



TIMELINE

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1978

- Jim Henson and Kermit the Frog cut the ribbon to open the Center on September 23
- Nancy Lohman Staub establishes permanent museum
- New Directions Series (NDS) for Adult Audiences is inaugurated
- Center begins Outreach Education programs

1980

- Xperimental Puppetry Theater (XPT), a workshop/performance forum for new, short works, debuts at the Center
- Education Department begins daily workshops for children
- Nancy Lohman Staub donates 150 puppets for permanent museum

1981

- 50,000 visitors view *The Art of the Muppets* exhibit

1982

- Vincent Anthony receives the Governor's Award for the Arts
- Exhibit of African puppetry tours the Southeast
- Bruce D. Schwartz, a MacArthur Foundation "Genius" Fellow, performs to sold-out houses
- The Center co-hosts the annual Puppeteers of America Festival
- *Allegory*, adapted for puppets by Kent Stephens, Janie Geiser & Megan McFarland, receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-USA

1983

- *Puppetry of China* exhibit opens and China's Minister of Culture is special guest

1984

- Jon Ludwig writes and directs *Brer Rabbit*, his first work for family audiences

1985

- *Dr. Dolittle*, directed by Luis Q. Barroso, receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-USA

1986

- Center purchases the former Spring Street Elementary School through a Capital Campaign and the support of an anonymous local foundation

1987

- Jon Ludwig's adult production *Cirque Pataphysique* runs to sold out houses for an unprecedented nine weeks

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1988

- 10th Anniversary celebration with Jim Henson and the Muppets, hosting two live performances of *The Muppets Take Atlanta*
- The Center and UNIMA-USA co-host the first Puppetry of the Americas Conference and Festival
- *Hansel & Gretel*, adapted and directed by Luis Q. Barroso, receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-USA

1990

- The Center begins focusing on educational performances with the break-through production of *Dinosaurs* by Jon Ludwig and Jane Catherine Shaw
- *Heaven and Hell Tour*, by Jon Ludwig, receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-USA

1991

- Center collaborates with the Metropolitan Atlanta Council on Alcohol & Drug Abuse to develop prevention programming
- Performances begin in the Downstairs Theater

1992

- Center becomes U.S. headquarters of UNIMA-USA and Vincent Anthony is appointed General Secretary
- *The Stone Circle*, an NDS production, integrates 12 college students with a professional cast and receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-USA. Co-produced by the Center and the California Polytechnic State University
- *Breaking Boundaries* celebrates American puppetry in the 1980s, and is also exhibited at Lincoln Center in New York City
- *Safe as Milk*, by Jon Ludwig, receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-USA

1993

- The Center is selected to participate in the Atlanta Committee for the Olympic Games Cultural Olympiad, a four-year festival of the arts
- George Latshaw, a master in the puppetry field, directs the Family Series production *The Tortoise and the Hare and Other Fables*

1994

- Jane Henson hosts a screening of *The Muppet Christmas Carol*
- Center receives its first Abby Award for Outstanding Arts Organization from the Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce
- First annual Puppetry Arts Festival is held on October 29

1995

- *PUPPETS: the Power of Wonder*, the permanent, interactive museum exhibit, opens
- Center embarks on recycling project & workshops in collaboration with the City of Atlanta, EVERYKID...CAN!, reaching over 40,000 City of Atlanta students in its three-year run
- The Center begins offering puppet workshops for pre-school children

1996

- Center's second major Capital Campaign, "Making a World of Difference in Atlanta" reaches its goal to raise \$2.78 million

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- The Center completes major renovations, including renovation of the Mainstage Theater and the addition of the Love Family Atrium
- Center receives Abby Award for Arts Education from Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in October
- The Center participates in the 1996 Olympics Arts Festival, viewed by over 22,000 people from around the world; it garnered the Center international press coverage
- The Center participates in the 1996 Cultural Paralympiad, offering museum tours and performances that were sign interpreted and audio described
- Jon Ludwig's *Frankenstein* debuts as part of the Olympic Arts Festival
- *Newsweek* praises the Center as "...one of the most exciting companies in American theater"
- Special Exhibit, *The Muppets in Atlanta: Vision of Jim Henson Exhibition*, (July 12, 1996 - January 4, 1997) features Kermit the Frog, Miss Piggy, Big Bird & others, as well as video highlights of the Muppets and other Henson productions
- Fifteen Asian puppets from the Center's Permanent Collection are on display in Concourse E at the Atlanta Hartsfield International Airport
- Center launches its first Web site in December

