

FOR RELEASE: August 19, 2016



MEDIA CONTACT: Allison Alvarez Hedrick
Vice President of Communications
P: 800.354.9338 ext. 2240
E: ahedrick@wedu.org

WEDU PBS Schedules the Perfect End to Summer with a Labor Day Weekend “Downton Abbey” Marathon

– Late August Also Brings I MISS DOWNTON ABBEY!
Hosted by Allen Leech, Tom Branson of “Downton Abbey” –



Tampa, FL — For those suffering from “**Downton Abbey**” withdrawal, missing their weekly dose of the joys and travails of the Crawley family and their servants, despair no longer. **WEDU PBS** has scheduled a binge-worthy Labor Day weekend marathon of all six seasons of the top PBS drama of all time, the most popular series in **MASTERPIECE**’s 45-year history and one of the most-watched dramas on American television.

Kicking off on Friday evening, September 2 at 9:00 p.m. and concluding on Monday, September 5, this round-the-clock celebration features every enthralling moment of the unforgettable series. Plump the cushions, pour the sherry and settle back into the world of the witty Dowager Countess and her “frenemy” Isobel, the Crawley sisters and their below stairs counterparts, for all the romance, intrigue, heartbreak and happiness “Downton” provides.

“Downton Abbey,” a Carnival Films/MASTERPIECE co-production, opened Season 1 with a crisis sparked by the sinking of the *Titanic* in 1912. Having weathered the demise of a string of heirs, the horrors of World War I, the Spanish flu, false convictions and romantic betrayals, not to mention the compromising death of a Turkish diplomat in the throes of passion, the characters of “Downton Abbey” continued to keep viewers riveted for five more seasons.

Season 6 opened in 1925 with a series of crises reflecting the momentous changes that transformed society. Women’s rights gave Lady Mary and Lady Edith new positions of responsibility: Mary ran the estate, and Edith managed the magazine she inherited from Michael Gregson. Tom Branson had left for Boston, and newlyweds Lady Rose and Atticus Aldridge tried their luck in Jazz Age New York. Anna Bates faced a murder charge, though many still suspected her husband. And

for the rest of the servants, big doubts hung over their jobs. But in the bittersweet final episode,

-more-

everyone seemed to find his or her rightful place in a conclusion befitting such beloved characters.

Late August also brings **I MISS DOWNTON ABBEY!**, a nostalgic celebration of the enormously popular MASTERPIECE series. Hosted by Allen Leech, who played Tom Branson, the charming chauffeur who transitioned from below stairs to above by winning the heart of Lady Sybil, **I MISS DOWNTON ABBEY!** delves into the stellar cast, superb writing and spectacular locations of the series. It combines clips, exclusive, never-before-seen “behind-the-scenes” footage from Season 6, and is filled with new interviews with the entire cast as well as creator Julian Fellowes and executive producer Gareth Neame. Providing an abundance of fondly remembered moments from all six seasons, **I MISS DOWNTON ABBEY!** is part of special programming premiering on WEDU on August 28 at 9:00 p.m.

A runaway hit when it debuted on PBS in 2011, “**Downton Abbey**” — a Carnival/MASTERPIECE co-production — is widely credited with reigniting American viewers’ passion for British drama. Beloved cast members include Michelle Dockery, Hugh Bonneville, Joanne Froggatt and more. With 59 Emmy® nominations, more than any other British show in Emmy® history, “**Downton Abbey**” is one of the most-honored series on television. It has won 12 Emmys®, three Golden Globes®, four Screen Actors Guild Awards, a Producers Guild Award and four BAFTAs.

“Downton Abbey” is a Carnival Films/MASTERPIECE co-production written and created by Julian Fellowes. The series is executive produced by Gareth Neame, Julian Fellowes, Liz Trubridge, and Nigel Marchant. Chris Croucher is the producer. The executive producer for MASTERPIECE is Rebecca Eaton. The senior series producer for MASTERPIECE is Susanne Simpson.

About WEDU PBS

WEDU is West Central Florida’s leading PBS station reaching 16 counties through media platforms including on-air programming and online experiences that broaden horizons, transport and transform and open gateways to new ideas and new worlds. Financially supported by the community, the organization offers a wealth of award-winning inspirational, educational and enlightening content over a variety of multi-media platforms including: television programming, station website, www.wedu.org and various social media platforms, monthly member magazine *Premiere*, educational outreach activities and a myriad of special events. WEDU’s focus on the local community has resulted in the station being regarded as a beacon of trust for men, women and children of every walk of life no matter their age, ethnicity or socio-economic status. WEDU is a treasured community resource; a window to the world for the homebound and a vital educational source for the youngest members of society. WEDU prides itself on its position in the Tampa Bay community as a leader, partner, informed citizen and a member of PBS, the most trusted institution in America (Source: Survey Sampling International (SSI), January 2016). For more information, program schedules or to support WEDU visit www.wedu.org; WEDU Public Media on Facebook and Twitter (@wedupbs) or call (813) 254-9338.

About MASTERPIECE

The top-rated primetime show on PBS, MASTERPIECE is celebrating its 45th anniversary in 2016. MASTERPIECE is presented on PBS by WGBH Boston. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Funding for the series is provided by Viking River Cruises and Audible with additional support from public television viewers and contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust. MASTERPIECE is known for presenting iconic shows such as *Upstairs Downstairs*, *Prime Suspect*, *The Forsyte Saga*, *Poldark*, *Sherlock* and *Downton Abbey*.

About CARNIVAL FILMS

Carnival Films is a division of NBC Universal International Studios and is the UK’s largest drama specialist. The company is responsible for the global TV sensation *Downton Abbey*, winner of three Golden Globes and 12

Primetime Emmy awards, including Best Mini-series. It is the most-nominated non-US show in the history of the Emmys with a total of 59 nominations and is now in over 250 territories worldwide. Among numerous national and international awards, including four Screen Actors Guild Awards and four National Television Awards, the show has even garnered a Guinness World Record for highest critical ratings for a TV show, and the BAFTA Special Award in recognition of its outstanding global success. *Downton Abbey* is executive produced by Carnival's managing director Gareth Neame, who sold the production company to NBCUniversal in 2008.

Founded in 1978, Carnival Films has produced many hundreds of hours of popular drama both in the UK and US, including primetime series such as *Poirot*, *Hotel Babylon*, *Whitechapel*, *Dracula* and *The Philanthropist*, as well as miniseries such as C4's iconic *Traffik*, David Nicholl's *The 7:39*, David Hare's *Worricker Trilogy*, as well as William Boyd's BAFTA-winning *Any Human Heart*, and Peter Morgan's BAFTA-winning *The Lost Honour of Christopher Jefferies*.

The sixth and final season of *Downton Abbey* aired on ITV in the UK and returned to PBS in January 2016. Carnival's latest series *The Last Kingdom* recently concluded on BBC TWO and BBC America. Stan Lee's *Lucky Man* aired on Sky One in January the UK.

Carnival Films was recognized as best production company at the 2011 Bulldog Awards and 2012 Broadcast Awards.

– WEDU –

Credit for all: © Carnival Film & Television Limited for MASTERPIECE.