

# Catching Up With Palisadian Martin Short and His Latest Show

By **Magnolia Lafleur** - February 24, 2022



*Martin Short*

*Photos courtesy of Hulu/Craig Blankenhorn*

By MAGNOLIA LAFLEUR | *Reporter*

Actor, comedian and Palisadian Martin Short, has been gracing television sets and the silver screen for over 40 years, creating a wide variety of memorable characters that have filled bellies with laughter. The *Palisadian-Post* recently spoke with Short, whose comedic stylings are being introduced to a new generation, about his character Oliver Putnam in Hulu’s “Only Murders In The Building.”

The show has already developed a strong following and is currently Hulu’s most-watched comedy series in the streaming platform’s history. “Only Murders in the Building” is an American true crime comedy series created by Steve Martin and John Hoffman about three neighbors who decided to start a podcast together after the untimely and mysterious death of a neighbor in their Arconia apartment building in New York City.

Short plays Oliver Putnam, a struggling Broadway director who teams up with Charles-Haden Savage—a hard-on-his luck veteran actor who was the star of a television, detective-drama— played by Steve Martin, and Mabel Mora, played by Selena Gomez, who is a struggling young woman living and renovating her aunt’s unfinished house.

“I enjoy working with the cast and I enjoy the writing. The scripts are great,” Short said. “Steve and Selena and I work in a very similar way, a very, loose happy joy filled set.

“And we’ve had amazing guest stars. Last season Sting, Amy Ryan, Nathan Lane and Jane Lynch ... It’s all been fantastic and I love the character. A character that is filled with humor but is a little delusional is always fun to play.”

Born in Hamilton—a city in Ontario, Canada—Short is the youngest of five siblings who were constantly taping skits and performing for their parents, Short’s gene to entertain was born from being a part of a “playful, fun family.”

Short also shared who inspired him as a young child.

“The people that impact you are the people that were famous when you were 12 and 13 and you were open to it all, like a sponge soaking up everything,” Short said. “As a kid, Jonathan Winters, Jerry Lee Lewis, Johnny Carson, Nichols and Elaine May, these were the people that, when I was a kid, were the brightest light of entertainment. I was fascinated by them and I would see them and want to emulate them.”

Short is a graduate of McMaster University and a comedy alumni of Second City TV and Saturday Night Live. He has starred in feature films like “Three Amigos,” “Innerspace” and “Father of The Bride”—playing some of the most memorable characters in comedic film history.

From characters lambasting Hollywood’s junket interviews, Jiminy Glick, to the oddly bent Ed Grimley, Short is a master of playing the strange in the most relatable of ways.

He has lived in the Palisades since 1984 and shares three children with his wife Nancy Dolman, who passed away in 2010.

Honorary Mayor of Pacific Palisades, and best friend of Short since 1970, Eugene Levy has worked alongside and been Short’s neighbor for many years. He shared his fondness for Short and his new show.

“Being neighbors with Marty here in the Palisades feels like Fred Mertz being Ricky Ricardo’s neighbor. The question is, which one of us is Fred Mertz?” Levy said. “I love ‘Only Murders In The Building.’ It’s fresh, smart and funny with characters that are endearing.

“Everything you need for a hit comedy show.”

Co-creator of the show, Hoffman said his experience working with Short, along with co-stars Martin and Gomez has been “beyond any dream or expectation” he could have imagined.

“Marty is many people’s favorite person,” Hoffman said to the *Post*. “And that is not for no good reason. He’s an honest, loyal and caring guy—and a true family man—who happens to be wildly inventive, quick-witted and brilliantly talented. It’s a very nice combination. Working with him every day is the greatest gift. In fact, Steve Martin came over to me a few weeks into shooting season one after doing a scene ... to say quietly in my ear, ‘Do you see why I wanted to have Marty in this show?’

“We’re all very aware of how lucky we are to be sharing this time and space with Martin Short, without question.”



Hoffman also dove into the development of the character Oliver Putnam with Short.

“All of the natural aspects of Marty’s character reminded me so much of people like Dr. Richard Mason, who was a legendary theater professor and director of mine at Hofstra University, and other theater directors I’ve known through the years,” Hoffman said. “You just want to be at an Oliver Putnam party or be in an Oliver Putnam production. Matching Marty’s natural gifts for both dramatic and comedic acting to a character who leans more theatrical, but desperately so when we meet him, felt like a wheelhouse I could write and that Marty would sink into with ease. “It’s truly a dream to work with him. And he’s tireless in his preparation and work ethic. Ask him to show you any of his pages from a day of shooting on our show. When Marty walks on set, he comes beyond prepared and that allows him to then spend time raising the energy on set to the most buoyant and funny and kind level—which makes us all feel like we’re in the best playground.”

Short's ability to lift the character from the writer's table and to indelibly portray them in a way that feels relatable, comes from his ability to empathize with the humanity of the character, no matter how farcical they are.

"The one thing about comedy is, the only way it is funny is if you make it real," Short explained. "The world is filled with those characters, whether it's a wedding planner or a theater director, some of them are broader than others but they're all real if you play them sincerely."

Following the first season of "Only Murders in the Building," Short is already getting rave reviews for his portrayal of the ambitious, grandiose yet self-deluded portrayal of Oliver Putnam, garnering award nominations from the Screen Actors Guild and the Golden Globes.

Currently in New York filming the second season of "Only Murders In The Building," Short's enthusiasm for the show, his cast-mates and his character comes from his commitment to only do what brings him joy and drives his passion.

Hoping to inspire the generations to come, Short underlined the value in patience, a strong work ethic and in developing one's craft.

"You don't want to do something just for doing it," Short said. "It's really about the creative experience. Are you happy to be involved in it? You try to find something you feel passionate about. If you want to be an actor, work hard.

"In general, finding your passion is the greatest thing to achieve and once you find it, and you know you would do it for nothing, then you've figured it out ... Those are the most successful."