

MEMORANDUM

Apr. 12, 2023

To: Suzie Smith, VP of Public Relations, NBC

From: Annie Cleaver, Public Relations Coordinator, NBC

Re: **“Saturday Night Live” Show Runner Transition – Media Kit and Strategy**

Dear Ms. Smith,

The following media kit outlines the strategy for the announcement of Kenan Thompson’s new role as showrunner of NBC’s “Saturday Night Live.” We intend to assure fans that the transition will be smooth and successful as current showrunner and creator of “SNL,” Lorne Michaels, hands over the reins.

This media campaign is designed to raise awareness and excitement for this leadership change amongst “SNL” and comedy fans to maximize viewership for Thompson’s first season as showrunner next fall.

See below for our media campaign strategy:

1. **News Release:** The news release includes the specific details of the transition for media outlets to utilize, as well as quotes from Michaels, Thompson, and NBC chairman of television and streaming, John Jones. The document will also explain the role of the showrunner at “Saturday Night Live” and a brief highlight of Thompson’s qualifications.
2. **Pitch Letter:** This letter is addressed to Lori Hughes, the lead talent booker at ABC’s “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” It describes Michaels’ impact as the showrunner of “SNL” and the news of Thompson as his successor. Additionally, it invites Hughes to contact the NBC PR department to book Thompson as a guest on Kimmel’s show.
3. **Professional Bio:** This bio outlines Thompson’s career timeline and accomplishments. It will highlight his knowledge and experience with the entertainment industry to assure fans that he will be able to successfully execute his duties as the showrunner of “SNL.”

4. **Fact Sheet:** The fact sheet will provide a general overview of facts about “SNL,” including its history, program ratings, production, awards and accolades, prominent cast members, writers and producers.
5. **Frequently Asked Questions:** This document answers questions about “Saturday Night Live” and other relevant topics that many viewers may have. The release of this document will inform audiences about the inner workings of the show that Thompson will now be leading. It will also touch on how to access “SNL” on NBC’s streaming service, Peacock, to increase streaming viewership.

If you have any questions or need additional information, please contact me at:

(123) 456-7890

snlmedia@snl.com

Sincerely,

Annie Cleaver

Public Relations Coordinator, NBC



SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Kenan Thompson to Replace Lorne Michaels as Showrunner of “Saturday Night Live”

The Show’s Longest-Running Cast Member Earns a Seat at the Table

[New York, April 14, 2023 –] NBC announces today that longtime “Saturday Night Live” cast member, Kenan Thompson, will replace Lorne Michaels as showrunner of “SNL” after he made the personal decision to step down. Michaels will continue to oversee the operations of the show for the remainder of this season. Thompson will officially assume the position on June 1, 2023, in preparation for the following season’s premiere in early September of this year.

Thompson takes on this role with years of experience in the entertainment industry under his belt. His credits for acting, writing, and producing have shaped him to be just as knowledgeable behind the scenes as he is in front of the camera. Currently, Thompson holds the record as the longest-running cast member of “Saturday Night Live,” joining the show in 2003. His work on the show has earned him five Emmy nominations and one win.

As showrunner, the “SNL” veteran hopes to take the program in a new direction by adding diverse voices and fresh perspectives to both the cast and writing staff.

“When Lorne asked me to step in I couldn’t believe it,” says Thompson. “I genuinely thought the show would end when he left. Somehow, he has enough faith in me and the rest of the team to keep it going. Truly no one does it like Lorne, but I’m grateful and excited to take on the challenge and see what we can create during these upcoming seasons.”

Michaels created the show in 1975 and has served as the showrunner since its inception. The showrunner of “Saturday Night Live” is responsible for finalizing the cast members, crew, and writing staff, as well as approving the sketch pitches each week.

“This job is no joke,” says Michaels. “It’s certainly not your typical nine to five. But there’s no one I trust more than Kenan to take over the show. Not only is he a brilliant comedian, but he’s a true leader that has the guts it takes to run a show as insane as this one. I’ll be leaving ‘SNL’ in very capable hands.”

Thompson’s assumption of the role comes during a period of reinvention for the show initiated by Michaels. After the pandemic setbacks and the departure of several featured cast members at the end of season 47 – including Kate McKinnon, Pete Davidson, Aidy Bryant, and Kyle Mooney – Michaels has been working to reshape the show.

Ratings have been steadily increasing since the pandemic, with Season 47 of “SNL” ranking fourth amongst broadcasted comedies across the Big Four (NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox). Thompson’s quick wit and knowledge of the entertainment industry will continue to usher the comedic giant that is “Saturday Night Live” into a new era.

“‘Saturday Night Live’ is one of the most iconic television shows for a reason,” says NBC chairman of television and streaming John Jones. “Lorne has really created something special and brought so many beloved characters and sketches to the fans. When you’ve run a show successfully for as long as he has, you’re bound to know a thing or two about choosing a proper successor. We’re excited to see what direction Kenan will take the show.”

