

SXSW ANNOUNCES KEYNOTES AND FINAL ROUND OF FEATURED SPEAKERS FOR SXSW ONLINE

Featured Speakers Announced Include President George W. Bush, Indra Nooyi, Ava DuVernay, Chance the Rapper, Kenan Thompson, Werner Vogels, Mick Fleetwood, Ole Obermann, Don Lemon, Jemele Hill, Swizz Beatz, Timbaland, Dr. Sanjay Gupta and More

Austin, Texas — February 24, 2021 — South by Southwest® (SXSW®) Conference and Festivals has announced U.S. Secretary of Transportation **Pete Buttigieg**; master facilitator, author, executive producer and host of *The New York Times* podcast *Together Apart* **Priya Parker** in conversation with **Anand Girdharadas**; and writer and author **Charles Yu** as Keynote Speakers, along with a new round of Featured Speakers for SXSW Online (March 16 - 20, 2021), a premiere digital experience featuring Conference sessions, Music Festival showcases, Film Festival screenings, world-class networking, and the unexpected discoveries that are always a part of SXSW.

“The three Keynote Speakers we’re announcing today are a perfect complement to our Conference lineup for SXSW Online 2021. Charles Yu’s amazing novel *Interior Chinatown* brings a completely unique perspective to the immigrant experience in the United States. Secretary of Transportation Pete Buttigieg will emphasize SXSW’s continued focus on how technological innovations are transforming mobility. And no one understands the importance of gatherings, and how social distancing has impacted this vital function in our society, more than Priya Parker,” said Hugh Forrest, Chief Programming Officer. “The addition to our lineup of creative luminaries such as Ava DuVernay; business leaders like Indra Nooyi; and President George W. Bush, the third president to speak in our conference, is part of what makes SXSW special and we look forward to everyone being able to experience what we’ve put together for this event.”

Buttigieg, Parker, and Yu join the Keynote lineup that includes previously-announced sessions from entrepreneur, political leader and bestselling author **Stacey Abrams** in a Keynote conversation with author **N.K. Jemisi**; and legendary musician, philanthropist and entrepreneur **Willie Nelson** in conversation with *Texas Monthly* writer at large and host of the magazine's *National Podcast of Texas* **Andy Langer**.

The SXSW Conference explores what’s next across entertainment, culture and technology, presented in a variety of formats. SXSW Online programming sessions are organized by themes (*A New Urgency*, *Challenging Tech’s Path Forward*, *Cultural Resilience in the Arts*, *The Rebirth Of Business*, *Transforming the Entertainment Landscape*, *Connection in Disconnection* and *An Uncharted Future*), which are specifically focused on our unique moment in history and a glimpse into what the future could look like. More information about SXSW programming formats and themes can be found [here](#).

Newly-announced SXSW 2020 Keynotes include:

- 19th US Secretary of Transportation and former mayor of South Bend, Indiana **Pete Buttigieg**
- Master facilitator, strategic advisor, acclaimed author of *The Art of Gathering: How We Meet and Why it Matters*, and executive producer and host of *The New York Times* podcast, *Together Apart*, **Priya Parker** in conversation with *The Ink* publisher and author of *Winners Take All* **Anand Giridharadas**
- Writer and author of four books, including his latest, *Interior Chinatown*, which was a *New York Times* bestseller and won the 2020 National Book Award for Fiction, **Charles Yu**

Newly-announced Featured Sessions include:

