



Tony Rosato: Looking Back on the Comedian's Life

Joelle Grosso (January 17, 2017)



Best known for his hilarious sketches on SCTV and Saturday Night Live, Italian-Canadian comedian Tony Rosato passed away on January 10th at the age of 62.

Italian-Canadian comedian, actor, and voice actor, [Tony Rosato](#) [2], was born in Naples and came to Canada with his family at the age of four. As a youngster he had the hopes of studying medicine but as fate would have it, he ended up falling in love with comedy instead. He dropped out of the University of Toronto shortly after entering the improv scene at [The Second City](#) [3] which is a multi-city improvisational theater troupe.

Rosato got his first big break when he joined the cast of [Second City Television](#) [4], or SCTV, in 1980. The popular sketch show is where other comedic greats including the likes of [Martin Short](#) [5] and [Rick Moranis](#) [6] kicked off their successful careers. Rosato's most popular character on SCTV was called Marcello Sebastiani, an Italian-American television chef that usually drank a little too much red wine while he cooked. This was also the platform where he was able to show off his spot on impersonations of [Lou Costello](#) [7], [John Belushi](#) [8], and [Ella Fitzgerald](#) [9] just to name a few.

Afterwards, Rosato went on to join the cast of [Saturday Night Live](#) [10] for one season from 1981 to 1982, making him the first member to be born in Italy. Even though he was there for just a year, he created several memorable characters during his stay including Ed Asner, Captain Kangaroo, and U.S. Attorney General Ed Meese.



He then went into the acting direction and appeared in television and movies for the next two decades. His biggest role was the character of Arthur "Whitey" Morelli in the Canadian police drama [Night Heat](#) [11]. Most people don't know that Rosato is also the voice of many beloved cartoon characters and has worked for tons of animated series. You might recognize him as the voice of Luigi on the DiC television show [The Adventures of Super Mario Bros. 3](#) [12] but he also provided voices from numerous children shows such as Hello Kitty and Friends, Little Bear, and Pippi Longstocking.

Unfortunately in 2005, Rosato went through many personal problems and was arrested for criminal harassment of his wife. Although he had been diagnosed with a rare delusional misidentification syndrome, Rosato was in denial about his deteriorating mental health and refused to plead insanity to the charges. For this reason, he was held in a detention center for over two years before finally being released in 2007 to live in a psychiatric hospital for 19 months. His death was unexpected at the age of 62 to what appears to be a heart attack. Despite the difficulties that occurred later in his life, Rosato will always be remembered as a talented and versatile comedian who provided his audiences with nothing but laughter for years on end.

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Links

[1] <http://iitaly.org/files/rosato2.jpg>

[2] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Tony_Rosato

[3] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Second_City

[4] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Second_City#SCTV

[5] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Martin_Short

[6] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Rick_Moranis

[7] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Lou_Costello

[8] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/John_Belushi

[9] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Ella_Fitzgerald

[10] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Saturday_Night_Live

[11] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Night_Heat

[12] https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Adventures_of_Super_Mario_Bros._3