



Bo Burnham, 17, has parlayed his YouTube appearances into a standup career.

# Young comedian is Burnham up charts

He's only 17 years old and looking forward to entering NYU's Tisch School of the Arts in the fall. But if college doesn't pan out for Bo Burnham, he can always fall back on a career in standup — in just 18 months, Burnham has gone from an accidental YouTube phenomenon to a buzzed-about comedian poised to hit the big time.

His debut digital-only EP on the Comedy Central label, "Bo Fo Sho," hit No. 1 on the iTunes comedy album chart and No. 6 on the overall iTunes album chart, alongside the likes of Coldplay.

"All my fans saw me as some little kid who can't even afford new jeans in his room, so they'll support me," says Burnham. "That'll work until I become a success."

He already is: Burnham made his NYC debut at Carolines Comedy Club last week, has already been to London to appear on TV, has performed at the prestigious Montreal Just for Laughs festival and has late-night talk-show bookers vying to be the first to put him on American TV.

Offering a gangly cross between the verbal wordplay of George Carlin, the drollness of Steve Martin and a self-deprecation all his own, the Hamilton, Mass., native's explosive success began when he sat in his bedroom and videotaped a perfor-

mance of an original song called "My Whole Family (Thinks I'm Gay)" and then posted it on YouTube just so his older brother at college could have a laugh.

"I like to joke about being gay because it's something teenagers would never joke about," says Burnham, who also has fun in his videos by awkwardly pretending he has just had lots of sex with beautiful women. "Uncharted territory is a good place to be in," he adds.

A Web site championed the video and in the blink of an eye it scored more than a million views. That's usually the beginning and the end of most online viral phenomena.

But he soon posted three more videos, all with jokey themes like Helen Keller being the perfect woman or a "Harold and Maude"-like ode to dating a senior citizen. They too became smash online hits, in no small part thanks to Burnham's witty banter. ("Hello world ... and Internet pedophiles," he winks at the beginning of one tune.)

Now he has had 15 million views of his baker's dozen worth of videos featuring hilarious tunes like "New Math" and "I'm Bo Yo," songs packed with so many vulgar puns and clever one-liners you have to listen to them repeatedly to catch all the jokes.

Michael Giltz

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