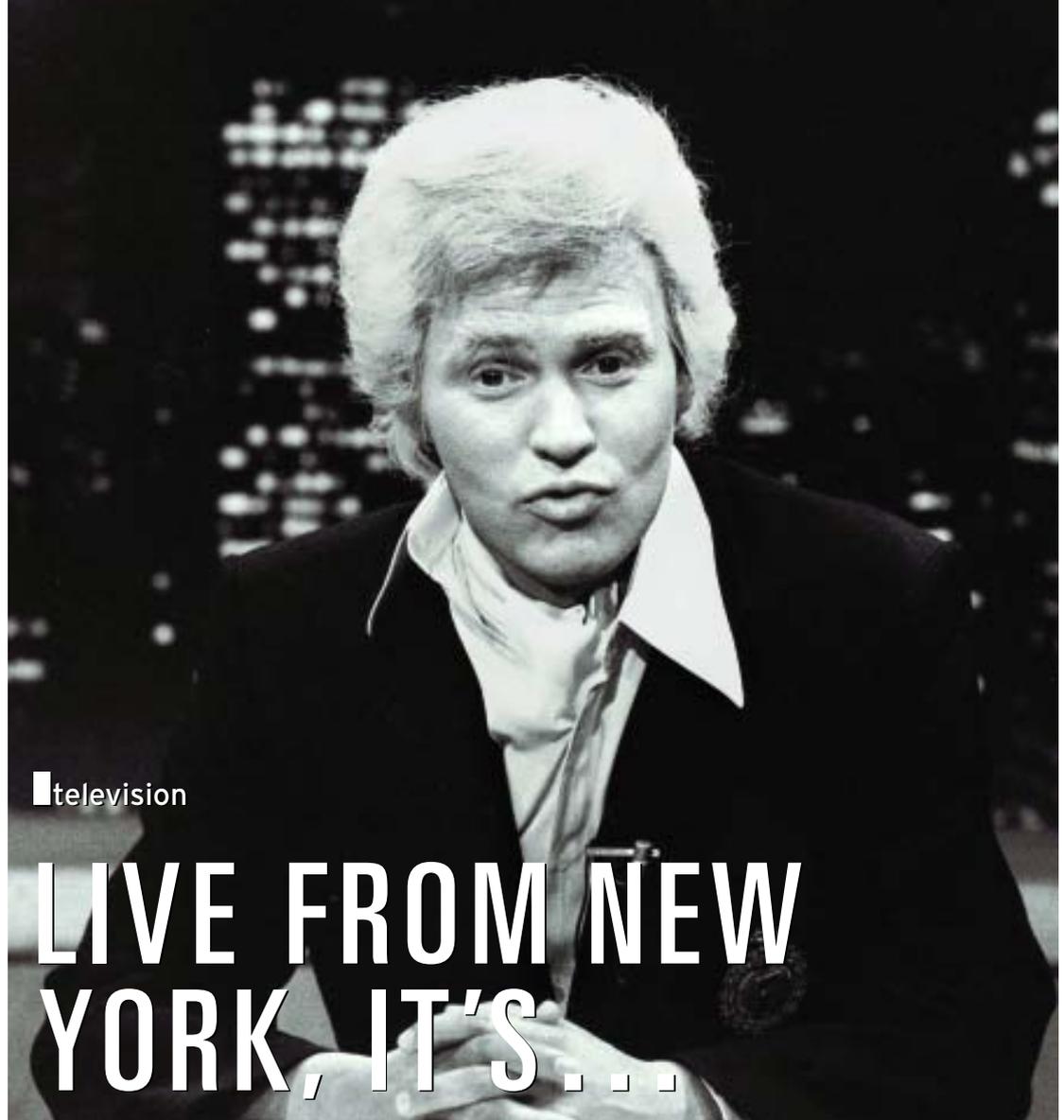


NYU

CULTURE



television

LIVE FROM NEW YORK, IT'S...

