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Wednesday, September 22nd, 2010

SURVEY SAYS

Comedy's 17 Favorite Comedians

by Adam Frucci on September 22nd, 2010

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Who are the best working comedians today? Who's creating the best material, influencing the most people and is the flat-out funniest? You could base the answer on a number of factors, be it ratings and box office success or Twitter followers and YouTube views. But I was more interested in who the people who look at and create comedy all day, every day think are really working at the highest level. The people who actually are actively getting comedic content out there, whose lives revolve around comedy. So I asked them.

I asked 12 people in the comedy business who their favorite current comedians are. The resulting list has the names you'd expect on it, but also some you might be surprised by.

In order to compile the list, I had people send me a list of 10 names in order from favorite on down. I assigned each choice a point value, with a #1 pick netting 10 points, a #2 pick netting 9 points and so on. I then added the points up. It was pretty straightforward, as I am no scientist.

Here are the judges who were kind enough to contribute lists to the survey:

- Eric Appel, Writer/Director, Funny or Die
- Owen Burke, Creative Executive, Gary Sanchez Productions
- Neil Campbell, Artistic Director, UCB Theatre LA
- Mike Farah, President of Production, Funny or Die
- Sam Grossman, Director of Original Programing and Development, Comedy Central
- Hallie Haglund, Writer, *The Daily Show*
- Chris Kelly, Writer/Director, Onion News Network
- Anthony King, Artistic Director, UCB Theatre NY

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Contributors

- Rob Kutner, Writer, *Conan*
- Christine Nangle, Writer, *Saturday Night Live*
- Sam Reich, President of Original Content, CollegeHumor
- Ricky Van Veen, Co-Founder and CEO, CollegeHumor

And now, onto the list:

15 (three-way tie): Maria Bamford



Maria Bamford is an excellent standup, and what makes her sets so unique is her voice. One of the best voice actresses around, she's voiced characters in shows such as *Home Movies*, *Daria*, *Tom Goes to the Mayor* and *Hey Arnold!* In her standup, she utilizes her voice to portray her dysfunctional family, amongst other characters, making her standup surreal yet personal.

15 (three-way tie): Hannibal Buress



Hannibal Buress has turned a promising standup career into jobs writing for two of the highest-profile comedy shows on TV: *Saturday Night Live* and *30 Rock*. Having written for *SNL* last season, he's now on board for the upcoming season of *30 Rock*. He also released a great standup album this summer entitled *My Name is Hannibal*, cementing his reputation as one of the sharpest joke writers out there.

15 (three-way tie): Chelsea Peretti



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If you don't follow standup comedy too closely, you probably recognize Chelsea Peretti from her great guest appearances on *Louis* and *The Sarah Silverman Program*. But she's an amazing standup and writer in her own right, and she's also been behind some things you've probably heard of, such as *Black People Love Us* and the *New York Rejection Line*. Her profile has been steadily rising for a while now, and it seems like it's only a matter of time before someone gives her her own show.

14: Brett Gelman



Brett Gelman has become one of Funny or Die's go-to actors, and with good reason. Gelman always seems a little unhinged, a little on the edge of doing something that nobody else involved in the shoot planned on. He's got a certain controlled creepiness to him that he expertly utilizes in videos such as his *Mr. Celebrity* series and *Death Bed Subtext*. And clearly, the higher ups at Funny or Die have taken notice: Gelman's character in *The Other Guys* was absolutely scene-stealing and one of the best parts of the entire movie.

13: Donald Glover