



Bam Bam and Celeste

Lorene Machado

USA, 2005
English

85 minutes ■ Colour/HDCAM
Production Company: **SALTY Features/
Cho Taussig Productions/Nuit Blanche
Productions**

Executive Producer: **Michael Hakan,
Julie Huntsinger**

Producer: **Eva Kolodner, Yael Melamede,
Karen Taussig, Margaret Cho**

Screenplay: **Margaret Cho**
Cinematographer: **Matthew Clark**

Editor: **Philip Harrison**

Production Designer: **John Chichester**

Sound: **Jerry Ross, George Berndt**
Music: **Pat Irwin**

Principal Cast: **Margaret Cho,
Bruce Daniels, Alan Cumming,
John Cho, Elaine Hendrix, Jane Lynch**

Print Source:

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Uproarious comic genius Margaret Cho is a revolutionary figure in American entertainment. Her self-proclaimed fag-hag status and her gently confrontational, self-mocking racial humour have changed the language of stand-up – not least regarding those comedy club put-down staples, gays and Asians – forever. And she has hand-delivered this seismic shift wrapped in an overall message of personal liberation and unironic self-respect that makes her a major force for good in this world.

In *Bam Bam and Celeste*, Cho gets to invest everything that makes her great in a madcap road movie that features all of her favourite targets and loves: freaky sex, growing up a loser, TV in every form and, of course, her glorious mother, full of kooky wisdom and breathtaking malapropisms that leave you laughing for days.

Cho is Celeste, an overweight, Korean, former goth punk, while her longtime friend and collaborator Bruce Daniels plays Bam Bam, a hyper-queeny, African-American stylist. They are both thirty-three years old and stuck in a dreary Midwestern city where they have been teased and beaten up since high school. It seems like the only person who loves them is Mommy (Cho, of course), Celeste's mother, known for her big sweaters and bizarre advice.

Salvation for the pair comes in the form of a reality TV make-over show looking for a challenge. Their trip to New York to volunteer themselves is fraught with peril – they are saved from thugs by, ahem, a

rugged outdoorswoman (Jane Lynch from Christopher Guest's *Best in Show*) and insulted by a racist gas station attendant. Finally, with much encouragement from the show's precious booking assistant (Alan Cumming), they arrive in New York. Fate – in the form of a showdown at the beauty salon owned by their high school nemeses – tries to rip them apart just before their big triumph, but Mommy saves the day in the nick of time.

Having this much fun almost makes you feel guilty, except that Cho and company set such a gloriously eccentric example, you can't help but want to join them on this uplifting and sidesplitting journey.

■ **Noah Cowan**

Lorene Machado has worked extensively in television as a writer and producer, starting her career as coordinating producer on NBC's "Bob Hope Specials." She has produced three of Margaret Cho's live stand-up comedy films: *I'm the One that I Want* (00), *Notorious C.H.O.* (02) and *Revolution* (04), as well as directing and editing the latter two. *Bam Bam and Celeste* (05) is her feature directorial debut.