

## SOUTH BY SOUTHWEST ANNOUNCES KEYNOTE NONNY DE LA PEÑA AND MORE FEATURED SPEAKERS

**Austin, Texas – February 21, 2018** – South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Conference and Festivals (March 9-18, 2018) has announced the addition of Keynote **Nonny de la Peña**, and more Featured Speakers to the programming lineup.

Featured Speakers announced today include *The Daily* host **Michael Barbaro**; *Black-ish* creator **Kenya Barris**; Blumhouse Productions Founder and CEO **Jason Blum**; *New York Times* foreign correspondent **Rukmini Callimachi**; *Ready Player One* author **Ernest Cline**; POLITICO chief Washington correspondent **Edward-Isaac Dovere**; bestselling author and Together Rising founder and president **Glennon Doyle**; actress **Dakota Fanning**, *CBS This Morning* co-host **Gayle King**; President of Paramount TV & Digital Entertainment **Amy Powell**; music legend **Nile Rodgers**; Vermont Senator **Bernie Sanders**; actor and former Governor of California **Arnold Schwarzenegger**; CNN anchor and chief Washington correspondent **Jake Tapper**; rapper and founding Wu-Tang Clan member **U-GOD**; Ireland's Taoiseach **Leo Varadkar T.D.**; and many more.

"A visionary storyteller, Nonny de la Peña has redefined the standard for how human creativity and technology can work together seamlessly to create engaging narratives and life-changing experiences," said Hugh Forrest, Chief Programming Officer. "As we head into the 25th year of Film and Interactive, De la Peña's work is emblematic of the cross-industry adaptation and experimentation we see [trending](#) in both festivals."

Nonny de la Peña is one of the most influential pioneers in virtual and augmented reality. She is founder and CEO of the award-winning Emblematic Group, renowned for using cutting-edge technologies to tell immersive stories that create intense, empathic engagement on the part of viewers. She was named one of *CNET*'s 20 Most Influential Latinos In Tech, *Wired Magazine*'s #MakeTechHuman Agent of Change and has been called the "Godmother of VR" by *Forbes*, *Engadget* and *The Guardian*. De la Peña joins previously-announced SXSW Keynotes **Darren Aronofsky** (Film), **Ta-Nehisi Coates** (Convergence), **Lyor Cohen** (Music), **Melinda Gates** (Interactive), **Barry Jenkins** (Film), **Sadiq Khan** (Convergence), **Esther Perel** (Interactive), and **whurley** (Convergence).

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

The 10th annual [SXSW Accelerator® Pitch Event](#) (March 10-11) has also announced the finalists in each of the Accelerator's 10 different tech categories with 50 startups competing with one winner selected from each category. For the first time this year, the event will also announce a "Best in Show" winner to honor the event's 10th anniversary. Participating finalists include companies from around the globe, including China, Germany, the UK, Netherlands, and

the Democratic Republic of the Congo. Some of the most pronounced trends across the SXSW Accelerator Pitch Event include emerging technologies in AI, blockchain, and social impact, with an anticipated rise of innovation spurred on by the newly introduced category, Hyper-Connected Communities.

SXSW Conference programming is organized into 24 Tracks divided between Interactive, Film, Music, and Convergence, presented in a variety of session formats. Continuing last year's initiative, SXSW is offering expanded access to events for all registrants. Attendees will receive primary access to programming associated with their badge type but now also enjoy secondary entry to most other SXSW events.

Additionally, SXSW registrants have access to **SXSW Gaming** (March 15-17). SXSW Gaming celebrates gaming culture via a unique combination of exhibitions, esports tournaments, hands-on play, awards, and Conference speakers. Featured Speakers announced for the 2018 event include **Christina Alejandre** (GM of ELEAGUE & VP of Esports, Turner Sports), **Steve Arhancet** (Co-CEO and Owner, Team Liquid), **Rick Fox** (Partner at VVP, Echo Fox owner), **Brendan Donohue** (Managing Director, NBA 2K League) with **Manny Anekal**, **Brendan Greene** (Creative Director, *Player Unknown's Battlegrounds*), **Sam Mathews** (Founder and Chairman, Fnatic), **Nate Nanzer** (Commissioner, Overwatch League), **Rahul Sood** (CEO, Unikrn), and **Pete Vlastelica** (President and CEO, MLG).

