



BARTOW - PELL MANSION MUSEUM

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

BARTOW-PELL MANSION MUSEUM UNVEILS ‘A VERY NEW YORK’ STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS ***Christmas Trees Inspired by Children’s Books and Decorated by Designers*** ***Deck the Mansion’s Halls for a Memorable Holiday Season***

Bronx, NY, November 19, 2015— Named one of the “top five places to see Christmas trees” in 2014 by NBC’s *New York Live*, Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum (BPMM) is gearing up for its best holiday season yet. The museum’s highly popular Storybook Christmas trees are back—this year with eight trees inspired by children’s books about the holidays in New York—and decorated by an impressive group of designers from Manhattan to Greenwich, CT. The theme this year, ‘A Very New York Christmas,’ is inspired by Michael Storrings’ whimsical book of the same name which features charming illustrations of well-known New York City sites dressed up for the holidays and includes Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum.

On view early enough to see again and again and long enough to enjoy after the holiday rush, the Storybook Christmas trees set the stage for a season to remember from the moment the mansion doors swing open on **Friday, December 4th** for the **Holiday Luncheon** and **book signing with special guest Michael Storrings**. That evening the merriment continues with the **Holiday First Friday! Music & Trolley** featuring the festive sounds of the all-female, a cappella MetropoliTones. Throughout it all, visitors can shop for gifts and books in the museum’s holiday pop-up shop (stocked, once again, with the help of Bronxville’s Kensington Paper), and purchase homemade holiday delicacies to take home.

Holiday fun continues the next day at the **Annual Holiday Family Day, Saturday, December 5th**. A highlight of this year’s Family Day is a **special author appearance by Sonia Manzano, “Maria” of Sesame Street fame, who will read and sign copies of her new children’s book, Miracle on 133rd Street** (Simon and Schuster, September 2015) at the 10:15 a.m. storybook reading. At Saturday night’s **Festive Party**, guests celebrate the season in style—and support the museum—with the mansion in all its holiday splendor. A live and silent auction featuring vacation homes; one-of-a-kind New York experiences including tickets to *Late Night with Seth Meyers* and *The Nutcracker*; a very special winter dinner at the mansion, plus themed raffle baskets, and more ensures the festive feeling will linger on well into the New Year.

A list of the Storybook Christmas trees, the books that inspired them, and the designers that bring them to life follows. All books will be available for sale in the museum shop. Please call 718.885.1461 or visit www.bpmm.org for more information about the trees or to register for any of the museum’s holiday events and programs. The trees are on view from Friday, December 4th through Wednesday, January 6th. Check website for hours.

Opportunities to sponsor the Storybook Christmas trees are still available. To date, they include include AGS Design, A.G. Williams Painting, Bistro SK, Clinique, DeCicco’s Family Markets, Digital Pulp, D. Ragno Landscaping, Gourmet Express, Houlihan Lawrence Real Estate, Joan Solimine Real Estate, La Gravinese Jewelers, McClellan Sotheby’s International Realty, Meridian Risk Management, Morgan Stanley, John Pacia D.D.S., and Elizabeth Pacia D.D.S.

BARTOW-PELL STORYBOOK CHRISTMAS TREES (on view through January 6, 2016)

In the entrance hall . . .

A Very New York Christmas Storybook by Michael Storrings, forward by Cynthia Nixon; tree design by **Michael Storrings, Creative Director at St. Martin's Press (Macmillan), New York City**

Michael Storrings is an award-winning artist, designer, and author with accolades from the American Institute of Graphic Artists, the Art Directors Club, the Society of Illustrators, *Print Magazine*, and the New York Book Show. For the last nine years, Storrings' highly collectible city-themed Christmas tree ornaments from Landmark Creations have been sold online and through select retail stores. They have been featured in publications from *Town & Country* and *Country Living* to *Celebrate 365*, and talked about on *The Today Show* and *Martha Stewart Living Radio*. Storrings' first book of watercolors, *A Very New York Christmas*, was first published in the fall of 2008 by St. Martin's Press and has been recently re-released for the 2015 holiday season. He is the author of several other books as well.

In the north parlor . . .

Miracle on 133rd Street Storybook by Sonia Manzano, illustrated by Marjorie Priceman; tree design by **Victoria Kirk, Victoria Kirk Interiors, Mamaroneck, NY**

With 22 years of design experience in both public and private commissions, Victoria Kirk's global design aesthetic is influenced by her European parents and a childhood split between New York, the Philippines, and Paris. Earning her undergraduate degree in art history and political science, she went on to study interior design at Parsons School of Design. Her first practice, MOVK opened in 2000 specializing in restaurant, retail, and hospitality design. The firm was singled out by Britain's Retail Interiors as one of the new ten hot design firms in 2001. Kirk spent the next seven years developing the interiors division for Tsao & McKown architects, working on a range of projects including the Nai Lert Park Hotel in Bangkok, and the luxury Cipriani Residences in downtown New York. When Victoria Kirk Interiors was established in 2007, her focus turned to residential commissions.

In the downstairs sitting room . . .

