

Live theater affords us the opportunity to gather together and spark conversation. When Richard O'Brien launched *The Rocky Horror Show* in 1973 as a paean to individuality and liberation, the whole world was invited to see a new reality, and to celebrate the diversity that reality presented. It is not surprising then that *The Rocky Horror Show* would figure prominently in A.C.T.'s 2019-20 season—a season singularly committed to, and in celebration of, diverse visions and voices. The chance to fashion a gala around the rich, iconic fabric of *Rocky Horror* represented a creative opportunity that could not be passed up—especially in this venue so close to the Strand Theater, which was one of the first places in the country to host a troupe of performers that acted out *The Rocky Horror Picture Show*.

While putting this evening together, we had the

great privilege to work with director/choreographer Sam Pinkleton (*Natasha, Pierre, & The Great Comet of 1812*). Sam is the mastermind behind A.C.T.'s upcoming production of *The Rocky Horror Show*, which he envisions as a party to which all are invited, turning the Geary Theater into a nucleus of community engagement. We hope tonight whets your appetite for San Francisco's most extraordinary *Rocky Horror* yet, landing next April.

In stride with this love letter to the shameless originality of San Francisco, we are honored to have three-time Grammy and Emmy nominee Margaret Cho with us tonight. Born and raised here, Cho is known as the "Patron Saint of Outsiders" who, in addition to having a storied career in comedy, is a tireless crusader in the fight against racism, sexism, and bullying.

We are deeply grateful for the generous support you are providing this evening, which will fund A.C.T.'s artistic, artist training, and education and community programs that serve 250,000 across the Bay Area each year. We also send our thanks to the members of our Event Committee, who helped us shape the evening, gave so generously, and inspired others to give.

***Don't dream it, be it...***



Catherine Geeslin  
Gala Co-Chair



Priscilla B. Geeslin  
Gala Co-Chair

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Sara Eisner Richter and Michael Richter  
Jason Ting  
Jeffrey Ting

## SPECIAL THANKS TO OUR EVENT UNDERWRITERS

Jerome L. and Thao N. Dodson, *After-Dinner Entertainment*  
Jesse Lee Eller, *Specialty Cocktail*  
John Little and Heather Stallings Little, *Dr. Frank-n-Furter's Laboratory Photo Booth*  
Marcy and Paul Nathan, *MFA Student Ticket*  
Gerine Ongkeko and Jorge del Calvo, *Champagne*  
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Patti and Rusty Rueff, *After-Dinner Entertainment*

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AND THEN A



# TONIGHT'S ENTERTAINMENT

## MARGARET CHO

Margaret Cho was born and raised in San Francisco. Racing toward adulthood as fast as she could to escape the constant bullying she endured, Margaret began writing jokes at 14 and professionally performing at age 16. Getting picked on, and not having a feeling of belonging, is something she still feels very deeply despite her success.

Soon after starting her stand-up career, Margaret won a comedy contest where first prize was opening for Jerry Seinfeld. Still in her early twenties, she hit the college circuit. Arsenio Hall introduced her to late night audiences, Bob Hope put her on a prime time special and, seemingly overnight, Margaret Cho became a national celebrity.

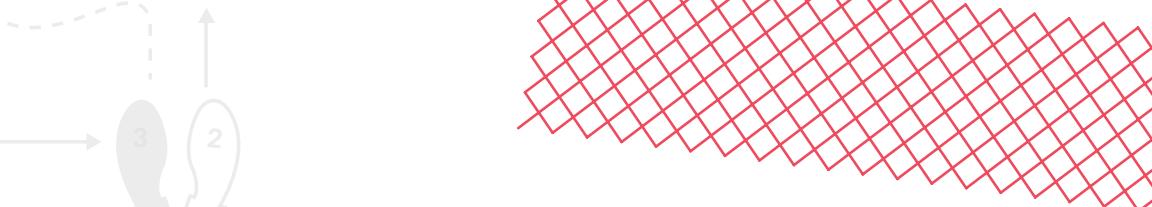
Her controversial and short-lived ABC sitcom, *All-American Girl* (1994) soon followed. Oddly, while chosen because of who she was, the powers-that-be decided they preferred for Margaret to “tone it down” for the show. “For fear of being too ‘ethnic,’ the show got so watered down for television that by the end, it was completely lacking in the essence of what I wanted to accomplish.”