### **Keynote**

**Nonny de la Peña** (Convergence Keynote) - Nonny de la Peña is one of the most influential pioneers in virtual and augmented reality. She is founder and CEO of the award-winning Emblematic Group, renowned for using cutting-edge technologies to tell immersive stories that create intense, empathic engagement on the part of viewers. She was named one of CNET's 20 Most Influential Latinos In Tech, Wired Magazine's #MakeTechHuman Agent of Change and has been called the "Godmother of VR" by Forbes, Engadget and the Guardian. Widely credited with inventing the field of immersive journalism by premiering the first-ever VR experience at the Sundance Film Festival in 2012, *Hunger In Los Angeles*, she is now on the verge of announcing another breakthrough: Emblematic Group's new REACH web platform, which allows anyone to tell their story in room-scale VR.

### **Featured Speakers**

**Michael Barbaro** and **Rukmini Callimachi** (News & Journalism) - Michael Barbaro is the host of *The Daily*, a five-day-a-week audio show from *The New York Times*. In just one year, the show has built an audience of 4.5 million monthly unique listeners; and became the most-downloaded new show in 2017 on Apple Podcasts. Rukmini Callimachi joined the *New York Times* in March 2014 as a foreign correspondent, covering al-Qaeda and Islamic extremism. She is a two-time Pulitzer Prize finalist, most recently in 2014 for her series of stories based on a cache of internal al-Qaeda documents she discovered in Mali. Before joining

the Times, she spent 7 years covering a 20-country beat in Africa, first as a correspondent and later as West Africa bureau chief for *The Associated Press*.

**Kenya Barris** (Social Impact) - Kenya Barris is the creator of the Emmy-nominated series *Black-ish* for ABC (which is loosely based on his own life). In its second season, the show won a Peabody Award as well as an AFI Award, among others. Barris was awarded the Humanitas Prize in 2017 as well as NAACP Image Awards in 2016 and 2017 for Outstanding Writing in a Comedy Series and a show win for Outstanding Comedy Series for the fourth year in a row. Barris will join the [W. Kamau Bell](#) Featured Session.

**Guy Benson** (Social Impact) - Guy Benson is the Political Editor of Townhall.com and a Fox News Contributor. He co-authored *End of Discussion* in 2015, an updated edition of which was published by Random House in 2017. He is a familiar voice on the nationally-syndicated radio broadcast *The Hugh Hewitt Show* — which he regularly guest hosts — and contributes to NPR's *All Things Considered*. Benson will join the [Dylan Marron](#) Featured Session.

***The Bleeding Edge: A New Generation of Horror*** Featured Session (Making Film & Episodics) - Horror has always been a staple in cinema but now thanks to creative vision, voices and casts, it's moving from theatrical to broadcast to on-demand to digital to mobile. Horror is expanding not only storylines and casts, but also platforms. Join us for a forward-looking panel on the rise of the horror genre for audiences and how it is allowing fans to connect to the genre anywhere, anytime. Featuring: **Vera Miao** (Writer/Director/Producer *Two Sentence Horror Stories*), **Leigh Whannell** (Writer/Producer *Saw*), **Roxanne Benjamin** (Producer, *Southbound*, *VHS*; Snoot Entertainment), **Stephen Susco** (*The Grudge*, *Untitled Blumhouse-Bazelevs Film*), **Jason Blum** (Founder and CEO Blumhouse Productions).

**Kerry Brown** and **Linda Perry** (Music Industry) - Over the past 30 years Kerry Brown has managed and produced multi-platinum artists, feature films, television and video games. His credits include The Smashing Pumpkins, Miley Cyrus, Ziggy Marley, and Courtney Love. In the ocean of celebrity musicians, Linda Perry stands apart. Through her work as a producer and songwriter, Linda Perry has had a profound impact on pop culture at large, and an especially resounding impact on female empowerment, supplying artists such as P!nk, Christina Aguilera, Alicia Keys, Britney Spears, and Adele with her uniquely creative services..

