

Subscribe

Feedback



63°
H: 59° L: 48°

 Monday, December 15, 2014

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

Credible. Compelling. Complete.

[Sign Out](#)

Search Site



NEWS



DeKalb cuts 5 charges, keeps murder vs. mom whose kids died in fire

▼ LATEST HEADLINES ▼

HOME / [ENTERTAINMENT](#)

advertisement

Resize text A | A | A

Marvel comic book heroes, villains rumble in arena

Posted: 1:41 p.m. Monday, Dec. 15, 2014

By Jon Waterhouse - For the AJC

Kenneth Feld, CEO of Feld Entertainment, may be the real-world equivalent to Tony Stark, the billionaire hero in the Marvel comic series "Iron Man."

According to Forbes, Feld, like Stark, is worth billions. Although he doesn't fly the skies in a super suit, his other worldly powers find him orchestrating some of the greatest family-friendly shows on Earth. His company owns Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey Circus, the Monster Jam monster truck events, Disney on Ice and more.



Loki and Spider-Man duke it out in "Marvel Universe Live." The show is coming to Philips Arena and the Arena at ... [Read More](#)

With Feld Entertainment's latest foray, "Marvel Universe Live," Feld flexes his business savvy muscles by plucking the good guys and baddies from the pages of the Marvel Comics mythos, and dropping them in the middle of arena floors for a live-action, 100-minute superhero stunt show smack down. The show swoops into Philips Arena and the Arena at Gwinnett Center this month.

Wolverine shows off his claws, the Green Goblin cuts through the air above and the Hulk goes green amid flying motorcycles, laser beams and explosions. And that's just the tip of Thor's hammer.

And why wouldn't Feld join forces with Marvel for the ultimate team-up? Marvel movies typically gross more than \$200 million at the domestic box office, with biggies such as "The Avengers," "Iron Man 3" and "Guardians

of the Galaxy” raking in more than \$620 million, \$409 million and \$332 million respectively.



Hawkeye gets in on the action in “Marvel Universe Live.” The show is coming to Philips Arena and the Arena at ... [Read More](#)

“We came up with the idea and approached Marvel,” Feld said. “The show was two years in the making, and nothing like it has ever existed before.”

To wrangle more than 25 of Marvel’s most beloved heroes and villains together in one show, it took serious planning and a constant back-and-forth between Feld Entertainment and Marvel. The comic book giant guided Feld along the way with script and character development. They created a story, based more on Marvel comic book lore rather than the films, that’s unique to “Marvel Universe Live.” And Marvel made sure the characters stayed true to their beloved personas.

The show centers around the Cosmic Cube, a serious source of power in the Marvel world. To keep it from falling into the wrong hands, Thor smashes it, scattering its pieces around the world. Trouble begins when Thor’s bad guy brother Loki learns how to clone the Cube’s powers. Spider-Man, the Falcon, Black Widow and others soon join in to save the day.



Captain America and Red Skull rumble on motorcycles in the new arena show “Marvel Universe Live.” The show is coming to ... [Read More](#)

After settling on the story, then came the task of bringing the heroes to life in a live setting. Without the luxury of green-screen effects and stunt doubles, Feld Entertainment needed real deal stuntmen and women with mad skills.

“We brought together all of the knowledge we have from all of the different disciplines from all of the different types of productions that we have,” Feld said. “It was the first time we’ve ever done it.”

In addition to hiring stunt coordinators who’ve worked on various Marvel films, the producers tapped performers and athletes from their wellspring of other productions including Monster Jam and motocross. When Captain America and Red Skull battle it out on motorcycles, they’re really doing it. When villain Aldrich Killian catches on fire, he’s actually fully ablaze. To heighten both safety and realism, the rehearsal process took six months.

“We found the athletes and then trained them to become actors,” Feld said. “You couldn’t really do it the other

way around. These are some of the top athletes in the world.”

When putting the show together, Feld says they inadvertently broke a world record in the process. At one point, a motorcyclist jumps his bike from the ground up more than two stories, 19 feet in the air.

“The world record up until this time, which we didn’t know when we were rehearsing, was 16 and a half feet,” Feld said. “It’s extraordinary to see that happening. You can be sitting 15 feet from where it’s happening, and it’s just difficult to believe.”

To help bolster the suspension of disbelief, “Marvel Universe Live” employs a laundry list of special effects. 3-D projection mapping blasts images all over the stage set and around the arena. Pyrotechnics, lasers and other heroic eye candy run throughout.

Of course, certain characters have to fly. They pull it off thanks to 1,800 feet of suspended fly track weaving around one-third of a mile in the arena. The track mechanisms had to be designed to specifically fit the style of each of Marvel’s high fliers. For instance, Captain Marvel takes to the air a bit differently than say Iron Man or Spidey.

The character challenges, Feld says, didn’t end there. The producers had to figure out how to realistically replicate the imaginative and fantastic attributes of each Marvel denizen. How can Tony Stark quickly slip on the Iron Man duds and begin taking care of business? Those and countless other questions had to be answered.

According to Feld, the toughest character to create was the Hulk. The actor playing Bruce Banner transforms into the towering Hulk right before the audience’s eyes. Although there’s an actor inside the Hulk suit, robotics and animation bring expressions to the character’s face and give him the ability to nearly smash a car in half.

“It’s something we save for the end of the show,” Feld said. “It’s a big surprise when it happens, and the crowd goes crazy.”

It’s those types of responses, Feld says, that differentiate “Marvel Universe Live” from other forms of superhero media.

“There’s an emotional response that’s impossible for people to get when they see a movie or read a comic,” he said. “That’s what happens when you’re there. People are cheering for the heroes and booing for the villains. There is total engagement with the audience and the characters. The audience becomes part of the show in that sense, and they have a stake in it.”

‘MARVEL UNIVERSE LIVE’

3 and 7 p.m. Dec. 20; 11 a.m., 3 and 7 p.m. Dec. 21; 11 a.m. and 3 p.m. Dec. 22. \$20-\$75 plus service fees. Philips Arena, 1 Philips Drive, Atlanta. 1-800-745-3000, ticketmaster.com.

3 and 7:30 p.m. Dec. 26; 11 a.m., 3 and 7 p.m. Dec. 27; 1 and 5 p.m. Dec. 28. \$20-\$75 plus service fees. Arena at Gwinnett Center, 6400 Sugarloaf Parkway, Duluth. 1-800-224-6422, gwinnettcenter.com.

In this Section

[Affordably priced art at annual 'December Show'](#)

[Why Barbara Walters thinks Amal Clooney is fascinating](#)

[Kobe Bryant passes Michael Jordan on all-time scoring list](#)

[Adkins' show blends Celtic traditions, narration](#)

[Pirate Bay closure had little effect on digital piracy](#)

[Wahlberg acknowledges varied opinions about pardon](#)

[Skip the signature tacos and enjoy the vibe](#)

[Author events, Dec. 14-20](#)

[New chef cookbook takes you into the restaurant kitchen](#)

[New libraries go high-tech, cater to individual communities](#)

PREVIOUS:
DINING

[What's new on metro Atlanta dining scene](#)

NEXT:
ENTERTAINMENT

[Affordably priced art at annual 'December Show'](#)

Popular on MyAJC.com

[Braves' Hart: 'It's not like I'm breaking up the '27 Yankees'](#)

[Rockdale monastery is spiritual — and sociable](#)

[Black and Blue: from the intersection of police and public](#)

[Would making the playoffs help or hurt the Falcons?](#)

[Spelman suspends Cosby chair in wake of growing sexual assault...](#)

All Comments (0)

Post a Comment

COMMENTS

Post comment