The experience was a traumatic one, and Margaret developed an eating disorder as a response to criticism about her body. She was so obsessive in her goal to try to be what she thought others wanted, that she landed in the hospital with kidney failure. Throughout this period, Margaret continued performing to sold-out audiences in comedy clubs, theaters, and college campuses, working to channel her anger into something more positive.

In 1999, her groundbreaking, off-Broadway, one-woman show, *I'm The One That I Want*, toured the country to national acclaim and was made into a best-selling book and feature film of the same name. In 2001, after the success of her first tour, Margaret launched *Notorious C.H.O.*, a smash-hit 37-city national tour that culminated in a sold-out concert at Carnegie Hall.

In 2003, Margaret embarked on her third sold-out national tour, *Revolution*; the CD recording was nominated for a Grammy for Comedy Album of the Year. In 2007, Margaret hit the road with Cyndi Lauper, Debbie Harry, and Erasure, along with indie faves The Dresden Dolls and The Cliks, to host the *True Colors Tour*, benefiting the Human Rights Campaign.



Margaret returned to TV in 2008 with the VH1 series, *The Cho Show*. *The Cho Show* followed Margaret, her real parents, and her eccentric entourage through a series of bold and outrageous experiences, shaped by Margaret's "anything goes" brand of stand-up.

The aptly titled *Beautiful* came next, exploring the good, bad, and ugly in beauty, and the marketers who shape our world. The year 2010 culminated with another high honor, a second Grammy Award nomination for "Comedy Album of the Year" for *Cho Dependent*, her humorous collection of music, featuring collaborations with Fiona Apple, Andrew Bird, Grant Lee Phillips, Tegan & Sara, Ben Lee, and more.

Margaret's creative side moved ahead at full speed with an Emmy nomination for "Best Guest Performance" on *Thirty Rock*. 2015 brought Margaret back to the stand-up stage, where she filmed her Showtime special/DVD *psyCHO* at the historic Gramercy Theatre in New York City.

In 2016, the three-time Grammy and Emmy nominee released her next studio album, *American Myth*, on her Clownery label. The song that set the internet on fire ("I Want To) Kill My Rapist" was called by *Salon* magazine "A new anthem." Margaret spoke about the song saying, "I'm a victim, and now a survivor, of sexual abuse and rape, and I think it's really hard to talk about it. I think having a song to perform live will allow others to talk about it. It's a huge issue, and this was cathartic for me."

Margaret has never turned away from the causes that are important to her. She is very active in anti-racism, anti-bullying, advocating for the homeless and gay rights campaigns, PFLAG, and LA Pride, and has been recognized for her unwavering dedication. She was the recipient of the Victory Fund's Leadership Award and the first-ever "Best Comedy Performance Award" at the 2007 Asian Excellence Awards. She also received the "First Amendment Award" from the ACLU of Southern California, and the "Intrepid Award" from the National Organization for Women (NOW). Margaret has been honored by GLAAD, American Women in Radio and Television, the Lambda Legal Defense and Education Fund, the National Gay and Lesbian Task Force (NGLTF), the Asian American Legal Defense and Education Fund (AALDEF), PFLAG, and LA Pride, who gave Margaret a "Lifetime Achievement Award" for leaving a lasting imprint on the LGBT community.

## STAR AMERASU

Star Amerasu is a multi-disciplinary artist, and her music project Ah-Mer-Ah-Su has been lauded by media publications. Star's debut album *Star* was voted by Billboard Music critics as one of the top 20 LGBT albums of 2018. She grew into her artistry in San Francisco and Oakland, and has been performing in music, theater, and dance pieces since 2012. Her most recent musical release, *Incandescent Body* (made possible by funding from the Women's Audio Mission), was released in September of 2019 and featured orchestrated selections from Star's discography. The premiere of this work, in collaboration with *Post:Ballet* and *The Living Earth Show*, culminated in a two-day dance, music, and theatrical event. Star currently resides in Los Angeles, where she is working on her music and acting projects. You can learn more by following her on Instagram @staramerasu or Ah Mer Ah Su on Facebook.



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All photos by Kevin Berne and Jay Yamada.

RICHARD O'BRIEN'S THE

# ROCKY HORROR SHOW

*Book, music, and lyrics by*

Richard O'Brien

*Directed and choreographed by*

Sam Pinkleton

APR 23-MAY 17

THE GEARY THEATER



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