

PROGRAMMING ADVISORY

Emmy Nominated *Downton Abbey* Back for Second Season on WSEC/PBS Springfield

JANUARY 18, 2012, SPRINGFIELD, IL – A miniseries nominated for 11 Primetime Emmy Awards, **Downton Abbey**, is back for a second season on Sundays at 8pm through February 19th on WSEC/PBS Springfield.

Downton Abbey, Series 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, 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. Last season opened with the sinking of the Titanic in 1912, which had dire consequences for *Downton Abbey*. The first season can be seen in its entirety on WSEC/PBS Springfield, Sundays at 6:30pm through February 19th immediately preceding the broadcast of season two at 8pm..

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.

WSEC/PBS Springfield, WQEC/PBS Quincy and WMEC/PBS Macomb are all part of Network Knowledge, which provides quality public television and educational services through a network of viewer-supporters, volunteers, universities, hospitals and business partners in communities throughout central and western Illinois.

Station-produced programs are also available on its YouTube channel <http://www.youtube.com/networkknowledge>. Network Knowledge is public media for western and central Illinois.

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Fast Facts

WHAT: Downton Abbey

WHEN: Sundays through Feb. 19th

WHERE: WSEC/PBS, Springfield