- **President George W. Bush in Conversation with Evan Smith:** 43rd President of the United States of America, and author of the upcoming book *Out of Many, One: Portraits of America's Immigrants*, **George W. Bush** in conversation co-founder and CEO of The Texas Tribune, **Evan Smith**.
- **Audience Wild West: Insurgent Categories Redefining Marketing:** A conversation with Tinder CEO **Jim Lanzone**, Snap Inc., Chief Business Officer **Jeremi Gorman**, Peloton SVP, Head of Global Marketing & Communications **Dara Treseder**, Twitch Chief Marketing Officer **Doug Scott**, with MediaLink founder, Chairman and CEO **Michael E. Kassin** about how the stay-at-home lifestyle has drastically changed consumer media consumption habits. Traditional theatrical, linear, and digital video experiences are now part of a much broader media diet as viewers gravitate toward environments that drive personal connection and provide escapist experiences. As traditional media companies attempt to retain audiences, and as brands pursue alternative advertising environments to engage consumers, four advertising ecosystems are emerging as competitive options. Gaming, online dating, community-driven social apps, and at-home fitness businesses are forging insurgent paths - stealing screen-share and building engaged audiences, and as well providing sophisticated options for brands to integrate and drive value.
- **Ava DuVernay with Franklin Leonard:** Filmmaker and founder of narrative change collective ARRAY **Ava DuVernay** in conversation with film and television producer, and Black List founder and CEO **Franklin Leonard**.
- **The Boardroom to the Moon: Repairing our Planet:** What do **Indra Nooyi** (former Chairman and CEO of PepsiCo) and **Naoko Yamazaki** (the second Japanese woman in space) have in common? They're both passionate about saving our planet. Join these members of The Earthshot Prize Council in their first public appearance together as they discuss needed changes, the best path towards accelerated climate action and their search for the most impactful ways to repair our planet over the next ten years.

- ***Celebrities Redefining Cannabis Entrepreneurship:*** A conversation about the changing landscape in the cannabis industry and how leading cannabis brands are actively challenging social and economic disparities by partnering with high-profile entrepreneurs and amplifying their unique stories. Featuring Mexican-American rapper, businessman, entrepreneur, founder & CEO of Cookies & Vibe **Berner**, former professional basketball player and CEO and founder of premium cannabis company Viola Inc **Al Harrington**, Koko Nuggz founder and CEO **Flo Storch** in conversation with VP of Greenlane Brands, **Eric Hammond**.
- ***A Conversation with Kenan Thompson and Chance the Rapper:*** **Kenan Thompson** and **Chance the Rapper** sit down for a fireside chat discussing Kenan's successful long-ranging career, including his new *NBC* series, *Kenan* and his historic 18 seasons on *Saturday Night Live*.
- ***The Daily Show News Team: Content from Their Couches:*** Join *The Daily Show with Trevor Noah's* News Team **Jordan Klepper**, **Michael Kosta**, **Desi Lydic**, **Dulcé Sloan** and **Roy Wood Jr.** in conversation with *NPR's* **Eric Deggans**, where they'll discuss how the Comedy Central late-night franchise tackles politics, race and social issues on the show—all during a global pandemic. From pivoting production to their living rooms to masking up for campaign rallies, the team will offer an inside look into what it takes to create *The Daily Social Distancing Show*.
- ***Entrepreneurship Equals Empowerment:*** A conversation about Leveling the playing field for entrepreneurship, empowering our next generation with the tools they need to create economic independence by bringing together businesses, governments, nonprofits and community orgs to invest in small business and remove barriers for disenfranchised groups, with entrepreneur, author, philanthropist, and Operation HOPE CEO and founder **John Hope Bryant**, and Shopify president **Harley Finkelstein** in conversation with NBC News correspondent **Jo Ling Kent**.
- ***Every Company Needs to Become a Software Company:*** By making digital business a necessity, the pandemic gave us final proof that every company must become a software company in order to survive. That's every company, from Ford to Starbucks, and not just digital, but a software company, whose leaders turn to their developers for strategic direction. Instead of envying the nimble innovation machines of Silicon Valley, any company can learn how to become one by tapping the power of software, unleashing the creativity of their developers, and bridging the divide between their technical people and their business leaders. Author and Twilio CEO and Cofounder, **Jeff Lawson** and Amazon.com VP & CTO, **Werner Vogels**, will explore how our current crisis will accelerate this trend and provide a playbook for companies on how to run a company using the methodologies of Silicon Valley disruptors.
- ***The Evolution of Diversity & Inclusion:*** Join **Maxine Williams**, Chief Diversity Officer, Facebook and **Jason Wright**, NFL President, The Washington Football Team in

conversation as they discuss the business case for building an inclusive company. Together, they will explore how the power of diverse perspectives and experiences are good for business and lead to better business outcomes.