1997

- Education begins offering a series of Adult Education classes, as well as year-round Outreach services
- Over 180 Fulton County elementary students participate in five Center residencies as part of FRESH (Fulton Roundtable Expanded Service Headquarters)
- Discovery Channel's international program *Travelers* visits Atlanta and features the Center
- Blue Marble Media produces first promotional video for the Center
- New library/study center opens to the public

1998

- Center hosts Puppeteers of America Southeast Regional Festival and Conference, June 25-28; includes 300 people from eight countries and 36 states and features adult and Family performances; special guest Steve Whitmire appears with Kermit the Frog
- World premiere of adult work *Kwaidan*, created by Jon Ludwig, theatre artist Ping Chong and designer Mitsuru Ishii, which later embarks on a seven city tour of the USA, appears at Spoleto, and tours Japan
- Distance Education/GSAMS established in September; provides free videoconferencing programming to schools across Georgia and the nation
- Education Department collaborates with *VOX/Youth Communication*, a newspaper produced by inner city teens, to create a puppet show expressing youth voices and concerns; project culminates with free community performance and reception at the Center
- *Creative Loafing* names Jon Ludwig Best Local Playwright (Best of Atlanta, October)
- Center's 20th anniversary; Cheryl Henson leads the toast at the 1998 Puppetry Arts Festival; featured guests were Bear and Tutter from Jim Henson's *Bear in the Big Blue House*

1999

- Center holds first annual PuppeTrek, sponsored by the Atlanta Track Club
- Fifth annual Puppetry Arts Festival is renamed String Fling, held October 9; featured guests were Bear and Ojo from Jim Henson's *Bear in the Big Blue House*

2000

- Center receives challenge grant of \$1.25 million from the Ford Foundation; Center is one of 28 arts organizations chosen, only one in Georgia

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- Center is named Best of Atlanta "Best Family Programming," *Atlanta Magazine*, December
- *The Plant Doctors*, by Jon Ludwig, receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-US
- *Kwaidan*, by Jon Ludwig, Ping Chong and Mitsuru Ishii, receives a Citation of Excellence from UNIMA-USA

2001

- Vincent Anthony honored as "Lexus Leader of the Arts," February
- World famous Salzburg Marionette Theatre presents *The Magic Flute* in November
- *Atlanta Parent* magazine chooses Center as Best Theater for Children, August
- *Atlanta Magazine* choose Center as Best Rainy Day Place for Kids, December
- The Center completes a \$3.4 million capital campaign, the Center's third, which funds a number of physical improvements, including a state-of-the-art scene shop and an attractive metal fence around the property
- *Kwaidan* tours to the Kennedy Center in Washington, D.C., the New Victory Theater in New York City and The Barbican Center in London, England

2002

- PUPPETS 2002 consists of UNIMA Conference (June 20-23) and Puppets Take Atlanta (June 1-August 18); UNIMA Conference attended by over 300 visitors from around the world; Puppets Take Atlanta, a collaborative effort between the Center and the Atlanta Convention and Visitors Bureau, unites the city with exhibits, performances and workshops
- *WINNER'S CIRCLE: 10 Years of the UNIMA-USA Citations of Excellence in the Art of Puppetry* opens January 25 and features Cookie Monster, puppets from *Shining Time Station* and the John Cusack marionette from the movie *Being John Malkovich*
- Center receives Abby Award for Outstanding Arts Organization from Metro Atlanta Chamber of Commerce in October
- *Atlanta Magazine* names Center as one of the 25 experiences every Atlantan should have
- MSN.com names Center as one of the top ten children's museums in the U.S.
- First Lady Marie Barnes debuts PLAY IT SAFE, written by Bobby Box, at the National Governors Association winter conference; this training video is distributed to every preschool in Georgia

