Cho & Tell

POZ caught Margaret Cho's rising star in December '95 after her AIDS flick *It's My Party*. Now the comic is back, touring with I'm the One That I Want, her hilarious one-woman tell-all.

November 1, 1999 By Walter Armstrong

Does your humor heal?
Absolutely. I find a lot of strength with humor. It helps me to cope with pain, and I use it to alleviate the tension of certain moments. My show is a very loving experience.

You touch on every taboo topic except AIDS. Why?
I'm dealing with a situation with a close friend who just found out he's positive. We're in a process of acceptance right now, so it's hard to talk about. But maybe it'll come up in the next show.

You were raised by drag queens in San Francisco in the '70s. What was it like?
Between the ages of 10 and 20 is when I spent the most time hanging around drag queens. I didn't know they were drag queens until much later. They all seemed to be just men with no hair on their arms. Then I'd see them at night, performing, and it was a totally different thing.

As a lifelong fag hag, is AIDS something you've always known about?
I've been aware of it for my whole adult life. I grew up on Polk Street, and I could see things start to disintegrate. There was this huge gay community, and then suddenly they weren't around. I lost so many people in the first wave of AIDS. It was terrifying.

With my generation—we're in our 30s—there was a bit of a reprieve, with people practicing safe sex. But now there's this complacency, and my friends are starting to get it. It seems like a new trend. It's the most hopeless thing.

If you were a gay man, would you be a top or bottom?
Ooh, well, I think I'd be such a bottom because I'm lazy.

How would you get the top to use a condom?
Put it on with my mouth. That's a good trick I learned from drag queens. It's easy and fun, but you've got to watch out for the lipstick because you don't want to get too much oil on the condom.

You've been sober for a year. How do you deal?
I'm actually never tempted. I just had to dry out. I'm really over it. But I kind of strangely want to

try Viagra. What appeals to me is those Viagra parties that guys are having. That’s so me.

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