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**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**The Center for Puppetry Arts presents *Pete the Cat*, April 4 – May 21**

The coolest cat in town makes his world premiere on the puppet stage

**ATLANTA (February 22, 2017)** – On **April 4**, ***Pete the Cat*** makes its stage debut at the **Center for Puppetry Arts!** Based on The New York Times best-selling book series by Georgia authors James and Kimberly Dean, this original production has been in the making for more than two years. Inspired by Pete the Cat’s many adventures, the production invites audiences to join a meeting of the “Pete the Cat Club” – a place where everyone loves to read *Pete the Cat*.

Center Artistic Director Jon Ludwig and Resident Puppet Builder Jason Hines lead the Center’s design team for the Mainstage Theater production. “We want whatever we put on stage to look exactly like it does in Dean’s books, whether it’s Pete scuba diving or skateboarding or playing his guitar,” Hines says. The production first began to take shape in classrooms across Atlanta. Ludwig and Hines, along with Center Education Director Aretta Baumgartner, partnered with Georgia State University to go into several area schools to learn directly from students what makes Pete so popular. Those interactions informed every aspect of the production and educational programming. “Pete’s cool and he stays cool even when things don’t turn out as he planned,” says Ludwig. “He goes with the flow – that ease and resilience is so important for kids to remember when things are tough.”

Stories included are:
*Pete the Cat: Rock On Mom and Dad*

*Pete the Cat and His Magic Sunglasses*

*Pete the Cat’s Big Lunch*

*SCUBA-Cat*

*The New Guy*

*Valentine’s Day is Cool*

*Robo-Pete*

*Bedtime Blues*

Pete the Cat features rod puppets, projected animations, original music and interactive elements, such as singing along with *The Wheels on the Bus* and helping Pete solve a math problem. The cast includes veteran performers at the Center for Puppetry Arts including Luis Hernandez, Amy Sweeney, Tim Sweeney, Anna Claire Walker and Puppeteer/Composer Dolph Amick, who wrote the original music. “Our goal is for people to leave the theater saying, “I just saw Pete the Cat. Alive—right there in front of me!’” Ludwig says.

Visit the link below for a behind the scenes look at the building of Pete!

[bit.ly/MakingPeteTheCat](http://bit.ly/MakingPeteTheCat)

As part of the Center’s Autism Spectrum Disorder initiative, a sensory-friendly performance of ***Pete the Cat*** will be presented on **Sunday, April 23** at **1 p.m.** Sensory stimuli will also be reduced in Museum Exhibits from noon to 1 p.m. and in Create-A-Puppet Workshops™ from 1:45-2:30 p.m. This special afternoon will allow guests with Autism Spectrum Disorder (ASD) to experience programming in a comfortable and safe setting with staff members who have been trained in interactions with patrons with ASD. Along with a quiet zone in the lobby, several performance alterations will be made, including: theater lights dimmed down (but not out); consistent sound levels and lower volume of show soundtrack; freedom for children to talk during the show and leave their seats, if necessary; and permission to bring quiet, contained snacks and beverages. Create-A-Puppet Workshop™ classrooms will be brighter, quieter and feature less-messy puppet building materials and slightly simplified puppet designs. In the Museum Exhibits, lighting will be adjusted and specialized educational activities (such as touch tables and guided storytelling) will be integrated. Fidget toys and sound-reducing headphones will also be available.

Recommended for ages 4 and up, ***Pete the Cat*** will be performed in the **Mainstage Theater,** **April 4-May 21.** Discounted seats are available for preview days on **April 4 and 5** at 10 and 11:30 a.m.

Regular show times are as follows:

* Tuesday-Friday: 10 a.m. and 11:30 a.m.
* Saturday: 12 p.m. and 2 p.m.
* Sunday: 1 p.m. and 3 p.m.

Tickets are available for **$10.25 (Members)** and **$20.50 (Nonmembers)** and include admission to the show, the *Worlds of Puppetry* Museum (with the largest collection of Jim Henson puppets and artifacts in the world, as well as a Global Gallery), and entrance to the Create-A-Puppet Workshop™, where guests can make and decorate their own **Pete the Cat Hand Puppet** and perform with it on our classroom stage. Tickets can be purchased online at [www.puppet.org](http://www.puppet.org) or by calling the ticket sales office at **404.873.3391**.

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**The Center for Puppetry Arts is supported in part by:** Fulton County Arts Council • City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs • Georgia Council for the Arts • The Zeist Foundation • The Wish Foundation Fund of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta

For a complete list of the Center’s major supporters, visit www.puppet.org/about/sponsors.

*Center for Puppetry Arts® is a unique cultural treasure – a magical place where children and adults are educated, enlightened, and entertained. Since 1978, the Center has introduced millions of visitors to the wonder and art of puppetry and has touched the lives of many through enchanting performances, curriculum-based workshops, and the hands-on Museum as well as Distance Learning and Outreach programs. Center for Puppetry Arts is a non-profit, 501(c)(3) organization and is supported in part by contributions from corporations, foundations, government agencies, and individuals. Major funding is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners and the City of Atlanta Mayor’s Office of Cultural Affairs. These programs are also supported in part by the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly. GCA is a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. The Center is a member of Theatre for Young Audiences (TYA/USA/ASSITEJ).The Center also serves as headquarters of UNIMA-USA, the American branch of Union Internationale de la Marionnette, the international puppetry organization.*