

Cultural Daily

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CinemaCon 2017: Upcoming movie stars

Elisa Leonelli · Wednesday, April 5th, 2017

CinemaCon, the annual convention of theater owners (NATO) in Las Vegas, presents awards to actors and filmmakers during a closing night ceremony at the Coliseum in Caesar's Palace. This year I was impressed but some of the new faces, actors and actresses that I had seen before in my work as an entertainment journalist, but are now poised for wider recognition.



Sofia Boutella, photo by Todd Williamson/Getty Images for CinemaCon

Female Star of Tomorrow **Sofia Boutella**, 25, is a French-Algerian hip hop dancer. We had seen her in *Kingsman: The Secret Service* (2015) starring Colin Firth as the villainous Gazelle slicing and dancing with her razor sharp CGI legs. This year she plays the ancient princess of Egypt in *The Mummy* (Universal) opposite Tom Cruise, and Charlize Theron's lover in *Atomic Blonde* (Focus Features).



Ansel Elgort, Brenton Thwaites, photo by Todd Williamson/Getty Images for CinemaCon

Male Star of Tomorrow **Ansel Elgort**, 23, is an American singer born in New York. He acted opposite Shailene Woodley in *The Fault in Our Stars* (2014) from the bestseller by John Green, and the *Divergent* series from the trilogy by Veronica Roth. In 2017 he stars with Kevin Spacey and Lily James in *Baby Driver* (Sony-Tristar).

Breakthrough Performer of the Year **Brenton Thwaites**, 27, is Australian. He played the teenager mentored by Jeff Bridges in *The Giver* (2014) directed by Phillip Noyce from the 1993 science fiction classic by Lois Lowry, he was the prince in *Maleficent* (2014) with Angelina Jolie and Elle Fanning. He is now the young hero of *Pirates of the Caribbean: Dead Men Tell No Tales* (Disney) with Johnny Depp as Jack Sparrow, Geoffrey Rush as Barbossa, Javier Bardem as Captain Salazar. He is paired with another enticing new face, **Kaya Scodelario**, 25, a British actress of Italian descent, who plays a fiery astronomer.



Kumail Nanjiani, photo by Ethan Miller/Getty Images for CinemaCon

Comedy Star of the Year **Kumail Nanjiani**, 39, is a stand-up comedian born in Pakistan; he stars in the HBO TV series *Silicon Valley* (2014-2017) and he was hilarious as the massage therapist in *Mike and Dave Need Wedding Dates* (2016). In 2017 he wrote and stars in *The Big Sick*

(Lionsgate), the true story of his courtship with his American wife Emily, played by Zoe Kazan.



Tom Holland (c) HFPA 2017

Tom Holland, 20, is a British dancer. He was the son of Naomi Watts and Ewan McGregor in *The Impossible* (2012), in 2017 he is the son of Charlie Hunnam and Sienna Miller in *The Lost City of Z* (Amazon Studios). He was introduced as Spider-Man in *Captain America-Civil War* (2016), after Tobey Maguire and Andrew Garfield played the Marvel Comics superhero, and stars in *Spider-Man Homecoming* (Sony).

The fact that 5 out of 6 of these upcoming movie stars were born outside of the United States reminds us that the Hollywood film industry has always welcomed talent from other countries, from the British Charlie Chaplin and Alfred Hitchcock, Cary Grant and David Niven, to the Swedish Greta Garbo and Ingrid Bergman, the German Marlene Dietrich and Ernst Lubitsch, the Austrian Fritz Lang and Billy Wilder, the French Maurice Chevalier and Charles Boyer, the Egyptian Omar Sharif, the Welsh Richard Burton and Anthony Hopkins, the Scottish Sean Connery and Ewan McGregor, the Taiwanese Ang Lee, the New Zealander Russell Crowe and Peter Jackson, the Australian Nicole Kidman and Hugh Jackman, the Mexican Salma Hayek and Gael Garcia Bernal, the South African Charlize Theron, the Israeli Natalie Portman, the Spanish

Antonio Banderas, Penelope Cruz and Javier Bardem, and countless more actors and filmmakers from the silent film era to the present.

In this hate-filled Donald Trump time we should not forget that America is a country founded by immigrants, it is a great and vital melting pot because it welcomes people from all over the world and offers them a path to legal citizenship, a process which should be made easier not more difficult than it already is. And I know that from personal experience, as an Italian-born American.

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