Myq
Takes the Mic

Alum’s fight to be the last comic standing ends in final round

LAST SUMMER COMEDIAN Myq Kaplan faced the biggest audience of his career: 5 million viewers tuned in to see which of the 10 finalists on NBC’s hit reality comedy competition Last Comic Standing would survive.

“Not knowing what would happen was nerve-wracking,” says Kaplan (GRS’09). “My performance got a great response, but it’s easy to second-guess yourself.” His stress gave way to elation when he found out he’d been voted on to the next round. Three weeks later, Kaplan was eliminated in the final round.

Kaplan describes his comedy as “cerebral and wordy.” He often draws on his own life for inspiration. References to his vegan diet, his liberal political views, and his thoughts on religion pop up frequently in his monologues. And sometimes, the joke is just a random thought: “When I die, I want to have my remains scattered over a beautiful park. I don’t want to be cremated, though.”

As a BU graduate student, Kaplan studied linguistics, an interest that complemented his passion for writing and performing comedy. “They spring from the same well: a love for language, communication, semantics, and humor,” he says. Wordplay permeates his jokes (“Many rap albums contain a warning on their covers: ‘May include explicit lyrics.’ If I ever write a rap album, I’ll have a warning for implicit lyrics. My lyrics are going to be like: ‘You know what I’m going to do. Use your imagination.’”) and even his adopted moniker. Inspired by pop star Prince and his various name permutations, Kaplan changed the spelling of his name from “Miko” to “Myk” and finally to “Myq.”

During his eight years at BU, Kaplan worked as a senior resident assistant. The security of free room and board allowed him to hone his art. In 2008, he moved to New York to become a full-time comedian.

Kaplan paid his dues opening for other comedians under “bringer crowd” conditions, where comedians guarantee to bring 10 to 15 paying friends who also promise to buy drinks. Since then, he’s commanded laughs at famous venues such as Caroline’s on Broadway, headlined a special on Comedy Central Presents, and even appeared on The Tonight Show with Conan O’Brien.

But arguably the most important gig of Kaplan’s career was his role as a finalist on season seven of Last Comic Standing.

Newfound fame has also meant more recognition by fans. Walking through Park Slope in Brooklyn recently, Kaplan heard someone in a garbage truck yell out, “Is that Myq from Last Comic Standing?” Kaplan acknowledged, and the worker cheered, “Good sh—!”

Kaplan admits it feels weird to be saluted by strangers, but he enjoys the support; it’s a welcome development for a man who once only dreamed of having an audience.

ROBIN BERGHAUS

WEB EXTRA
Comedian Myq Kaplan performs a set and discusses what it’s like to write and perform comedy at bu.edu/bostonia.

Glenn Harris works with Rachel Collins (CAS’11), a member of the Terrier lacrosse team.

Glenn Harris helps varsity athletes become all that they can be.

The third floor of 300 Babcock Street is a cacophony of clanking metal, echoing voices and grunts, and speakers throbbing with rap music. In the 12,000-square-foot gym and weight room, members of the men’s varsity hoops squad are short-sprinting under the watchful gaze of BU’s strength and conditioning head coach Glenn Harris.

“He’s got the shoes, he’s got the shoes,” Harris shouts as guard Matt Griffin (SMG’12) sprints 10 yards, stops on a dime, and sprints back.

NCAA regulations prevent varsity student-athletes from contact with their head coaches during much of the off-season, but Harris, who is not a team coach, and his staff are on hand year-round to keep players in top shape.

The fitness guru, who has run BU’s strength and conditioning program since 1997, helps de-
Sheveloff Bids BU Farewell

From prelude to postlude, 45 years as dynamic music professor, provocateur

Here are a few of the things Joel Sheveloff hates: the U.S. Supreme Court, cell phones, the shrinking academic year, Googling as a substitute for book research, and wrong-way cyclists who play chicken with his car on Commonwealth Avenue. These are some things the blustery, Falstaffian, about-to-retire College of Fine Arts professor of music, musicology, and ethnomusicology loves: Bach (J. S., not his offspring), Scarlatti, Brahms, Finns, Greer Garson in Goodbye, Mr. Chips, Siena, Italy, and most of all, his students.

This past summer’s postlude to Sheveloff’s 45-year BU career ended on a poignant note—his very last lecture on the eternally misunderstood composer Johannes Brahms, whose work, jokes Sheveloff, it has been his “misfortune” to teach. Facing rows of empty desks on a nonteaching May afternoon in his second floor classroom in Mugar Memorial Library, he reflects on nearly half a century as not just a teacher, but a thorn in the side of the administration and a beloved but incorrigible nudge. With his gravelly, Mailer-esque voice and old-fashioned suspenders, Sheveloff has a way of wresting control of a room and holding forth on just about anything. He may grouse about everything from his department’s curriculum to the traffic on the BU Bridge, but if he criticizes his students at all, it is with affectionate bemusement. He likes them.

Cutwork regimens for all 23 varsity teams, using the latest training techniques and equipment, as well as some decidedly old-school tools like medicine balls, weight vests, and barrels of rice (athletes plunge their hands in and squeeze the grains to improve wrist strength).

“You look around and you see new and shiny equipment, but the mentality is you need to do the hard work,” says Harris, who has beefed up everyone from professional soccer and lacrosse players to state troopers. “The successful people are the ones who are good at doing the hard work.”

Harris and his staff design each training session to improve an individual athlete’s movement, core stability, speed, strength, balance, and flexibility.

He points to Terrier hoops standout Rashad Bell (CGS’03, CAS’05), who now plays professional basketball in Asia, as one of his biggest success stories. “When I first met Rashad he was 6’8” and 172 pounds, and now he plays at 218 pounds,” Harris says. “It didn’t happen over the course of four months. It was a four-year process, and he arguably became one of the best players on our team. His mind, and his body, was a sponge.

“I’ve had athletes who have gone on to play professionally come back to me because they really enjoyed their time as a BU athlete and want to get into that training mode again.”

CALEB DANILLOFF

WEB EXTRAS Watch a video of Glenn Harris at work at bu.edu/bostonia.

Through October, Glenn Harris answers your questions about fitness and conditioning at bu.edu/bostonia.

SUSAN SELIGSON

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