

‘Saturday Night Live’ celebrates 50 years with comedy, music and show’s many, many famous friends



Paul Simon and Sabrina Carpenter duetted on Simon’s “Homeward Bound” to open the show, five-decade [“Saturday Night Live”](#) luminary Steve Martin delivered the monologue, and Paul McCartney gave an epic closing to a 50th anniversary special celebrating the sketch institution that was overflowing with famous former cast members, superstar hosts and legendary guests.

“SNL50: The Anniversary Celebration” aired live from New York, of course, on NBC and Peacock. The [pop culture juggernaut](#) has launched the careers of generations of comedians including [Eddie Murphy](#), [Kristen Wiig](#) and [Will Ferrell](#), who all appeared in early sketches.

And the evening included epic cameos that included Meryl Streep, Jack Nicholson and Keith Richards.

Martin, one of the show’s most prolific hosts and guests since the first season in 1975, tried to keep it current in the monologue even on a backward-looking night.

He was joined by former “SNL” luminaries and frequent hosts Martin Short and John Mulaney, who looked at the star-studded crowd full of former hosts in the same Studio 8H at 30 Rockefeller Plaza that has been the show’s longtime home.

“I see some of the most difficult people I have ever met in my entire life,” Mulaney said. “Over the course of 50 years, 894 people have hosted ‘Saturday Night Live,’ and it amazes me that only two of them have committed murder.”

The extravaganza came after months of celebrations of “Saturday Night Live,” which premiered Oct. 11, 1975, with an original cast that included [John Belushi](#), Chase and [Gilda Radner](#).

It’s become appointment television over the years as the show has [skewered presidents, politics and pop culture](#).

The show had its typical ending, with all involved looking exhilarated and exhausted on the studio stage. This night it was so crowded with luminaries it looked like it might break. Led by Short, they all applauded in tribute to Michaels, who created the show and has run it for 45 of its 50 years.