



SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST ANNOUNCES NEXT WAVE OF FEATURED SPEAKERS FOR 2017

Austin, Texas – January 11, 2017 – South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Conference and Festivals (March 10-19, 2017) has announced its next batch of Featured Speakers for the 2017 event including *Game of Thrones* co-creators and showrunners **David Benioff** and **D.B. Weiss**, CNN political commentator **Van Jones**, organizational author **Marie “KonMarie” Kondo**, futurist **Ray Kurzweil**, SoulCycle CEO **Melanie Whelan** and more. Once again showcasing the creative cross-collaboration SXSW is known for, these speakers are leaders in the tech, film, television, business, literature, government and journalism fields.

“This programming represents global leaders using their talents as creative visionaries, and futuristic engineers advancing innovation,” said Hugh Forrest, Chief Programming Officer. “Their contributions in the fields of artificial intelligence, robotics, and the future of entertainment are just a few of the bigger-picture trends we see coming out of March 2017.”

SXSW’s next registration deadline is January 13, 2017, at 11:59pm PT. Early registrants will save \$200, and select from better hotel options. New for 2017, the Interactive, Film, and Music badges will now include expanded access to more of the SXSW Conference & Festivals experience. Attendees will still receive primary entry to programming associated with their badge type but now also enjoy secondary access to most other SXSW events.

SXSW Conference programming is organized into 24 Tracks divided between Interactive, Film, Music, and Convergence, presented in a variety of session formats.

Featured Speakers

Steve Case and **Beth Comstock** (Startup Village) - Steve Case is America's best-known and most accomplished entrepreneur. He is the co-founder of AOL and CEO of Revolution. Beth Comstock is Vice Chairman at GE. In this capacity, she leads GE’s efforts to accelerate new growth.

Tom Cwik, **Maggie Malone**, **Steve May**, and **Vick Schutz** (Entertainment Influencers) - Tom Cwik leads Space Technology development at JPL, initiating and maintaining the Laboratories long-term tech strategy. Maggie Malone is the Head of Creative Affairs at the Walt Disney Animation Studios, where she has worked on such films as *Zootopia*, and *Frozen*. Steve May is the Chief Technology Officer at PIXAR, overseeing the development of visual effects tools and processes for the entire studio. Vick Schutz is the Computer Graphics Supervisor at ILM, where he completed work on films such as *Avatar*, *War of the Worlds*, and more.

David Benioff and **D.B. Weiss** (Entertainment Influencers) - David Benioff works as an author and screenwriter. D.B. Weiss is a writer and the author of *Lucky Wander Boy*. Both Benioff and Weiss co-creators and executive producers of the Emmy Award-winning *Game of Thrones* for HBO.

Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro and **Dr. Ryuichiro Higashinaka** (Intelligent Future) - Dr. Hiroshi Ishiguro is director of the Intelligent Robotics Laboratory, part of the Department of Systems Innovation in the Graduate School of Engineering Science at Osaka University, Japan. Dr. Ryuichiro Higashinaka is a Senior Research Scientist at the Audio, Speech, and Language Media Laboratory, a part of the NTT Media Intelligence Laboratories.

Van Jones (Government) - Van Jones is an author, CNN political commentator, and host of *The Messy Truth* with Van Jones on CNN. Jones worked as the green jobs advisor to President Barack Obama, and has founded and led four not-for-profit organizations engaged in social and environmental justice.

Marie "KonMari" Kondo (Design) - Marie "KonMari" Kondo is a Japanese organizing consultant, author and visionary entrepreneur. Kondo has captured the findings from her lifelong journey of organization as the best-selling author of *The Life-Changing Magic of Tidying Up: The Japanese Art of Decluttering and Organizing* and *Spark Joy: An Illustrated Master Class on the Art of Organizing and Tidying Up*.

Ray Kurzweil and **Amy Kurzweil** (Tech Industry) - Ray Kurzweil is one of the world's leading inventors, thinkers, and futurists. He is co-founder and Chancellor of Singularity University and a Director of Engineering at Google. Amy Kurzweil is a cartoonist and writer whose comics have appeared in *The New Yorker* and *The Huffington Post*. She teaches writing and comics at Parsons The New School for Design and at the Fashion Institute of Technology.

Wagner Moura and **Alice Braga** with **John Hopewell** (Entertainment Influencers) - Golden Globe Nominee actor Wagner Moura (*Narcos*, Netflix) and actress Alice Braga (*Queen of the South*, USA Network), two Brazilian artists, discuss diversity in Hollywood alongside Variety reporter John Hopewell, as both star in cutting-edge, prime-time drama series in the United States -- with Latin American protagonists.

Casey Neistat (Journalism) - Casey Neistat is a YouTube creator with over 1.3 billion views, a filmmaker and a technology entrepreneur. In November 2016 he became part of CNN Worldwide, where he is currently building an entirely new stand-alone media and technology company that combines CNN's global resources with a fresh approach to the news.

Gen. Paul J. Selva (Government) - General Selva serves as the 10th Vice Chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff. In this capacity, he is the nation's second highest-ranking military officer.

Selva was recently featured on the *60 Minutes* segment “The Coming Swarm,” which addressed autonomous drones.

Melanie Whelan, Tyler Haney with Julia Boorstin (Health) - Melanie Whelan is the CEO of SoulCycle, the country's premier indoor cycling brand. Tyler Haney is the Founder and CEO of active lifestyle brand Outdoor Voices. Julia Boorstin is the Senior Media and Entertainment Correspondent for CNBC.

Explore the full list of previously announced [Keynotes](#) and [Featured Speakers](#), as well as the full list of Conference programming on the [online schedule](#).

SXSW dedicates itself to helping creative people achieve their goals. Founded in 1987 in Austin, Texas, SXSW is best known for its conference and festivals that celebrate the convergence of the interactive, film, and music industries. The event, an essential destination for global professionals, features sessions, showcases, screenings, exhibitions, and a variety of networking opportunities. SXSW proves that the most unexpected discoveries happen when diverse topics and people come together. SXSW 2017 will take place March 10-19, 2017.

SXSW 2017 is sponsored by Esurance, Mazda, Monster Energy, Bud Light, Capital One, McDonald's, The Austin Chronicle, and Sonicbids.

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