The Carpenter's Gift: A Christmas Tale about the Rockefeller Center Tree Storybook by David Rubel, illustrated by Jim LaMarche; tree design by **Jennifer Condon, Hewitt Hancock, Ltd, Pelham, NY**

Hewitt Hancock, Ltd is an interiors company specializing in residential design and styling. After a decade working as a style editor at *House & Garden*, *Domino*, and *Brides* magazines, Jennifer Condon founded Hewitt Hancock as a way to bring together her passion for interiors with her editorial expertise to create photo-worthy spaces for friends and clients. She is known for creating gracious, sophisticated rooms that thoughtfully reflect each client's personality, preferences, and budget. She is also a stylist and producer for editorial and advertorial clients, designing sets for photo shoots, staging marketing events, and merchandising showrooms.

In the dining room . . .

The Christmas Tugboat Storybook by George Matteson and Adele Ursone, illustrated by James E. Ransome; tree design by **Byron C. James-Rodrigues, Principal and Creative Director, House of Oasis, New York City**

Byron C. James-Rodrigues is the creative director and principal of the New York City-based House of Oasis, a full service interior design firm specializing in complete residential interior design services, interior architecture, space planning, and more. Educated at the University of South Carolina, the Alpha Workshops, and the Fashion Institute of Technology, he has a knack for designing small spaces. James-Rodrigues has designed rooms and vignettes for Holiday House, the New York Botanical Garden Orchid Dinner, Lennox Hill's Spring Gala, The Horticultural Society of New York, and Animal Rescue of the Hamptons, among others.

In the upstairs parlor . . .

Yes, Virginia, There is a Santa Claus by Chris Plehal, illustrated by James Bernardin; tree design by **Benjamin Bradley, E & Co. Interiors, New York City**

Benjamin Bradley is known in the industry and by his clients as a designer of incredibly detailed, atmospheric, and beautiful interiors. Originally from Indiana, Bradley studied interior design at the Fashion Institute of Technology where he graduated with honors. A veteran of the interior design industry for over 20 years, Bradley has been published numerous times in various national publications, has participated in several regional showhouses, and has worked on projects, both large and small, across the country.

In the Lannuier bedchamber . . .

Christmastime in New York City Storybook by Roxie Munro; tree design by **husband and wife team of Mike Gracie and Paula McKeever, GRACIE, New York City and Pelham, NY**

Mike Gracie is President of GRACIE, a 117-year-old Manhattan company specializing in handpainted wallpaper, Asian art and antiques, and lacquer furniture. GRACIE has vastly expanded its wallpaper lines in recent years, while growing its antiques business and creating custom orders for five-star hotel projects, as well as opening a showroom in Dallas in 2013. Paula McKeever began her career in fashion merchandising and then moved to interior furnishings. Her creative talents in event planning, decoration, and costume design have been highlighted in her work for a number of Westchester non-profits in recent years. She is currently on the board of the Pelham Art Center and the Pelham Children's Theater.

In Clarina Bartow's bedchamber . . .

This is New York Storybook by Miroslav Sasek; tree design by **Suzanne Eason, Suzanne Eason Interiors LLC, Greenwich, CT**

Suzanne Eason founded her residential interior design firm in 2006 after eighteen years as a Creative Director for various luxury and prestige brands in New York City and Santiago, Chile. Having studied in Florence, Italy, Eason later received a BFA, summa cum laude, in graphic design from the Fashion Institute of Technology in New York City. Her interiors boldly fuse the classical together with contemporary design. The intelligence and elegance of her design work has garnered many clients and awards. Most recently, her work has been published in *Traditional Home*, *Newsday*, and *The Daily News*.

In George Bartow's bedchamber . . .

Oskar and the Eight Blessings Storybook by Tanya Simon and Richard Simon, illustrated by Mark Siegel; tree design by **Barbara Feinstein, BFein Interiors, Scarsdale, NY**

Since 1999, Barbara Feinstein has transformed interiors for upscale homes throughout Westchester and Manhattan. Feinstein works with homeowners to create interior designs that reflect their personalities. She excels at creating interior designs which also accentuate a home's beauty and is a master at combining color, texture, and furnishings to create exquisite interiors. Feinstein has a certification in Interior Design from Parson's School of Design and is a member of the American Society of Interior Designers, ASID.

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ABOUT THE BARTOW-PELL MANSION MUSEUM

A New York City Landmark listed on the National Register of Historic Places, Bartow-Pell Mansion Museum (BPMM) is owned by the City of New York Department of Parks & Recreation and is a member of the Historic House Trust of New York City. It is operated by the private, non-profit Bartow-Pell Conservancy. The Bartow-Pell Conservancy, originally known as the International Garden Club, was formed in 1914 by a group passionate about horticulture. That year, New York City gave them permission to use the Bartow family mansion on Pelham Bay in the Bronx, as their headquarters in exchange for restoring it, creating public gardens and programs, and preserving it for generations to come. The International Garden Club officially changed its name to the Bartow-Pell Conservancy in 2008 as well its membership model to that of a typical cultural organization. BPMM is located at 895 Shore Road, Pelham Bay Park, Bronx, New York. The mansion and carriage house are open to the public for guided tours on Wednesday, Saturday, and Sunday from noon to 4 p.m. The gardens and grounds are open daily from 8:30 a.m. to dusk. For more information about Bartow-Pell, visit www.bpmm.org.