ABOUT NBC

The National Broadcasting Company (NBC) is an American television network owned and operated by NBCUniversal, a division of Comcast. It was founded in 1926, making it the oldest major broadcast network in the United States. As of 2020, the NBC Network is led by NBCUniversal chairman of entertainment networks, Frances Berwick, and NBCUniversal chairman of entertainment content, Susan Rosner Rovner.

ABOUT “SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE”

“Saturday Night Live” is one of the longest-running television programs of all time. Since its premiere in 1975, the show has delighted audiences with hilarious sketch comedy and live musical performances. Currently, “SNL” holds the record for being the most Emmy-nominated show in history and has received 93 wins.

SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE

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Lori Hughes
Lead Talent Booker
“Jimmy Kimmel Live!”
ABC Television

Dear Ms. Hughes,

For 47 years, Lorne Michaels has served as the showrunner of NBC’s sketch comedy show “Saturday Night Live,” one of the longest-running television shows of all time. After years of undeniable success, the time has come for Michaels to hand over the reins to his predecessor, current “SNL” cast member Kenan Thompson.

While Thompson will serve as the newly appointed showrunner, he is certainly no stranger to the show. Having worked 20 years as the longest-running cast member in history, he is beloved by “SNL” fans of all ages who are already buzzing online about the news of his next position.

Aside from his outstanding live performance each Saturday night, Thompson’s live television presence is nothing short of memorable. He has hosted the 2022 Emmys and appeared on numerous talk shows over the years that have drawn in viewers of all ages and backgrounds. A segment with Thompson as he prepares to take over as the leader of one of the most historic shows on television will surely intrigue the audiences of “Jimmy Kimmel Live!” and “SNL” alike.

I’ll be in touch with you later this week about plans for Thompson to appear on “Jimmy Kimmel Live!”

Sincerely,
Annie Cleaver
Public Relations Coordinator, NBC
(123) 456-7890



Kenan Thompson

Showrunner at “Saturday Night Live”

As an entertainment industry veteran, Kenan Thompson provides expertise in managing the creative direction and overall operations of “Saturday Night Live,” one of television’s longest-running programs. As the top executive producer, Thompson is responsible for assembling the show’s talent and crew and approving the running sketches.

Thompson is certainly no stranger to the legendary NBC program; he currently holds the title of “Saturday Night Live’s” longest-running cast member, joining in 2003. During his tenure, he was nominated for five Emmys for his work on the show, winning once. Some of his notable characters and impersonations include Steve Harvey, “Black Jeopardy” host Darnell Haynes, and “Cinema Classics” host Reese De’What.

While still a cast member of “Saturday Night Live,” Thompson starred in his own single-camera sitcom, “Kenan.” His performance in this role earned him an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Lead Actor in a Comedy Series.

Prior to his time at “SNL,” Thompson held recurring roles in popular shows such as “Sabrina the Teenage Witch,” “The Steve Harvey Show” and more. Additionally, he appeared in films such as “Love Don’t Cost a Thing” and “D2: The Mighty Ducks.”

His knack for sketch comedy acting was immediately apparent when he earned a role as a cast member in the hit 1994 Nickelodeon show, “All That.” At just 17-years-old, Thompson impressed producers and executives with his comedic ability and timing. He and his “All That” cast member, Kel Mitchell, would later star in their own Nickelodeon primetime show, “Kenan and Kel,” as well as the comedy film “Good Burger.”

With Thompson’s extensive knowledge of the entertainment industry and “Saturday Night Live,” he has the skills to carry the hit show into a new era of success.

Fact Sheet



What is “Saturday Night Live?”

Premiering in 1975, NBC’s “Saturday Night Live” is a late-night sketch comedy show that has provided viewers with laughter for decades. With 48 seasons and over 900 episodes, it’s one of the longest-running television shows to date. The weekly 93-minute show offers comedic commentary on political issues and current events by its cast of both featured and repertory members. “SNL” is hosted by a different celebrity guest each week. The hosts participate in sketches and deliver a monologue toward the beginning of the program. Additionally, the show features weekly musical performances.

Production

“Saturday Night Live” broadcasts every episode live from historic Studio 8H in 30 Rockefeller Plaza. The creator and longtime showrunner, Lorne Michaels, also serves as an executive producer alongside other major names in the comedy world. The show is now produced by Michaels’ production company, Broadway Video, founded in 1979. Since 2021, “SNL” has been directed by Emmy-award-winning director Liz Patrick.

Program Ratings

In its 47th season, “Saturday Night Live” ranked fourth amongst comedies across the Big Four (NBC, ABC, CBS and Fox). Additionally, the “SNL” YouTube channel received a total of 1.6 billion views for videos posted during the same season. The season premiere, hosted by Owen Wilson, drew in 4.9 million viewers.

