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**Straight From the *War Horse*’s Mouth: Topthorn Comes to Atlanta**

Center for Puppetry Arts’ newest acquisition will be unveiled during anniversary weekend celebration with Cheryl Henson

ATLANTA (October 12, 2016) – Get ready for a larger-than-life anniversary celebration**! Friday, November 11 - Sunday, November 13**, the **Center for Puppetry Arts** will celebrate the **first anniversary of its *Worlds of Puppetry* Museum** with a weekend full of activities, including the opening weekend of *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* and the premiere of the Center’s newest iconic museum acquisition, Topthorn from the Tony Award-winning Broadway production of *War Horse*. The weekend will also include a viewing of the documentary *Making War Horse* with an introduction by Cheryl Henson, daughter of Jim Henson and Center for Puppetry arts board member, as well as a discussion with performer, designer and puppet artist Tom Lee, who performed in *War Horse* at Lincoln Center.

Cheryl Henson recently acquired Topthorn at auction from the National Theatre in London and donated it to the Center’s museum. Built by the Handspring Puppet Company of South Africa, Topthorn was one of the two main characters in *War Horse*. At 10 feet long, the figure is larger than a real horse. This is the first Handspring puppet in the Center for Puppetry Arts’ collection. *War Horse* is based on the novel by Michael Morpurgo. The show opened at London’s National Royal Theatre in 2007 and has toured 11 countries.

On Saturday, November 12, after patrons have had a chance to view the new Topthorn display, the Center will present a screening of the documentary *Making War Horse* with an introduction by Henson. Following the screening, Lee will take questions and discuss his role in *War Horse*. Lee has been on numerous stages in New York. Other credits include his performance in Dan Hurlin’s Obie-award winning *Hiroshima Maiden* and *Disfarmer,* and Lee Breuer’s epic puppet opera *La Divina Caricatura.*

To kick off the weekend’s celebration, Lee will lead an exciting master class on the evening of November 11 from 7:30 – 10 p.m. Previous puppetry experience will be required to take part; space will be limited. The cost of the class will be $40 and will include the ability to purchase a limited number of reduced price tickets to the next evening’s film event. Email **education@puppet.org** to be placed on the list to receive application information.

In addition to unveiling Topthorn, the Center will be rotating items in the *Worlds of Puppetry* Museum throughout the month of November. Twenty new pieces will debut in the Jim Henson Collection, including Fazoobs from *The Muppet Show* and new pieces from *Fraggle Rock*, *Dog City* and *The Song of Cloud Forest*. Guests can see the new additions and round out the weekend with *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer*, after which they can make and take home a Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster™ Hand Puppet. The holiday classic has become an Atlanta tradition!

**WHAT**: **Center for Puppetry Arts’ Star-Studded First Anniversary Celebration**

**WHEN**: **Friday,** **November 11 – Sunday, November 13**

 Museum open regular hours all weekend

 Friday: *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,* 10 and 11:45 a.m.; Tom Lee workshop 7:30-10 p.m.

Saturday: *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,* 12 and 2 p.m.; *Making War Horse Film* 8-10 p.m. featuring Cheryl Henson and Tom Lee on stage

 Sunday: *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer,* 1 and 3 p.m.

**WHERE: Center for Puppetry Arts**

1404 Spring Street NW
Atlanta, GA 30309

**HOW:** All events include admission to the Topthorn display and *Worlds of Puppetry* Museum. Tickets for *Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer* are **$10.25 (Members)** and **$20.50 (Nonmembers)** and include admission entrance to the Create-A-Puppet Workshop™, where guests can make and decorate their own **Bumble the Abominable Snow Monster™ Hand Puppet** and perform with it on our classroom stage.

 Friday night’s workshop is **$40**. Tickets for Saturday night’s movie showing are available for **$10 (Members)** and **$15 (Non-members**). Tickets can be purchased online at [www.puppet.org](http://www.puppet.org) or by calling **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 • Zeist Foundation • The Wish Foundation Fund of the Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta • PNC • The Coca-Cola Foundation • WSB-TV Family 2 Family Project • YP

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 Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre and 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.*