



****MEDIA ADVISORY - PHOTO/BROLL OPPORTUNITY****

City Parks Foundation

in Partnership with NYC Parks, The Consulate General of Sweden in New York,

Historic House Trust of New York City

To Break Ground on Major \$10.4M Exterior & Interior Renovation for

The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre

In Central Park on Friday, March 20



PHOTO ID: (l-r): Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre; Puppet Emcees Garth and Gino Vino

Puppet Emcees Will Kick Off Event to Celebrate World Puppetry Day

Historic Cottage to Mark Upcoming Milestone of 150 Years in Central Park

WHAT: The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre, operated jointly by City Parks Foundation and the NYC Parks Department, will celebrate **World Puppetry Day** and **150 years in Central Park** with a **groundbreaking ceremony to launch a major \$10.4 million exterior and interior renovation of the iconic building**, setting the stage for a vibrant era of renewal and opening a new chapter in its story celebrating this momentous milestone. In conjunction with the groundbreaking, City Parks Foundation will also launch a private fundraising campaign to support renovation efforts. Located in the heart of Central Park, the Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre has delighted generations of children and families with its distinctive marionette performances and intimate storytelling.



The planned renovations will invest in critical upgrades that preserve the Cottage's historic character while significantly improving the experience for audiences, artists, and staff and providing greater flexibility to use the theater for performances for individuals of all ages. Planned improvements include restoration of the building's exterior and interior features, modernization of theatrical and technical infrastructure, building mechanical upgrades, accessibility enhancements, and sustainability upgrades to ensure the theatre remains vibrant and welcoming for generations to come.

Originally constructed in 1876, the storybook structure was built in Sweden from native pine and cedar, dismantled, and shipped to the United States to serve as Sweden's pavilion at the Centennial International Exhibition in Philadelphia. Frederick Law Olmsted, the designer of Central Park, was so impressed by the building's craftsmanship and utility that he secured funding from the City of New York to purchase it. In 1877, the structure was dismantled once again and reassembled on the west side of Central Park.

Over the years, the Swedish Cottage served many purposes before becoming a marionette workshop in 1947 and, in 1973, the theatre New Yorkers know and love today. In 1997, City Parks Foundation spearheaded a major renovation to restore the theatre after 100+ years of continual use. Since then, the theatre has been jointly operated by City Parks Foundation and the NYC Parks Department and has introduced countless young audiences to the performing arts through affordable, family-friendly productions that celebrate creativity, craftsmanship, and cultural heritage. This is the first renovation of the theatre since the 1997 project.

WHO:

The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre groundbreaking will feature:

- **City Parks Foundation Executive Director Heather Lubov**
- **NYC Department of Parks & Recreation Commissioner Tricia Shimamura**
- **Consul General of Sweden in New York Erik Ullenhag**
- **Historic House Trust of New York City Executive Director Giulietta Fiore**



Additional speakers include:

- **Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre artistic director Bruce Cannon**
- **Congressman Jerrold Nadler**
- **NY State Senator Liz Krueger**
- **Manhattan Borough President Brad Hoylman-Sigal**
- **NYC Comptroller Mark Levine**
- **New York City Council Member Gale Brewer**

The event will be emceed by **puppets Garth (and his puppeteer Tau Bennett) and Gino Vino (and his puppeteer Sebastiano Ricci).**

WHERE: **The Swedish Cottage Marionette Theatre**

[West 79th Street & West Drive, inside Central Park](#)

WHEN: **Friday March 20, 2026**

Press Call Time: **10:30amET**

Groundbreaking Ceremony: **11:00am - 12:00pmET**

****Speakers will be available post-event for on-site interviews**

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