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## Saturday Night Live: Lorne Michaels

Morganne Standley  
*Bowling Green State University*

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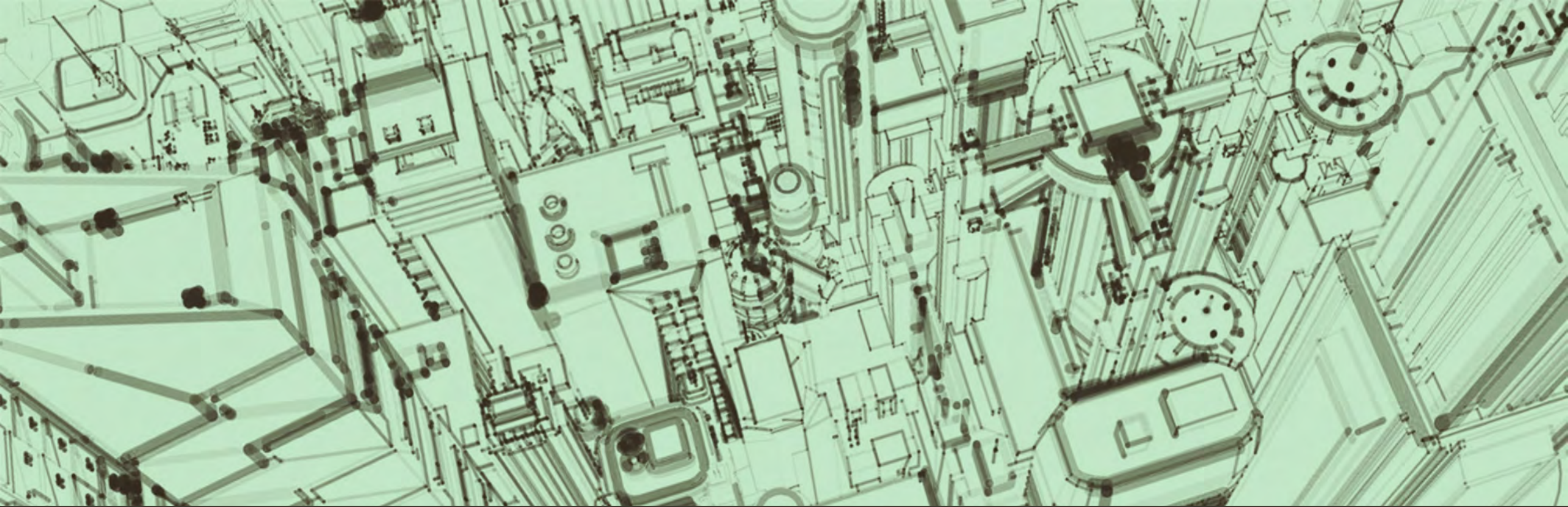
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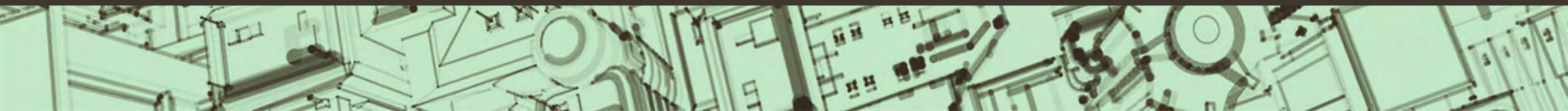
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**Live from  
New York,  
it's...**



# Lorne Michaels

Creator and Executive Producer of Saturday Night Live



# Lorne Michaels Background

- Born in 1944 in Israel
- Family immigrated to Toronto, Canada when he was a child
- Began writing fiction as a teenager – led him to be interested in an entertainment career
- Producer and writer for several shows
  - Saturday Night Live (1975)
  - 30 Rock (2006)
  - The Kids in the Hall (1988)
- Recognized as one of the most influential comedy producers of all time
- Founded his own production company in 1979 called Broadway Video

# Lorne Michaels Background

- Known for nurturing talent that he discovers on SNL
  - Conan O'Brien
- Executive producer (EP) of *Late Night*
- Executive producer of *The Tonight Show*
- EP of Late Night with Seth Meyers
- EP of projects of former SNL casts
  - Tiny Fey – 30 Rock
  - Emily Spivey (SNL Writer) – Up All Night

# Lorne Michaels Education

- Attended University of Toronto
  - English major
- Received an Honorary Doctorate from Ryerson University
  - From his contribution to the television industry

# Saturday Night Live Show Background

- Lorne Michaels was hired by NBC at the age of 30 in 1975
- Worked with executive Dick Ebersol to create a sketch comedy show to be filmed in front of a live audience
- Purpose of the show was to replace reruns of *The Tonight Show*
- Currently in their 43<sup>rd</sup> season of the show
- First episode of Saturday Night Live aired October 11<sup>th</sup>, 1975
  - George Carlin was the first host ever

# Influence of Saturday Night Live

- Show won four Emmy Awards following first season
- Some of the biggest names in comedy are associated with SNL
  - Dan Aykroyd
  - Bill Murray
  - Eddie Murphy
  - Mike Meyers
  - Will Ferrell
  - Conan O'Brien
  - Jimmy Fallon
  - Tina Fey & Kristin Wiig
  - Amy Poehler



# Michaels' Involvement with SNL

- Hired as a producer and writer for the show in 1975
- Left the show in 1980 for 5 years until received a phone call from NBC's Chief of Programming
- Michaels was recruited to return and help the show get back to its original popularity level
- Lorne Michaels returned officially as an executive producer in 1985 – a title he still holds today

# Michaels' Achievements

- 2004: Mark Twain Prize
- 2008: TIME magazine's list of "100 most influential people" list
- 2012: Individual Peabody Award
- 2016: Presidential Medal of Freedom, presented by Barack Obama

# Lorne Michaels Reputation

- Many cast members characterize him as a paternal mentor
- Some cast members say he is cold and withholding
- Lorne Michaels admits to being a perfectionist who takes his work “very seriously:”
- In auditions, Michaels is described as intimidating & cryptic
  - Often made comedians wait for hours outside of his office

\* Michaels always has a full bowl of popcorn in his office and for always hiring three young female assistants nicknamed “the Lornettes” \*

## 5 “Lorne Lessons” to Learn

1. Always leave room for spontaneity
2. Don't be afraid to say what needs to be said
3. Don't hold grudges
4. Let the people under you know they matter
5. Nothing is more important than loyalty

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1AtrI9PoiBQ>