

Tech To Make Riyadh Epicentre of MENA Music by 2030, Grammy Awards President Tells DeepFest 2025

RIYADH, SAUDI ARABIA, February 11, 2025 /EINPresswire.com/ -- Just a week after watching superstars including Kendrick Lamar and Beyonce make global headlines at the 67th GRAMMY Awards, the head of the organisation behind the annual music awards jetted into Saudi Arabia to speak on the second day of DeepFest 2025, the world's leading artificial intelligence (AI) conference, and left no doubt about his expectations regarding Riyadh's role in the future of the music industry.

Panos Panay, President of the Recording Academy, has been visiting the Kingdom for several years yet still finds it "incredible" to note the transformation of the country and its capital each time he returns. Citing Riyadh Music Week and the growth of MDLBEAST, the Saudi-based entertainment company rooted in music culture, Panay made a bold prediction at DeepFest, the four-day show co-located with LEAP, the Kingdom's award-winning global tech event running until 12 February at Riyadh International Exhibition and Convention Centre in Malham.

"Just seeing this massive explosion of the music scene, I have absolutely no doubt that within the next five years, Riyadh will become the music epicentre of the entire region," Panay said. "It will be the Los Angeles of the Middle East, undoubtedly."

The Recording Academy launched the Latin Grammys 25 years ago, and Panay – who was born and raised in Cyprus – says one of his missions as president is to help music and its creators in the Middle East and North Africa gain traction globally.

"Frankly, and maybe it's because I am from the region, I don't think there is an area on the planet that is richer in heritage and in musicality than the broader Middle East and North Africa," he



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said. "There's 400 million people that speak Arabic, so it's only a matter of time before you see an Arabic star become what K Pop is – a global idiom embraced by everybody."

Panay added the likelihood is being accelerated by the development of AI and streaming platforms, which enable more creativity, wider connections, and enhanced visibility – despite 400,000 new songs being added to Spotify daily.

"That's an overwhelming amount of content, but I remember when there was no way as an artist to reach an audience unless you went through traditional routes, so technology is undoubtedly an enabler," he added. "And I'm sure there's entrepreneurs – hopefully at this very conference – that are working on better ways for emerging artists to better target audiences."

UN Chief Says AI Enables Us To Focus On Our 'Unique' Human Qualities

Bringing together AI innovators and transformation leaders, DeepFest 2025 is featuring more than 150 speakers and 120 exhibitors, attracting an attendance exceeding 50,000 participants from around the world. The second of four days lasered in on the pros, cons, benefits, and pitfalls of AI on life and society.

Lambert Hogenhout, Chief Data and AI at the United Nations, assessed the dystopian and utopian beliefs of the technology in a session focused on the near- and long-term societal impact of emerging technologies. Acknowledging that AI had allowed humans to "become knowledgeable about any topic, in minutes", he also addressed the belief that a reliance on AI will change the way we behave, think, and feel.

While admitting it is hard to predict how AI will impact society in 20-plus years, it is the impact of over the next decade that will make a difference to the way we work and live. "Don't forget we've already had tech that has changed who we are," he said. "Think smartphones: They changed how we work, how we communicate, how we navigate cities."

Hogenhout challenged those with a dystopian belief of AI, and those who think it will take away our autonomy, identity and purpose: "Think of a calendar app, for example. Think of an AI tool to help with letter writing or emails. We are getting assistance in our productivity, which frees up time. If everyone starts to do that, can you afford not to? Can you afford to be the only non-augmented human?"

Tackling the belief that AI will remove our abilities to think and feel, taking away identity and purpose, the AI expert added the use of AI will allow society to instead focus on things that matter, including fulfilment, connection and inclusion. "It will give us time to look at our unique qualities as humans – cooperation, creativity, and entrepreneurship," he concluded.

Dr Yaser Al Onaizan, CEO of the Saudi Data and Artificial Intelligence Authority (SDAIA), which powers the Tahaluf-organised DeepFest 2025, opened the second day of sessions, with a reassurance that AI can have real-time, real-life benefits. After years of talking about the

technology, actions will speak louder than words, he said.

“To be really effective, AI should be invisible,” Al Onaizan said. “It should allow us to take a back seat and do things on our behalf.”

Annabelle Mander, Executive Vice President of Tahaluf, reiterated the importance of attracting regional and global talent to the event and how AI is transforming every corner of the industry; “The keynote sessions at DeepFest are testament to the positive impact AI is having on the tech industry, but also how transformative applications are shaping entertainment, the arts, and even humanitarian efforts. As we move into the final two days, visitors can look forward to more engaging discussions around quantum computing, how women are breaking industry barriers, and real-life case studies on how AI is revolutionising healthcare.”

For more information, visit www.DeepFest.com

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