**Charles Caldas** (Music Industry) - Charles Caldas is CEO of Merlin, the global digital rights agency for the world's independent label sector. The organization's members command in excess of 12% of the digital recorded music market and embody more than 20,000 independent record labels and distributors from 51 countries and all continents. Caldas has been recognized by Billboard in its 2018 list of the 100 most influential people in the music business and is a previous recipient of IMPALA's Outstanding Contribution Award.

***CherryPicks: Why Does a Critic's Gender Matter?*** Featured Session (Film & TV Industry) - Creating parity in the critical sphere is essential to paving the way for more inclusive,

female-centered media and to growing the number of women in all aspects of the media industry. Top voices from the film and music world will talk about the impact of limited female representation in film and music criticism. It's time to start building the media world of the future, one that recognizes the multi-tiered problem of gender bias and fights it every step of the way. Featuring: **Miranda Bailey** (CherryPicks), **Ann Powers** (NPR), **Claudia Puig** (Los Angeles Film Critics Association), **Samantha Mathis** (Actress).

**Erin Lee Carr** (Making Film & Episodics) - Erin Lee Carr is a director, producer and writer. Most recently, Erin directed *Drug Short*, an episode in Netflix's critically-acclaimed Dirty Money series. The film focuses on price gouging and unsustainable business by the pharmaceutical company Valeant. Her hit film *Mommy Dead and Dearest* had its World Premiere at SXSW and aired on HBO May 15, 2017. Carr will join Deborah S Esquenazi, Tamron Hall, and Ryan White for the [Doc Filmmakers on How to Tell a True Crime Story](#) Featured Session.

**Ernest Cline** (Entertainment Influencers) - Ernest Cline is an internationally best-selling novelist, screenwriter, father, and full-time geek. He is the author of the novels *Ready Player One* and *Armada*, and co-screenwriter of the film adaptation of *Ready Player One*, directed by Steven Spielberg. His work has been published in 58 countries, in 37 different languages, and has spent more than 100 weeks on *The New York Times* Best Sellers list. He lives in Austin, Texas, with his family, a time-traveling DeLorean, and a large collection of classic video games.

**Glennon Doyle** (Social Impact) - Glennon Doyle is the author of the #1 *New York Times* Bestseller *Love Warrior*, a 2016 Oprah's Book Club selection, as well as the *New York Times* Bestseller *Carry On, Warrior*. She is the founder and president of Together Rising, a nonprofit organization that has raised nine million dollars for women, families, and children in crisis. Doyle is an activist, speaker, and thought leader who believes that a Love Warrior's journey is to rush toward her pain and allow her pain to become her power. She lives in Florida with her wife and three children.

**Bob Gruters** (Startup & Tech Sectors) - Bob Gruters is the US Group Lead for Facebook's Entertainment + Technology & Connectivity business teams in North America, overseeing marketing relationships with leading brands across these key verticals. With more than 20 years of experience, Bob has held key leadership positions across the marketing and advertising industry that span television, digital, print, and OOH media.

**Mona Haydar** and **Aasif Mandvi** (News & Journalism) - Mona Haydar is a rapper, poet, activist, practitioner of Permaculture, meditator, composting devotee, mountain girl, solar power lover and a tireless God-enthusiast. She practices a life of sacred activism, poetry, contemplation and advocacy for living gently upon the Earth. Former *Daily Show* correspondent, actor, writer, and comedian, Aasif Mandvi is the co-creator of the Peabody Award-winning *Halal in the Family*. Mandvi's feature films include *Mother's Day*, *Million Dollar Arm*, *The Internship*, and *The Proposal*. He also co-wrote and starred in the indie hit, *Today's Hit*. Haydar and Mandvi will join Katie Couric on the [The Katie Couric Podcast](#) Featured Session.

