MASTERPIECE 40 YEARS

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Acclaimed, honored, and back by popular demand

Downton Abbey II

A miniseries nominated for 11 Primetime Emmy Awards
Sundays, January 8 through February 19, 2012, at 9pm ET on PBS

One of the most phenomenally popular series in MASTERPIECE history is back for an exciting second season: *Downton Abbey* II resumes its story of love and intrigue at an English country estate, now mobilized for the trauma of war. With a returning cast including Dame Maggie Smith, Elizabeth McGovern, Hugh Bonneville, Dan Stevens, Michelle Dockery, Siobhan Finneran, and many more, *Downton Abbey* II airs over seven weeks from Sunday, January 8 through February 19, 2012, at 9pm ET on PBS (check local listings).

Downton Abbey, produced by Carnival Films and co-produced by MASTERPIECE, has won a host of prestigious awards in the UK and was recently honored in the US with an impressive 11 Primetime Emmy nominations, including Outstanding Miniseries or Movie, plus acting nods for Dame Maggie Smith and Elizabeth McGovern and writing kudos for Julian Fellowes. This represents the most nominations MASTERPIECE has ever received for a single program.

American critics were no less enthusiastic, calling *Downton Abbey* "an instant classic" (*New York Times*), "compulsively watchable from the get-go" (*Variety*), "impossible to resist" (*Wall Street Journal*), "addictive" (*People Magazine*), "the best Abbey since Abbey Road" (*Entertainment Weekly*), and "a quintessential Masterpiece Classic" (*TV Guide*).

"MASTERPIECE viewers took *Downton Abbey* to heart and they won't be disappointed with season two," says MASTERPIECE Executive Producer Rebecca Eaton. "The cast we love is back and screenwriter Julian Fellowes is in top form. No one can equal him at breathing life into a world that vanished almost a century ago."

"We were absolutely thrilled by the enthusiastic response of MASTERPIECE viewers to *Downton Abbey*," says Gareth Neame, Executive Producer of *Downton Abbey*. "Its success is a testament to the wonderful storytelling, acting and production values of the show."

About thirteen million MASTERPIECE viewers tuned into the first season including one million who streamed it online—spellbound as Lord Grantham of *Downton Abbey* (Bonneville), the father of three daughters and no sons, welcomed

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more

an unexpected new heir, his handsome, marriageable, but proudly middle-class distant cousin, Matthew Crawley (Stevens).

The inevitable courtship between Matthew and Lord Grantham's eldest daughter, Mary (Dockery), was as bewitching as it was unresolved. Then there was Lady Grantham (McGovern), the mistress of Downton who reacted with impressive cool when social Armageddon threatened to bring down the family. Of equal interest were the members of the downstairs staff, with their own romances and schemes, including the most scheming of them all, Lady Grantham's Machiavellian maid, Miss O'Brien (Finneran).

Last season opened with the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, which had dire consequences for Downton Abbey. The new season picks up in the middle of another disaster, World War I, which affected every aspect of life in England, accelerating the social change that was already transforming an age-old system of class and privilege.

The second season promises to be as satisfying as the first, with thwarted and rekindled romances, forgotten and fresh scandals, and enough new plot twists to weave a tapestry with Lord Grantham's family crest.

Downton Abbey is produced by Carnival Film & Television, a division of NBC Universal. MASTERPIECE is a co-producer of the series. The series is written and created by Julian Fellowes. Gareth Neame, Julian Fellowes, and Rebecca Eaton are Executive Producers. The Producer is Liz Trubridge. The Directors are Ashley Pearce, Brian Kelly, Andy Goddard, James Strong and Brian Percival.

MASTERPIECE on PBS is presented by WGBH Boston. Rebecca Eaton is executive producer. Funding for the series is provided by public television viewers with additional support from contributors to The MASTERPIECE Trust, created to help ensure the series' future.

pbs.org/masterpiece
Online press materials available at pbs.org/pressroom and pressroom.wgbh.org

Downton Abbey II will be available to view online at **pbs.org/masterpiece** in January 2012.

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