The Center for Puppetry Arts Welcomes Archives of Shadow Puppetry Master Larry Reed

Materials Chronicling the Career of the Cinematic Shadow Theater Pioneer Join Nancy Lohman Staub Puppetry Research Library Collection

ATLANTA (October 19, 2026) — The Larry Reed Archives will join the Center for Puppetry Arts' Nancy Lohman Staub Puppetry Research Library, preserving more than five decades of work by one of puppetry's most innovative artists. Spanning the late Larry Reed's early encounters with Balinese wayang tradition through his development of ShadowLight Productions' groundbreaking cinematic shadow theater, the archives include papers, correspondence, photographs, film, audio, and an expansive digital video collection, as well as production materials from the UNIMA Citation of Excellence–winning In Xanadu.

"The Larry Reed Archives are an extraordinary record of one of the most distinctive voices in the history of puppetry," said Jill Nash Malool, Center for Puppetry Arts' Museum Director. "This partnership began while Larry was still with us and carried his full blessing — a fact that means everything to us. We are profoundly grateful to Larry's family and everyone at ShadowLight for their trust and care. We do not take lightly what has been placed in our hands."

Reed, who passed away in March 2026, was a pioneer of shadow theater who studied Balinese wayang for 15 years and was one of the first non-Balinese artists to perform the tradition. Through ShadowLight Productions, which he founded in San Francisco in 1972, he introduced wayang to Western audiences and went on to create cinematic shadow theater, a style that blended the ancient art form with film and modern stagecraft and influenced shadow puppetry around the world.

The Larry Reed Archives will be housed in the Center's Nancy Lohman Staub Puppetry Research Library, which documents the history and art of puppetry through more than 1,100 books, 1,300 periodicals in a variety of languages, an extensive film collection, and archival materials from influential puppet artists. In keeping with Reed's belief that his work should be accessible to practitioners and researchers alike, the Center intends to make the materials digitally available to puppeteers, scholars, and researchers around the world.

Reed's work is also being celebrated at the Ballard Institute and Museum of Puppetry at the University of Connecticut, which opens its new exhibition, Larry Reed: Cinematic Shadows, on Friday, Nov. 6. Learn more about the event here.

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About the Center for Puppetry Arts

The Center for Puppetry Arts, which celebrates its 50th anniversary in 2028, is the largest nonprofit in the U.S. dedicated solely to puppetry, offering live performances, interactive workshops, educational programs, and a world-class museum. Home to the Jim Henson Collection, featuring original Muppets, *Fraggle Rock* characters, and *Sesame Street* icons, the Center provides a rare, behind-the-scenes look at beloved TV and film favorites. With over 4,000 puppets in its collection, the Center immerses visitors in diverse cultural

traditions, making it a must-visit destination for families and fans of all ages. The Center is proud to serve Atlanta's vibrant arts scene and recently gained national attention as one of Smithsonian Magazine's 250 Places to Celebrate America. Visit https://puppet.org for more information.

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