AFTER MORE THAN THREE DECADES, ALUMNI CONTINUE MAKING SATURDAY NIGHT FUNNY

by Jason Hollander / GAL '07

Since the first show aired on October 11, 1975, millions of Americans have tuned in each weekend to *Saturday Night Live* to watch the likes of Bill Murray, John Belushi, Gilda Radner, and Eddie Murphy embody some of the most absurdly memorable characters in television history. Defying age by winning 22 Emmy Awards over 32 seasons, the show's biting pop culture and political commentary lives up to *The New York Times* declaration that it remains "the most pervasive influence on the art of com-

edy in contemporary culture."

One famous training ground for this talent has been Chicago's Second City improv comedy group. Another has been our neighbor to the north: Canada natives include executive producer Lorne Michaels and former cast members Dan Aykroyd, Martin Short, Phil Hartman, Mike Myers, and others. But dig a little deeper into the archives and another common thread is revealed.

With Billy Crystal (TSOA '70), Molly Shannon (TSOA '87), Adam Sandler (TSOA '88), writer Tim Herlihy (STERN '88, LAW

'92), cartoonist Robert Smigel (WSUC '83), musical director Lenny Pickett (adjunct professor at Steinhardt), as well as Alec Baldwin (TSOA '94), who is one behind Steve Martin's record 14 appearances as host, NYU has left a legacy on *SNL* that continues today with Andy Samberg (TSOA '00), and numerous others behind the scenes. Even Michaels, the show's original and enduring architect, has an NYU connection as a member of the TSOA Dean's Council.

The following is a pictorial history of some of the SNL characters and works brought to life by alumni...

ABOVE: BILLY CRYSTAL'S (TSOA '70) CHARACTER FERNANDO MADE THE CATCH PHRASES "YOU LOOK MAHVELOUS" AND "IT'S BETTER TO LOOK GOOD THAN TO FEEL GOOD" POPULAR IN THE 1980S.

LEFT: PHOTO © NBC-TV/THE KOBAL COLLECTION; RIGHT: CLOCKWISE FROM TOP: PHOTO © NBC/PHOTOEST; PHOTO © TARSCHE/RETNA LTD.; PHOTO © GETTY IMAGES; PHOTO © WALTER MCBRIDE/RETNA; PHOTO © GETTY IMAGES; PHOTO © NBC/PHOTOEST



< ANDY SAMBERG (TSOA '00)

When Andy Samberg (pictured with Tisch Dean's Council co-chair Alec Baldwin) was a kid in the late 1980s, he would flip on the TV most Saturday nights at 11:30, hoping to catch his favorite show: the World Wrestling Federation's *Saturday Night's Main Event*. But that program aired only occasionally and, though dejected, he'd often watch NBC's alternative—a silly sketch comedy show that made him laugh despite jokes that went over his head. As the years went by, he understood more and more of the gags, and eventually started looking forward to the satire instead of the staged wrestling. "What appealed to me is what still appeals to me," says the 29-year-old cast member. "You could just tell the people there were having fun."

A California native, Samberg picked up an Emmy Award in 2007 for writing the *SNL* Digital Short "Dick in a Box" (which he performed with host Justin Timberlake), and has made a name for himself with other shorts—including the mock-rap "Lazy Sunday"—that have attracted millions of additional viewers online. While his film career is blooming, Samberg, who wrote about his dream to be on *SNL* in his application to NYU, intends to keep honing his skills in Studio 8H. "I'm just happy to be there," Samberg says, "and just trying to be funny enough not to get fired."



FAR LEFT: *SNL* EXECUTIVE PRODUCER LORNE MICHAELS (FAR RIGHT), PICTURED IN MID-1970S WITH CAST MEMBERS CHEVY CHASE, JOHN BELUSHI, AND GARRETT MORRIS, IS A MEMBER OF THE TISCH SCHOOL DEAN'S COUNCIL.