**Ben Howe and Noor Tagouri** (Social Impact) - Noor Tagouri is a prominent Muslim-American female activist and journalist. Since launching her viral #LetNoorShine campaign in 2012, Tagouri has built a socially-aware and engaged community of nearly one million social media followers. **Ben Howe** is the Senior Contributing Editor at RedState.com, Filmmaker, and author of *The Immoral Majority*. Howe and Tagouri will join Ana Marie Cox and Bree Newsome for the [The Gifts of Faith: Cultivating Resilience](#) Featured Session.

**Gayle King** (Startup & Tech Sectors) - Gayle King is co-host of *CBS This Morning*. An experienced television journalist, King interviews top newsmakers and delivers original reporting to *CBS This Morning* and all CBS News broadcasts and platforms. She is also Editor-at-Large of the award-winning *O, the Oprah Magazine*. King will join Bumble founder and CEO Whitney Wolfe Herd in [conversation](#).

**Evan McMorris-Santoro** (Intelligent Future) - Evan McMorris-Santoro is a correspondent for *VICE News Tonight* on HBO. Before *Vice*, he was a reporter for *BuzzFeed News* and the host of *No One Knows Anything*, *BuzzFeed's* politics podcast. McMorris-Santoro got his start in journalism as an award-winning local newspaper reporter in his native North Carolina. McMorris-Santoro will join Waymo CEO John Krafcik for the [Just Press Go: Waymo's Self-Driving Cars Are Here](#) Featured Session.

**Evelyn Ngugi** (Social Impact) - Evelyn From The Internets is a #MagicalBlackGirl who loves to tell hilarious stories online. She's a video producer, journalist, and Internet personality dedicated to highlighting the experiences of women of color. Her most recent gig was Director of Video Strategy at NaturallyCurly.com, the largest online platform dedicated to textured hair. She is a 2017 YouTube Creators For Change fellow, filming projects that foster understanding and impact her communities. Ngugi will join Luvvie Ajayi for the [On Doing Better: A Convo](#) Featured Session.

**Kawan "KP" Prather and David Banner** (Music Culture & Stories) - Kawan "KP" Prather is an A&R legend, esteemed executive, established producer, soundtrack curator, headlining DJ, and GRAMMY® Award-winning songwriter. He has produced and written songs alongside Kendrick Lamar, Pharrell, John Legend and many more. David Banner is a GRAMMY® Award-winning music producer, recording artist, philanthropist, activist and actor.

**Teddy Riley and Andre Harrell** (Music Culture & Stories) - Teddy Riley is a legendary producer, artist and hit-maker. He is well known for his involvement with the groups Blackstreet and Guy, along with being credited with the creation of the new jack swing genre. Andre Harrell is the founder of Uptown Records and Vice Chairman of REVOLT Media & TV.

**Nile Rodgers** (Music Culture & Stories) - Among music legends, Nile Rodgers is truly exceptional. He amplifies his legacy as a multiple Grammy-winning composer, producer, arranger and guitarist by constantly traversing new musical terrain and successfully expanding

the boundaries of popular music. As the co-founder of CHIC, Rodgers pioneered a musical language that generated chart-topping hits like *Le Freak*, sparked the advent of hip-hop with *Good Times*, and won CHIC 11 Rock and Roll Hall of Fame nominations. Rodgers transcends all styles of music across every generation with a body of work that's garnered him inductions into the Rock & Roll Hall of Fame (2017) and the Songwriters Hall of Fame (2016).

**Bernie Sanders and Jake Tapper** (Government) - Bernie Sanders is an Independent Senator from Vermont. In 2006, he was elected to the U.S. Senate after 16 years as Vermont's sole congressman in the House of Representatives. Bernie is now serving his second term in the U.S. Senate after winning re-election in 2012 with 71 percent of the vote. CNN anchor and chief Washington correspondent Jake Tapper joined the network in 2013. He is the host of *The Lead with Jake Tapper* and the network's Sunday morning show, *State of the Union*.

**Arnold Schwarzenegger joins POLITICO's Off Message** Featured Session (Government) - Actor and former California Governor **Arnold Schwarzenegger** talks with POLITICO's **Isaac Dove** about his own principles for effective governing, why he made gerrymandering and other issues his crusades after finishing his term as governor of California, and what he sees for the future of American politics. Edward-Isaac Dove is the chief Washington correspondent for *POLITICO* and host of its podcast, *Off Message*.

