

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****SATURDAY NIGHT LIVE IS 50 AND EMMY MAGAZINE IS DELIVERING AN INSIDE LOOK AT THE PAST, PRESENT AND FUTURE OF THE CULTURAL PHENOMENON**

(LOS ANGELES – Feb 12, 2025) — It's been 50 years since the premiere of *Saturday Night Live* changed late-night television forever. Over the past five decades, the legendary NBC show has become the gold standard for sketch comedy and the most-awarded program in Emmy history with 95 wins. *Emmy* is marking the extraordinary milestone with a cover featuring all 17 current cast members and an enlightening discussion with creator and executive producer Lorne Michaels and the ensemble cast, including previous Emmy hosts Colin Jost, Michael Che and Kenan Thompson. The award-winning official publication of the Television Academy is on sale Feb. 13.

When *SNL* launched in 1975, American TV audiences were already familiar with the sketch-comedy and variety genre from programs like *The Carol Burnett Show* and *The Ed Sullivan Show*. But *SNL* had a completely new format that spoke directly to a younger audience with edgy celebrity impressions, iconic characters, hilarious catchphrases and a cutting-edge take on the news that quickly became part of the cultural zeitgeist.

Michaels, the Canadian writer-producer who created the irreverent 90-minute show, reflects on the enormity of its 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary in *emmy*. "I've been forced to believe it's the 50<sup>th</sup> season because I was there for most of it, but we still take it one week at a time," he says. "The great part of doing the show is that whatever

happened last week, you're onto this week. We're always looking for what's fresh. Life is all about reinvention."

*SNL* has launched some of comedy's biggest stars, many of whom have returned for the special anniversary season, including Maya Rudolph, Andy Samberg, Chris Rock and John Mulaney. "Season 50 has felt especially electric with so many guest stars, and there have been so many great sketches," says *SNL* director Liz Patrick. "The idea of all these generations getting to work together is fun and very special," adds Michaels. Current cast member Heidi Gardner shares that "It's felt like Dana Carvey is a cast member again, which is so cool because he was my doorway to *SNL*. To watch the audience fall in love with him has brought me new joy."

In the cover story "Larger Than Live," season 50 cast members recall their earliest memories of *SNL*, their auditions, first live skits, favorite hosts and most memorable moments. Michael Che reminisces about his audition. "I came in through a writers' program. It was supposed to be two weeks. I thought it was like an internship. I had no idea what the job was or how to write for the show! That was 11 years ago, and I've been here ever since." Mikey Day describes his favorite musical performance. "I was here for Prince [in 2014]. It was my second year as a writer, so I would just watch him from afar. The studio is pretty small, so being right there for a little Prince concert just didn't feel real. He's just one of those people who was bigger than life."

*Emmy* magazine's *SNL* feature also includes "In Stitches," a look at the 50-person department required to supply costumes for sketches; "Mane Stage," which delves into the 10 experts, 70 hours and 80 wigs needed to get everyone's head on straight each week; and "Faces, Everybody!," which explores the world of the 18 makeup artists who transform dozens of cast members for every episode.

The anniversary celebration starts Feb. 14 with *SNL50: The Homecoming Concert*, a live all-star event from Radio City Music Hall, airing on Peacock, followed by *SNL50: The Anniversary Special*, live Feb. 16 on NBC and Peacock. Additionally, a new four-part docuseries, *SNL50: Beyond Saturday Night*, is streaming now on Peacock.

#### **Additional feature highlights from the new issue include:**

- Laverne Cox is known for her advocacy for trans visibility and her commitment to advancing LGBTQ representation on screen. In "**The Prodigal Daughter**," *emmy* speaks with Cox about her latest project, the Prime Video comedy *Clean Slate*, and how she draws on lived experience for her first leading role.
- In *The Residence*, the latest collaboration from Netflix and Shondaland, premiering March 20, the White House becomes the setting for a screwball murder mystery. *Emmy* talks with creator-showrunner Paul William Davies (*Scandal*) about how the show was inspired by a late-night C-SPAN video featuring the chief usher — head of the household staff — during the Clinton administration in "**House Arrest**."

- Zahn McClarnon, the Native American actor who plays Navajo tribal police officer Joe Leaphorn on AMC's hit drama *Dark Winds*, has found the show to be a safe space to tap into his own life experiences. In "**Role Model**," McClarnon talks to *emmy* about how season three is more emotional and personal than ever, with a storyline that evokes memories of his own past trauma.

### **About *emmy***

*Emmy*, the official publication of the Television Academy, goes behind the scenes of the industry for a unique insider's view. With wide-ranging, inclusive subjects representative of the Television Academy membership and the medium as a whole, *emmy* showcases the scope of television and profiles the people who make it happen, from the stars of top shows and artisans behind the cameras, to programming trends and technological advances. Honored with dozens of awards for editorial excellence, *emmy* is published 13 times per year and is available on selected newsstands and at [TelevisionAcademy.com](http://TelevisionAcademy.com) for single print and digital copies as well as subscriptions.

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### **For issue/coverage contact:**

Stephanie Goodell  
breakwhitelight (for the Television Academy)  
[stephanie@breakwhitelight.com](mailto:stephanie@breakwhitelight.com)  
818-462-1150