LEFT, FROM TOP: PRODUCER HAL WILLNER (GAL '77) HAS BEEN THE SHOW'S MUSIC SUPERVISOR SINCE 1981; ROBERT SMIGEL (WSUC '83) CREATES *SNL*'S "TV FUNHOUSE" SEGMENTS, INCLUDING "THE AMBIGUOUSLY GAY DUO" AND "FUN WITH REAL AUDIO"; TIM HERLIHY (STERN '88, LAW '92) WROTE FOR *SNL* FROM 1994-99 AND PENNED THE ADAM SANDLER VEHICLES *HAPPY GILMORE* AND *THE WEDDING SINGER*, AMONG OTHER FILMS; HUGH FINK (TSOA '83) WROTE FOR *SNL* FROM 1995-2002 AND HAS PERFORMED STANDUP ON THE *LATE SHOW WITH DAVID LETTERMAN*.



LEFT: ADAM SANDLER (TSOA '88) GAINED FAME FOR PLAYING ORIGINAL TUNES ON *SNL*, INCLUDING "THE CHANUKAH SONG" AND "RED HOODED SWEATSHIRT."

> **MOLLY SHANNON (TSOA '87)**
Molly Shannon tended toward more dramatic, "intense" roles in high school in Ohio, and only stumbled upon her funny bone while rehearsing for the Tisch Follies as an undergrad. "I had never thought about comedy," says the actress, who starred in 2007's *Year of the Dog*. "But once I was in character, I felt really free." Soon after the follies, Shannon discovered her humor resonated with fellow students. "People started telling me I should be on *SNL*," she says. Eight years and lots of hard work later, the coveted gig was hers.

Best remembered for such sketch roles as superstar Mary Katherine Gallagher and the high-kicking 50-year-old Sally O'Malley, Shannon was stunned to find herself ascend as a rookie cast member, quickly moved from the ending skits into the night's earlier, more prominent slots. Though she couldn't type, which hindered her ability to write sketches quickly, she endured six years of the "comedy boot camp" and thrived on the risk of taking creative chances. While some of her most off-the-wall characters scored big with audiences, she says there's always the chance that sometimes "you try and there's just crickets."



^ **LENNY PICKETT (ADJUNCT PROFESSOR)**

Musical director Lenny Pickett makes sure his band keeps the crowd's feet tapping between commercials and before the show. Though he never aspired to work in comedy, Pickett calls his experience on *SNL* "a musician's dream," allowing him to pick some of the world's best players for the group.

A member of the R&B/funk horn band Tower of Power in the 1970s and '80s, Pickett has played behind Elton John, David Bowie, and Talking Heads, among others. But having always had an interest in theater, he respects the unique collaboration that all of those on *SNL*—from the costumers to the makeup artists to the set designers—experience each Saturday night. "We get the best of the best because we're the last vestige of variety television," Pickett says. "We're making a piece of theater every week."

TOP AND BOTTOM: © NBC/PHOTOFEST (2); RIGHT: © MARY ELLEN MATTHEWS

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ROWS OF DESIGNER FLIP-FLOPS SUGGEST TO WOULD-BE BUYERS THAT SUMMER IS A TIME FOR FUN.

COMMERCIAL KALEIDOSCOPE

AN EMOTIONAL APPEAL TO CONSUMER CHOICE BECOMES AN ART AND SCIENCE

by Beth Saulnier

Do you care what color your living room is painted? Of course. But how about your mixer? Your laptop? Or the pill you take for a headache? All these and more are the purview of the burgeoning color industry, which seeks not only to predict tomorrow's trends but to influence consumer choices by appealing to what color consultant Leslie Harrington (STERN '02) calls our most potent visual stimulus. "Color is a nonverbal language," Harrington says, "and it probably is one of the fastest ways to communicate."

In the marketplace, color has emerged as a quick-track way to connect with consumers' wallets. Harrington cites the case of a firm

that tripled sales of its memory sticks solely by offering them in four colors as opposed to the familiar gray. And Apple turned the personal-computing industry on its head a decade ago when it offered its iMac in a rainbow of jellybean hues. "Many computer companies touted their size and speed and all their technical capabilities, and very few attended to aesthetics," says Harrington, a former director of color for Benjamin Moore paints whose Connecticut-based firm, LH Color, has worked for such clients as Avon, Crayola, and Pottery Barn. "Apple was one of the first who said, 'The way it looks and the way it operates are equal.'"