- ***Going Viral: In Your Dreams:*** Today's musical artists crave two things: global virality on platforms such as TikTok and career longevity. **Mick Fleetwood** has achieved both. Sustaining over 50 years in the industry as a founding member of Fleetwood Mac, Fleetwood was also part of TikTok's biggest viral trend of 2020. TikTok has become the music industry's best promotional tool since launching; breaking artists, new music and giving new life to catalog hits. Billions of video creations are set to music and its leaned-in and engaged community is driving chart success. TikTok's Global Head of Music **Ole Obermann** has been at the heart of TikTok's ascent since joining in 2019. Join Fleetwood and Obermann as they talk music, how to sustain a career, discovering new talent, the role of technology in shaping trends and culture, and what today's music stars can learn from Fleetwood's decades at the top.
- ***How To Not Let the 2020 Crisis Go to Waste:*** With dramatically increased calls from all layers of society for serious structural change, the opportunities for building a better future are abundant. But how do you translate those into practice? Rotterdam, the second largest city in the Netherlands, with a challenging diversity, dependence on heavy industry and deep economic divides, started seizing on their opportunities even before 2020. Lessons from a bold Dutch city, with Rotterdam **Mayor Ahmed Aboutaleb** and Vice President, Head of Centers, EU & Asia for CIC International, **Melissa Ablett-Jordaan**.
- ***Immunized: COVID-19 and the Race for a Vaccine:*** Join CNN's **Dr. Sanjay Gupta** with molecular virologist **Dr. Keith Chappell** (University of Queensland) and immunologist, Professor **Katie Ewer** (University of Oxford) as they discuss scientific innovation to fight the COVID-19 pandemic. Dr Gupta will also share a sneak peek from the forthcoming documentary for CNN Films and BBC, *Race for the Vaccine/ Vaccine: The Inside Story*, produced by Wingspan Productions and Global Health Reporting Center in association with the HHMI Tangled Bank Studios. The film has also been supported by the Chan Zuckerberg Initiative. This program is presented in partnership with CITIZEN BY CNN, the network's civic engagement platform designed to engage voters in conversation about issues that matter
- ***Impacts of Activism:*** CNN anchor and author of *This is the Fire* and host of the podcast *Silence is Not an Option* **Don Lemon** joins journalist **Jemele Hill** and **Malcolm Jenkins**, two-time Super Bowl Champion and founder of Broad Street Ventures, to talk about using personal platforms to fight against racism, the impact and potential consequences. This program is presented in partnership with CITIZEN BY CNN, the network's civic engagement platform designed to engage voters in conversation about issues that matter