2003

- Bobby Box directs his Family Series production *The Velveteen Rabbit* at Ming Ri Theatre in China in February; the show retained its original design, but was performed in Cantonese
- The Center launches its new Web site, designed by Macquarium, on July 1
- *Our Kids* magazine names the Center Favorite Live Theater in its 2003 Family Favorites issue, August
- Julie Taymor donates Mufasa and Scar, two mask prototypes from Disney's *The Lion King*, to the permanent collection
- The Center turns 25 on September 23
- The Center's 25th Anniversary Dinner is held on September 26; special guests include Philip Huber of *Being John Malkovich* movie fame, Wayland Flower's Madame and Kermit the Frog
- The 10th annual String Fling is held September 27-28
- Jon Ludwig and Jason Hines receive Rockefeller Grant for *Avanti, Da Vinci!*

2004

- The Center continues its 25th anniversary celebration with four performances by the Salzburg Marionette Theater: *The Barber of Seville*, *A Midsummer Night's Dream*, *The Magic Flute* and *Peter and the Wolf*

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- The Center is rated No. 1 for Child Appeal in Atlanta by Zagat Survey
- The Center receives a “Cultivating the Audiences of Tomorrow” grant from the New Generations Program, an initiative cooperatively designed by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation and Theatre Communications Group
- The Center is a finalist in the 2004 Technology Innovation Award presented by TechBridge and given by Accenture. TechBridge will assist in the development and launching of the on-line Museum Store
- *Avanti, Da Vinci! The Secret Adventures of Leonardo da Vinci* by Jon Ludwig and Jason Hines premieres August 5 and receives rave reviews: “Fastidiously crafted puppet operetta...pop-up book of sublimely inventive stagecraft...comic masterpiece. In terms of its originality, depth of imagination and technical complexity, this is one of the best works I’ve seen in my three years of reviewing Atlanta theater.” - Wendell Brock, theatre critic, *Atlanta Journal-Constitution*. The show travels to Slovakia in September for an international puppet festival, Babkarska Bystrica
- *Creative Loafing* names *Avanti, Da Vinci!* Best Educational Theater Production in its Best of Atlanta issue, October
- The Center receives a “Standard of Excellence WebAward” from the Web Marketing Association (WMA)
- Jane Fonda attends the String Fling Gala 2004 as a special guest and is presented with a Barbarella marionette designed by Jason Hines
- The Center receives the prestigious George Goodwin Community Grant from public relations firm Manning Selvage & Lee/Atlanta (MS&L) and is awarded \$100,000 in pro-bono services over a two-year period
- The Center debuts three DVDs – *American Tall Tales*, *Beauty & the Beast* and *Dinosaurs* – as part of the DVD collection, PUPPETS AT PLAY

2005

- Bobby Box receives a grant from the Jim Henson Foundation in support of *Anne Frank: Within and Without*, an original work set to premiere in 2006
- Jason Hines & Jon Ludwig present doppelganger puppets to Blue Collar’s TV Bill Engvall, Jeff Foxworthy and Larry the Cable Guy. The trio and crew shot a segment of the guys making puppets and entertaining kids at the Center for an upcoming show
- The *American Tall Tales* DVD is recognized with a Telly Award
- Jon Ludwig receives an Emmy nomination for Outstanding Directing in a Children’s Series for Disney Channel’s *The Book of Pooh*
- Jon Ludwig receives a UNIMA-USA Citation of Excellence for *American Tall Tales*
- The Center establishes its third endowment, the Barbara and Bill Wyllly Executive Director Chair Endowment
- The Center receives a grant from the Competitive Grants Fund of The Community Foundation for Greater Atlanta, Inc. to support educational programming
- The Center receives a Special Event Lifetime Achievement Award from VSA (Very Special Arts) of Georgia for 26 years of ticket donations

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The Center for Puppetry Arts is a non-profit, 501(C3) organization and is supported in part by the National Endowment for the Arts; the Georgia Council for the Arts through the appropriations of the Georgia General Assembly (the Council is a Partner Agency of the National Endowment for the Arts); and contributions from individuals, corporations and foundations. Major funding for the Center is provided by the Fulton County Board of Commissioners under the guidance of the Fulton County Arts Council. Major support is provided by the City of Atlanta Bureau of Cultural Affairs. The Center is a participant in the New Generations Program, funded by the Doris Duke Charitable Foundation/The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and administered by Theatre Communications Group (TCG), the national organization for the American theatre. The Center is a member of Theatre Communications Group and the Atlanta Coalition of Performing Arts. The Center also serves as headquarters of UNIMA-USA.