**Superchunk** Featured Session (Music Culture & Stories) - For this session, Superchunk co-founders Laura Ballance and Mac McCaughan will be interviewed by *New York Times* bestselling author **Austin Kleon** to discuss the making of and motivation behind *What a Time to Be Alive*, the newest album by the innovative North Carolina rock 'n' roll band—their first in nearly five years—as well as Merge Records, the highly respected and influential independent label McCaughan and Ballance launched in 1989.

**Fitz Tepper** (Startup & Tech Sectors) - Fitz Tepper is a writer at TechCrunch based in New York City. He writes about a wide range of topics including fintech, social apps, cryptocurrency, hardware and more. He frequently keynotes and moderates panels at technology conferences around the world. Fitz also does video interviews for TechCrunch, and has interviewed personalities including Apple co-founder Steve Wozniak, NYSE President Tom Farley, and former Prime Minister of Israel Ariel Sharon. Tepper will join President and Co-Founder of rewardStyle, Amber Venz Box for the [What Mobile Means for the World's Biggest Brands](#) Featured Session.

**TIME'S UP! Shifting the Imbalance of Power** Featured Session (Film & TV Industry) - In recent months, our nation has witnessed an undeniable cultural shift in how we address sexual harassment in the workplace – and TIME'S UP and the TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund are making sure that change is here to stay. Conceived by women in Hollywood to serve all industries, TIME'S UP is addressing power imbalances in the workplace to stop sexual harassment and promote equality. The TIME'S UP Legal Defense Fund, administered by the National Women's Law Center, offers legal and public relations assistance to those who've

experienced sexual assault, harassment or related retaliation in the workplace or while trying to advance their careers. Featuring: **Fatima Goss Graves** (President and CEO of the National Women's Law Center), **Hilary Rosen** (SKDKnickerbocker Partner), and more TBA.

**An Informal and Candid Conversation with Female Leaders in Television** Featured Session (Entertainment Influencers) - As in almost all industries, Hollywood has serious disparity problems when it comes to male/female representation, sexual misconduct, and executive leadership. With the backdrop of one of the most long-time-coming shakeups the entertainment industry has seen, learn how TNT's Sarah Aubrey, working with some of the leading women of Hollywood, are challenging the status quo as executives and creative talent in front of and behind the camera to not only reshape the dialog, but also to redefine women's place in the entertainment industry. Featuring: **Amy Powell** (President of Paramount TV & Digital Entertainment), **Dakota Fanning** (Actress & Star of TNT's *The Alienist*), **Janine Sherman Barrois** (EP & Director for TNT's *Claws*), **Niecy Nash** (Actress & Star of TNT's *Claws*), **Sarah Aubrey** (EVP of TNT Original Programming), **Susan Rovner** (EVP, Development, Warner Bros. Television and Co-President, Warner Horizon Scripted Television), moderated by **Tonya Lewis Lee** (Producer, Entrepreneur & 'Mistress of Modernism').

**U-God** (Music Culture & Stories) - Born Lamont Jody Hawkins, U-God is an American rapper and hip-hop artist, one of the founding members of the legendary Wu-Tang Clan, and a native New Yorker. His first book *Raw: My Journey into the Wu-Tang*, takes a deep dive into his origins and the rise of the seminal rap group. The new book is set for a March 6, 2018 release via Picador.

**A Conversation with Leo Varadkar, T.D., Taoiseach (Prime Minister) of Ireland** Featured Session (Startup & Tech Sectors) - Leo Varadkar is the youngest ever Taoiseach. In conversation with CEO and co-founder of *The Texas Tribune*, **Evan Smith**, they will discuss how tech has made Ireland one of the most open and globalized economies in the world. Varadkar will also discuss Irish innovation at this year's SXSW and how the Irish tech sector is increasingly impacting on the US economy.

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 2018 will take place March 9-18, 2018.

SXSW 2018 is sponsored by Capital One, Mercedes-Benz, Bud Light, and The Austin Chronicle.

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