

Margaret Cho combines music and comedy on tour



Photo courtesy of Ken Phillips

Margaret Cho will perform "Beautiful" at the Orange Peel tonight.

Cho addresses controversial and personal subject matters

By Noor Al-Sibai
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The best thing about modern comedy, according to comedian Margaret Cho, is that the good comedians are really, really good.

Cho, no stranger to Asheville, will perform two shows, one early and one late, at the Orange Peel tonight.

Born in the Haight district of San Francisco, Cho began doing stand-up when she was 16 at a comedy club above her parents' bookstore.

"I was born and took it from there," said Cho of her beginnings in the comedy world.

That same matter-of-fact attitude is heard loudly in Cho's stand-up, where she gives equal time to her Korean-American upbringing and other touchy subjects, including race, homosexuality, body image and politics.

Openly criticized and praised for her irreverent and controversial treatment of

almost any subject, Cho nonetheless has tackled these issues head-on during her 25 years as a comedian.

A prolific comic, actress and writer, Cho's accomplishments include nine national comedy tours, numerous cameos and starring roles in television and in film and three books.

Cho's 2007 hit comedy tour "Notorious C.H.O." earned her comparisons to icon Richard Pryor, whom she counts among her favorite comedians, along with Chris Rock, Steve Martin and Wanda Sykes.

After moving to Los Angeles in the early 1990s, Cho's exposure on the college circuit eventually led to the title role on ABC's "All-American Girl," a comedy loosely based on Cho's life.

Initially excited by the chance to be part of the first Asian-American sitcom, Cho became disenchanted when she was forced to "water down" her comedy and battled with the network's insistence that she lose weight.

That first venture into the world of prime
SEE **COMEDIAN** PAGE 13 |

Raekwon's latest album owns the hip-hop shelves

Review by Jeremy Rice
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A full 14 years after the original, *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx... Part II* has arrived, and it is a staggering success.

It is a 70-minute sprawl of coked-out crime tales woven through a tapestry of hard-hitting, hypnotic beats.

After his masterful debut, *Only Built 4 Cuban Linx*, Raekwon's output has been frustratingly inconsistent. As the most corpulent emcee in the Wu-Tang Clan gained more and more weight, his verses on solo and Wu-Tang group ef-

forts grew more and more sluggish and uninspired.

Wu-heads rejoice: Rae has dropped the doughnut holes and picked up the coke spoon, rapping again with grit and a fast clip.

He is in top form as a lyricist and flow-artist, spinning stories that are dense with slang and internal rhyme and vivid with violent imagery and microscopic detail.

Raekwon sways through a hazy Marley Marl beat on "Pyrex Vision," which sums up Raekwon's tone throughout *Only Built*.

The brief, chorus-less track sets the
SEE **RAEKWON** PAGE 13 |

Blueprint 3 is Jay-Z's only disappointment in his catalog



Review by David Milton
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Jay-Z, the elder godfather of cocaine hip-hop, released his long-awaited *Blueprint 3* on Friday, supplying ammunition to the argument that retirement may be an attractive option for "Hova."

With a plethora of classic albums under his belt, Sean Carter no longer needs to donate high-caliber lyrical genius and advanced production to the genre's catalog, but for his own sake, it might be time to count the millions and hang the microphone up permanently.

The first single, a teaser track titled "Death of Auto-Tune," is a refreshing start.

Playing the singer-gangster persona to the fullest, Jay calls for an end to the youthful fads that currently define commercial hip-hop.

"Stop using voice modulation software," he demands. "Stop wearing tight jeans." His message is simply, "grow up."

The instrumentation does not disappoint. Kanye West loops a jazzy background over a hard-hitting snare and works his typical studio magic.

SEE **JAY-Z** PAGE 13 |

The Orange Peel
Social Aid & Pleasure Co.

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+ JOHN ROBERTS
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TICKETWEB

BOX OFFICE * WEDNESDAY - SATURDAY 12pm - 5:30pm
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