

Brainwashed - Margaret Cho with guest Dr. Vaginal Cream Davis

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This September 1st show, which took place at the Saenger Theatre in New Orleans, Louisiana, was the kickoff of comedienne Margaret Cho's "Notorious C.H.O." stand-up tour. I had no idea that I was right in the middle of Southern Decadence (a massive gay and lesbian festival in New Orleans), but quickly figured it out when a 6'4" African-American "woman" named "Ms. Dr. Vaginal Cream Davis", who claimed to be from "Africa-Germany" as well as being a "Celtic-African-Wiccan-Sorceress", took the stage as the tour's opener. Dr. Davis performed a few songs from her album, "The White to Be Angry" (interestingly enough produced by Steve Albini who worked with PJ Harvey and Nirvana), as well as "shrimping" (the sucking of toes as a sexual act) an innocent man from the audience. In between songs, Ms. Davis ate a combination of "Macrobiotic Aunt Jemima Light Syrup from Macedonia", whipped cream, and maraschino cherries from between the audience member's toes. This, she said, was a virginal sacrifice to some of the more important goddesses of ancient Greece: Chlamydia, Anal Wartease, Syphilis, and Gonorrhoea. After parading around in her American flag dress, flipping her long blonde "hair" numerous times, and revealing her sequined American flag-print thong, she left the stage. A mess. Margaret Cho took the stage moments later. After gratefully accepting the gift of an "Anal Pleasures Butt-Plug" from an adoring fan, she began to work the crowd with her unique blend of style, simple grace, and childlike charm. Her routine, often centering on topics like the gay and lesbian community, womanhood, weight problems, and what it's like to be an Asian-American, was a series of sometimes hilariously exaggerated and sometimes touching stories. Between anecdotes about her (usually embarrassing) sexual experiences and impressions of her mother, Ms. Cho often offered bits of genuine, inspirational advice. One got the idea that this wasn't just some comedy act, but the keynote address delivered to a group so wildly different that they could only be classified by their status as being "outside society." In fact, the final part of her show, just before her encore, was a call for a "revolution" that enabled you to "love yourself and others without restraint-unless you're into S&M-then by all means, use restraints" was "long, long overdue." The feelings of pride, happiness, and acceptance that flowed between the self-proclaimed "fag hag" and her audience were almost palpable, making this far more than your average stand-up routine.