Today's color boom traces its roots to the 1960s, when societal

shifts toward individual self-expression and manufacturing advances allowed products to be made in a wider variety of hues. Then, for example, a palette of 800 colors was the norm in the paint industry whereas today systems with 3,000 colors exist. By the 1990s, increased global competition had prompted companies to exploit every possible edge. As Apple had proved, color could not be left to whim.

Manufacturers are mindful of what individual colors communicate, which moves well beyond the stereotypes that say blue inspires calm or black indicates depression. Ikuko Acosta (STEINHARDT '81), director of Steinhardt's grad-

Apple turned the personal-computing industry on its head when it offered its iMac in a rainbow of jellybean hues.

uate art therapy program, likens color to music. "It elicits immediate emotional reactions," she says. "It's far more complicated than saying, 'a certain color means death.'" For example, she notes, there are many shades of red; each

can summon different but equally powerful images—such as fire and blood—and evoke emotions from anger to passion. She notes that patients suffering from mental illness sometimes shy away from strong colors, which offers an opportunity for art therapists. "By introducing colors little by little, it's a metaphorical way to connect with emotions that might be buried," she says.

Predicting this emotional response is both a science and an art, made more difficult by lengthy manufacturing turnaround times that require forecasters like Harrington to look two years into the future to divine hot colors in industries ranging from bedding plants to vinyl siding. "You have to be on trend with a lot of different things," she says. "A really important movie could influence color, the summer Olympics in China, the election." This year, Harrington has her eye on a yellow-based green, which reflects the growth of the environmental movement and "signals new birth, resurgence, young saplings in the spring. It has a renewedness that we are looking for in our society."

In general, during tough times like today's—with the housing slump, talk of recession, and the war in Iraq—people tend to favor

neutral shades, to buy a beige, brown, or navy sofa, for example. But, Harrington says, "If things are looking up and everybody's happy-go-lucky, the citron, melon, or chartreuse sofa could land in someone's living room." ■

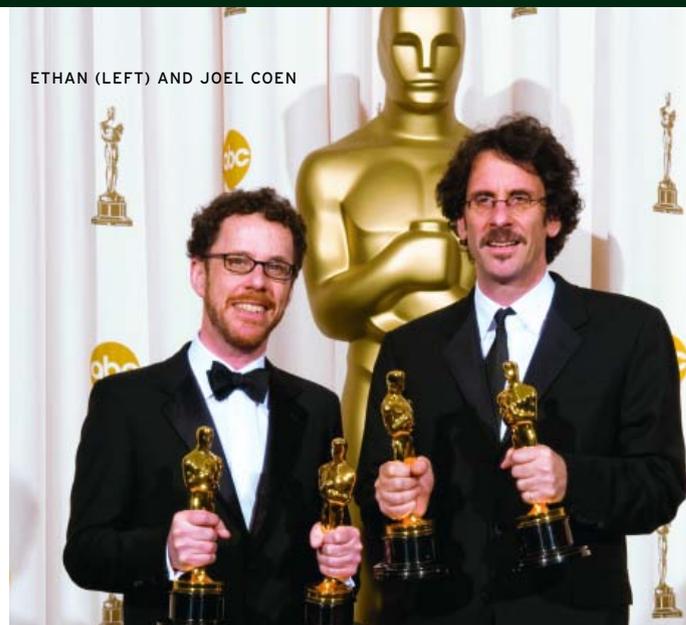
CREDITS

NYU STARS SHINE FROM THE SLOPES OF SUNDANCE TO AWARDS SHOW STAGES

JOEL COEN (TSOA '78) and brother Ethan took home the Best Picture Academy Award for their violent crime thriller *No Country for Old Men*, which nabbed four of its eight nominations including Best Director. Next up for the brothers is their dark-as-usual comedy *Burn After Reading* starring George Clooney and Brad Pitt... Novel-turned-film *Beaufort*, adapted and directed by **JOSEPH CEDAR** (TSOA '95) about a group of soldiers during the last days of Israel's 18-year occupation of Lebanon, scored an Oscar nomination for Best Foreign Language Film... **JENNIFER FOX** (GAL '94) was nominated for the Best Picture award as a producer of the film *Michael Clayton*... **TAMARA JENKINS** (TSOA '94) wrote and