- ***The New York Times Climate Debate:*** With 2020 tying the record for the hottest year, there is agreement that we have to combat global warming, but there is less agreement about how to get there. Some argue that we don't have all of the tools - and that if we are to halt global warming, we must pursue new solutions, such as accelerating renewable initiatives that will help us to bring carbon emissions to net-zero. For others, the tools for creating a sustainable economy already exist. It's simply a matter of changing behaviour and holding accountable policy-makers and business leaders, who have set lofty ambitions. Join us as two sides debate and share their perspective on the most sustainable path to net-zero, exploring these issues ahead of *The New York Times* Climate Hub. Moderator: **Somini Sengupta** (International Climate Reporter, *The New York Times*). Judge: **Nigel Topping** (High-Level Climate Champion for COP26). Debaters: **Chris Stark** (CEO, Committee on Climate Change) **Dr. Leah Stokes** (Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science, UCSB; Author, *Short Circuiting Policy*), **Emma Howard Boyd** (Chair of the Environment Agency, UK Government), **Mohamed Adow** (Founder and Director, Power Shift Africa), **Rhian-mari Thomas** (C.E.O., Green Finance Institute), **Joseph Majkut** (Director of Climate Policy, Niskanen Center).
- ***The Pandemic's Hottest Concert Series:*** Musicians didn't think twice about internet concerts before 2020. They could make more money in one night on the road than they could in a year on Twitch or Instagram Live. But the pandemic has stranded thousands of professional musicians at home, and brought out their innermost creativity. Of all the biggest at-home concerts, nothing comes close to *Verzuz*, a recurring event that is part concert series, part history lesson. Every few weeks, two musicians gather and take turns playing their biggest hits and telling stories from their careers. The project is the brainchild of Swizz Beatz and Timbaland, two producers responsible for some of the biggest hits of the past 25 years. The old friends started by talking live on Instagram from their respective homes. But what started as an impromptu conversation between two music industry kingpins quickly morphed into must-see programming. Join Grammy-Award Winning music producer, entrepreneur and visionary **Swizz Beatz**, multi-platinum Grammy winning Super-producer **Timbaland**, music industry veteran **Fadia Kader** in conversation with *Bloomberg News* reporter and author of the Screentime newsletter **Lucas Shaw**, for a conversation about the pandemic's hottest concert series.
- ***Raising the Bar: Accelerating Diversity in Music:*** This session with Warner Music Group Global Head of Equity, Diversity and Inclusion **Dr. Maurice A. Stinnett**, Recording Academy Chief Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Officer **Valeisha Butterfield-Jones**, Color Of Change president **Rashad Robinson**, Sony Music EVP, Chief Diversity and Inclusion Officer **Tiffany R. Warren**, and SVP, Chief Diversity, Inclusion and Belonging Officer at the Universal Music Group **Liliahn Majeed** will evaluate how inclusive the music industry is at this time across race, gender, age, and across all genres of music, highlighting the good, the bad, the ugly. Immersed in the day

to day, music leaders on the panel will take a step back and discuss the most surprising and least surprising DE&I insights from within their organizations and their communities.

- ***Reinventing the Telethon for the Digital Generation:*** Learn about how creators are leveraging their influence for good, and social platforms are supporting them with new technologies and features including the ability to fundraise and lead an evolution of social good. Join Tiltify CEO **Michael Wasserman** with will be joined by content creator **Jacksepticeye** and **Alison Moore** of Comic Relief US to highlight some of their biggest collaborations of 2020, as well as examine how creating more interactive, live and personalized experiences on social platforms make it easier than ever for the next generation of donors to support their favorite charities and causes worldwide.
- ***Space is for Everybody: Insights from NASA Astronauts:*** For 20 years, humans have conducted science from humanity's home in orbit — the International Space Station. Join NASA astronauts **Victor Glover** and **Kate Rubins** for a conversation from 250 miles above as these space travelers provide insight about their experience working and living in space, international collaboration aboard the station, space technology, and how research in microgravity benefits everybody back on Earth.

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. In 2021, the event moves to a digital format. SXSW Online offers conference sessions, music showcases, film screenings, exhibitions, and a variety of networking and professional development opportunities. An essential destination for global professionals, SXSW Online 2021 will take place March 16 - March 20. For more information, please visit sxsw.com. To register for the event, please visit sxsw.com/attend.

SXSW Online 2021 Platinum Partners are White Claw, High Grade Hemp Seed, Showtime and The Austin Chronicle. The SXSW Online 2021 Conference is powered by Audible and Dell.

###

Press Contacts:

Brett Cannon

Jody Arlington

Elizabeth Derczo

press@sxsw.com

512-467-7979