

■ TV review

# SNL crew disappoints in 31st season's debut episode

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PULSE EDITOR

The 31st season of "Saturday Night Live" premiered Saturday with "The 40 Year Old Virgin's" Steve Carell as host and controversial rapper

Kanye West as the musical guest. I had been looking forward to this premiere since I had first heard Carell was hosting, and I was determined to not be let down. But alas, I was.

Things started out promising, with

the typical presidential mockery that "SNL" is so famous for. President George W. Bush has given writers plenty of material to work with lately and Will Forte did a decent impression, although he's no Will Ferrell. It was also wonderful seeing Darrell Hammond's face first thing — after all, this is his 10th year with "SNL," which is the longest any cast member has stuck around (Tim Meadows is a close second with nine and a half seasons). But as they went on into the credits, I was disappointed to see that nothing had changed. And by that, I don't mean the cast — I was happy that everyone I really like returned this season. But they didn't even change the look of the credits or even the shots of the players. It was exactly the same as the 2004-05 season, except that Kenan Thompson and Finesse Mitchell were now repertory players and there were three new featured players: Bill Hader, Andy Samberg and Jason Sudeikis. The only cast member to leave was Rob Riggle, who was reportedly fired after just one season.

Carell's monologue was decent. I enjoy hosts that don't have to depend on the rest of the cast to make them funny, such as Paris Hilton, and Carell really held his own with a

song about being one of the "golden boys" of comedic movies. He claimed he was in company of Ferrell, Vince Vaughn, Ben Stiller (who were all in "Anchorman: The Legend of Ron Burgundy" with Carell), as well as Owen Wilson, since the "40 Year Old Virgin" had made more than \$100 million at the box office. He also mentioned that he had actually auditioned for a role on "SNL," but the part went to the "other guy," who happened to be Ferrell. Although I love Carell, Lorne Michaels definitely chose the right guy.

The next sketch worth mentioning was the "Anderson Cooper 360 Degrees" spoof about famous people helping to rebuild after Hurricane Katrina because it gave a way for cast members to make fun of celebrities, which I love. Everyone did really great impressions: Fred Armisen as Tony Danza, Amy Poehler as Sharon Stone, Hader as Al Pacino, Carell as Ray Romano, Horatio Sanz as Aaron Neville and Hammond as Geraldo Rivera. I was really worried when I saw Hader was going to be Pacino, but I underestimated him, hard core. He was dead on and it was easily one of the best impressions I have ever seen.

After a few more forgettable skits, the arguably offensive "Girls Gone Wild: Katrina Victims" skit came on. Sure, it wasn't the horrible natural disaster that "SNL" was making fun of, but rather the lame "Girls Gone Wild" videos. It just — well, it just wasn't funny. It was tasteless and tacky and plain unfunny.

Thankfully, the best part of the evening came next, when Mike Myers had a small cameo with West. Too bad it was so short and West's performance was so long. But West did well with a DJ and a full orchestra behind him. I noticed how nice it was to see a rapper up on stage without a huge posse of hangers-on going, "Uh huh, yeah" or repeating the last line West rapped.

"Weekend Update" was quite a disappointment for me. Although my boyfriend thinks there was no one better to fill in Tina Fey's shoes than Sanz, he just didn't do it for me. He looked really uncomfortable in his suit and tie and he was so nervous in the beginning, a lot of his jokes fell flat. I think Seth Meyers would have been a much funnier choice.

Another beef I have with

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 CHILDHOOD BEGINS AT FORTY!  
 I REALLY LIKED THAT THE FILM SUCKED.  
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 I LOVE YOU SO MUCH I JUST CAN'T DEAL WITH YOU.  
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