“SNL” Awards and Accolades

The hit show has earned numerous awards during its tenure. “SNL” holds the record for being the most Emmy-nominated television show in history as well as receiving 93 Emmy wins. Additionally, “Saturday Night Live” has earned six Writers Guild of America Awards, three Peabody Awards and has been inducted into the Broadcasting Hall of Fame.

Prominent Former Cast Members

Many Hollywood stars have hailed from the Studio 8H stage. Some prominent former cast members of “Saturday Night Live” include Bill Murray, 1977-1980; Eddie Murphy, 1980-1984; Chris Rock, 1990-1993; Adam Sandler, 1990-1995; Will Ferrel, 1995-2002; Jimmy Fallon, 1998-2004; Tina Fey, 2000-2006; Amy Poehler, 2001-2008; Kenan Thompson, 2003-Present; Kristen Wiig, 2005-2012; Jason Sudekis, 2005-2013; Kate McKinnon, 2012-2022; and more.

Prominent Producers and Writers

Without the behind-the-scenes players of “SNL,” the show would not run successfully. Some prominent producers include Lorne Michaels, 1975-Present; Marci Klein, 1995-2003; Steve Higgins, 1996-Present; Michael Schur, 2002-2004; Lindsey Shookus, 2008-present; and John Mulaney, 2011-2012. Notable head writers include Adam McKay, 1995-2001; Tina Fey, 1999-2006; Seth Meyers, 2005-2014; Colin Jost, 2017-present; and Alison Gates, 2018-present.

“SNL” Media Contact and Location

Annie Cleaver

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snlmedia@snl.com

30 Rockefeller Plz, New York, NY, 10112

FAQ



How can I watch “Saturday Night Live?”

“SNL” airs Saturdays live on NBC at 11:30 p.m. EST; 10:30 p.m. CDT; 9:30 p.m. MST; and 8:30 p.m. PST. The show’s season typically runs from October to late May. Alternatively, you can download the NBC Peacock app and create an account with the Peacock Premium plan to stream the show after it has aired. For \$4.99 a month, Peacock Premium also gives you access to every past episode of “Saturday Night Live” and the option to watch the show live in your timezone.

Who are the current “SNL” cast members?

The show divides its cast into two different categories, the newer featured members and the established repertory members. Currently, the featured cast members of season 48 are Marcello Hernandez, James Austin Johnson, Molly Kearney, Michael Longfellow, Sarah Sherman, and Devon Walker. The repertory cast members include Michael Che, Mikey Day, Andrew Dismukes, Chloe Fineman, Heidi Gardner, Punkie Johnson, Colin Hanks, Ego Nwodim, Cecily Strong, Kenan Thompson, and Bowen Yang.

How do I join the “Saturday Night Live” cast?

While “SNL” doesn’t hold open casting calls, we have an array of scouts in cities across the country looking for upcoming comedic talent. Previous cast members have been scouted at places such as an open-mic night or improvisational comedy group performances. Our scouts also monitor comedy published on the internet to recruit a diverse and well-rounded cast.

Is the show scripted?

Yes, “Saturday Night Live” is a scripted sketch comedy show. While there are instances of improvisation throughout the runtime, the cast members have rehearsed the sketches prior and read scripted lines from cue cards during the actual live performance. The show's writers spend the week leading up to the show ideating and writing the sketches.

Does “SNL” accept audience submissions for sketch and joke ideas?

No, “Saturday Night Live” is unable to accept sketch and joke submissions from the public. If you’re seeking a job involved with the creation or production of the show, you can visit the [NBCUniversal career site](#) to learn more.

Are any portions of the show pre-recorded?

Yes, “SNL” features a few pre-recorded portions, including parody commercials and “SNL” Digital Shorts. The cold open, host monologue, the remainder of the sketches, Weekend Update and the musical performances are live.

How do I get tickets to be in the live studio audience?

“Saturday Night Live” audience members are selected at random through an email lottery. Entry to the lottery is free and can be submitted for the upcoming season at any time within the month of August. If you are selected as a winner of the lottery, you will receive two tickets to the show. You are unable to choose preferred show dates, but will be notified of your given show date and time if you win the lottery.

How do I enter the “SNL” ticket lottery?

To enter the lottery, email your submission to SNLTICKETS@NBCUNI.COM and include your full name, email address, and why you would like to be a part of the “SNL” studio audience. Only one ticket entry per household is permitted. You must be 16 years or older to attend the show. “SNL” audience members must be fully vaccinated by the day of their attendance and in line with NBC COVID-19 protocols. Guests must also provide valid photo ID and proof of vaccination at the door, or else they will be denied entry.