

COYO 2018 - Keynote Speakers



Séan McCann - Mental Health Advocate, Acclaimed Solo Musician, Founding Member of Great Big Sea

Séan McCann uses his music to help people find light in the darkness. Best known as a founding member of the massively successful Canadian band Great Big Sea, Séan's twenty years with the ensemble came to a halt in 2013, when he realized that he needed to deal with both alcohol addiction and coming to terms with the sexual abuse he suffered as a young man. Since then, Séan has been using his words and music to bring healing into his life and the lives of others.

Séan's love for Newfoundland and Labrador folk songs shot him to international fame as a founding member of the renowned group Great Big Sea. But while Séan was with the band, giving himself to thousands of people a night on the road, he was slowly losing his own way. It was a life, he says, where "every night was like a Friday night."

The time finally came for him to seek help and realize that the underlying issue surrounding his alcohol addiction was that a local priest had abused him while he was growing up. It was in finally confronting this reality and bringing it out in the open by speaking about it with family, friends, the media, and the public that Séan was able to begin moving forward.

In 2014, he released his first solo album *Help Your Self*, which was later followed by the album *You Know I Love You*. With these projects, Séan found how therapeutic creating, recording, and performing music could be for him, and discovered that his songs were helping others as well.



Dr. Samantha Nutt - Global Humanitarian, Founder of War Child & Bestselling Author

Dr. Samantha Nutt is an award-winning humanitarian, bestselling author and acclaimed public speaker. A medical doctor and a founder of the renowned international humanitarian organization War Child, Dr. Nutt has worked with children and their families at the frontline of many of the world's major crises – from Iraq to Afghanistan, Somalia to the Democratic Republic of Congo, and Sierra Leone to Darfur, Sudan.

Dr. Nutt is a leading authority on current affairs, war, international aid and foreign policy, Dr. Nutt is one of the most intrepid and recognized voices in the humanitarian arena and is amongst the most sought-after public speakers in North America. With a career that has spanned more than two decades and dozens of conflict zones, her international work has benefited hundreds of thousands of war-affected children globally.



Dr. Greg Wells - CTV Sport Science Analyst, Human Physiologist, Author, Coach, and Athlete

Dr. Wells is an assistant professor at the University of Toronto and also serves as an associate scientist at The Hospital for Sick Children. There, he and his team explore how to use exercise to prevent, diagnose and treat chronic illnesses in children.

Throughout his career, Dr. Wells has coached, trained and inspired dozens of elite athletes to win medals at World Championships, the Commonwealth Games and the Olympics. He has studied athletic performance in some of the most severe conditions on the planet, like the Andes Mountains and the Sahara Desert.

Dr. Wells has had his own experience with the challenges of adversity and human extremes. Late in his high school career, he broke his neck in an accident in the ocean and was in a halo brace before undergoing neurosurgery. Told by his doctor that he would never perform as an athlete again, he went on to compete at the international level in swimming. He has competed in events such as the Nanisivik Marathon - 600 miles north of the Arctic Circle - Ironman Canada, and the Tour D'Afrique, a grueling 11,000-kilometre event that is the longest bike race in the world.

Dr. Wells has been an expert source to other top media outlets like ABC News, "20/20," The Discovery Channel, TSN, CBC and CTV. He also served as the sports medicine analyst for the Canadian Olympic Broadcast for the 2010 & 2012 Olympic Games.



Kevin Newman - Journalist, News Anchor, and Co-Author

One of Canada's most authoritative voices in news, Kevin Newman is a household name and has been well-known to viewers as a news anchor in Canada and the U.S. for more than 30 years. A correspondent and co-host on the award-winning investigative series W5 since September 2012 as well as a fill-in anchor for CTV NATIONAL NEWS, Newman formerly anchored the innovative daily news program KEVIN NEWMAN LIVE and hosted the long-running political broadcast program QUESTION PERIOD.

Newman's career has taken him to every major hotspot around the globe and through every community, territory, and province in Canada, covering some of the most significant events in recent history, from 9/11 and the Asian Tsunami, to Mandela's release and Chris Hadfield singing in orbit. He has been embedded with Canadian troops in Afghanistan, and led award-winning newscasts north and south of the border. His work has garnered the industry's highest honours, including Emmy® Awards, Gemini Awards, and a Peabody Award.

In 2015, Newman and his son Alex published *All Out: A Father and Son Confront the Hard Truths That Made Them Better Men*, a co-written memoir of their relationship before and after Alex came out as gay at age 17. Confessional and provocative, their memoir is also a touching meditation on ambition,

absence and family that will resonate with every parent and child who've ever struggled to connect and understand each other.