directed *The Savages*, which earned two nominations at the Oscars and four at the Film Independent's Spirit Awards where she won for Best Screenplay. The tragicomedy stars Laura Linney and **PHILIP SEYMOUR HOFFMAN** (TSOA '89) as siblings struggling with their father's mental decline. Hoffman, who picked up Best Male Lead at the Spirit Awards, next stars in *Synecdoche, New York*, which will be screenwriter **CHARLIE KAUFMAN**'s (TSOA '80) first turn as a director... At this year's Golden Globes, **KAKI KING** (GAL '01) and **MICHAEL BROOK** (TSOA '91) were nominated for Best Original Score for their work on Sean Penn's Indie hit *Into the Wild*... *Bee Movie*, co-directed by **STEPHEN HICKNER** (TSOA '79)

and starring Jerry Seinfeld as a curious bee in the Big Apple, was up for Best Animated Feature... *Men in Black* director **BARRY SONNENFELD** (ARTS '74, TSOA '78) is co-executive producer with fellow alum **DAN JINKS**



ETHAN (LEFT) AND JOEL COEN

LEFT: PHOTO BY MATT PETTI/©A.M.P.A.S.; BELOW: RICHARD FOREMAN/COURTESY MIRAMAX FILMS

(TSOA '85) of ABC's *Pushing Daisies*, nominated in its first season for a Golden Globe for Best TV Comedy... At the People's Choice Awards, executive producer **KATIE JACOBS**' (TSOA '87) *House* won Favorite TV Drama while *Grey's*

NO COUNTRY FOR OLD MEN



Anatomy's **CHANDRA WILSON** (TSOA '91), as Dr. Miranda Bailey, was voted Favorite Scene Stealing Star... At this year's Sundance Film Festival, writer and director **ANDREW FLEMING** (TSOA '85) premiered his comedy *Hamlet 2* about a high school drama teacher who pens a sequel to Shakespeare's tragedy in order to save the school's theater department. The film was picked up by Focus Features for \$10 million—one of the biggest deals in the festival's history... **CLARK GREGG**'s (TSOA '86) dark comedy *Choke*, which he adapted and directed from the Chuck Palahniuk novel, was also one of the biggest hits at Sundance, and features Sam Rockwell and Anjelica Huston as a sex-addicted comedian and his insane mother... Director **M. NIGHT SHYAMALAN**'s (TSOA '92) next sci-fi thriller *The Happening* is due out this sum-

mer, starring Mark Wahlberg as a science teacher on the run from a mysterious virus that causes people to commit suicide... This winter, **JUSTIN BARTHA** (TSOA '00) revived his role as Nicolas Cage's treasure-hunting sidekick in the blockbuster sequel *National Treasure: Book of Secrets*... **JULIE BENZ** (TSOA '94) starred alongside Sylvester Stallone in the latest installment of *Rambo*... **ARIELLE JACOBS** (STEINHARDT '05) currently tours the country in the first theatrical production of Disney's wildly popular TV movie *High School Musical* as super-smart transfer student Gabriella Montez... **JUSTIN ZACKHAM** (TSOA '94) wrote the screenplay for *The Bucket List*, which pairs Jack Nicholson and Morgan Freeman as cancer patients who set out on an adventurous road trip.

—Renée Alfuso



THE SAVAGES



CHOKÉ

RIGHT: PHOTO © 2007 20TH CENTURY FOX. BELOW: PHOTO © FOX SEARCHLIGHT PICTURES