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**Hermitage Artist Retreat Awards**

**2019 Greenfield Prize in Music to Helga Davis**

*This multidisciplinary artist is “a powerful vocalist with an almost operatic range and all the bruised sensuality of Jeanne Lee.” (Wire Magazine). Davis will be honored at the Greenfield Prize Award Dinner on April 14 in Sarasota.*

**“Helga Davis is an explosion of electricity. Every time I encounter her artistry, I am confronted, inspired, and brought to a deeper sense of my humanity.”**

**– Shara Nova**

(Sarasota County) The Hermitage Artist Retreat and the Philadelphia-based Greenfield Foundation have awarded the New York-based composer and performer, Helga Davis, with the 2019 Greenfield Prize, given this year in music. Davis receives a residency at the Hermitage and a $30,000 commission for a new work, which will premiere in Sarasota in 2021 with the presenting partner, ensembleNEWSRQ.

 Davis is a composer, vocalist and performance artist with feet planted on the most prestigious international stages and with firm roots in the realities and concerns of her local community. She was principal actor in the 25th-anniversary international revival of Robert Wilson and Philip Glass's seminal opera *Einstein on the Beach*. Among the collaborative and works written for her are *Oceanic Verses* by Paola Prestini, *You Us We All* by Shara Nova and Andrew Ondrejcak, and *Faust's Box* by Italian contemporary music composer Andrea Liberovici. The renowned theater director and visual artist Robert Wilson describes her as “a united whole, with spellbinding inner power and strength.” Davis also starred in Wilson’s *The Temptation of St. Anthony*, with libretto and score by Bernice Johnson Reagon; and *The Blue Planet*, by Peter Greenaway. She is the recipient of the 2014 BRIC Media Arts Fireworks Grant and completed her first evening-length piece, *Cassandra*. Current projects include *Silent Voices* with the Brooklyn Youth Chorus with text by Hilton Als; *Requiem for a Tuesday* with bass-baritone Davóne Tines and dancer/choreographer Reggie Gray; and *Yet Unheard,* a tribute to Sandra Blandby Courtney Bryan, based on the poem by Sharan Strange. Davis conceived and performed *First Responder* and *Wanna* as responses to *Until* and *The Let Go* by multidisciplinary artist Nick Cave. She is artist in residence at National Sawdust, host of the eponymous podcast *HELGA* on WQXR/New Sounds and is the 2018-19 visiting curator for the performing arts at the Isabella Stewart Gardner Museum.

Davis was selected by a jury that included Limor Tomer, general manager for concerts and lectures at the Metropolitan Museum of Art; Terrance McKnight, a WQXR host and accomplished pianist and educator; and Karen Sander, director of public programs for The Graduate Center, City University of New York.

Tomer stated Davis was chosen, in part, because “of her collaborative practice, creativity, where she is in her career, and the strength of the vision in the proposal.”

Davis is thrilled with the opportunities and the affirmation the prize offers her, saying that the award gives her “time and space to engage the imagination. To have been chosen gives me the opportunity to continue to make vibrant, authentic places of change and community—and to study and perhaps travel. It’s the biggest ‘YES’ an artist can receive.”

Bruce Rodgers, the executive director of the Hermitage, says that he and the board are “honored to give this award to Helga. She is an intrepid creator, most comfortable in uncomfortable territory, pushing boundaries, and redefining ‘full commitment.’ As an artist, Helga embodies the very heart and soul of this prize and we are grateful for the vision of this distinguished jury in selecting her.”

Davis will receive her award at the Greenfield Prize award dinner on Sunday, April 14, 6 p.m., at Michael’s On East, 1212 East Avenue South, in Sarasota. Tickets begin at $150; reservations can be made online at www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

**About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:**

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Englewood, Sarasota County, Florida. It invites accomplished artists in all disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Its artists, who are asked to interact with the community, touch thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage fellows have included Pulitzer, Tony, Emmy, Grammy and MacArthur Fellowship award winners. The Hermitage awards the $30,000 Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, and the Aspen Music Festival awards the annual Hermitage Prize in Composition. For more information about The Hermitage Artist Retreat, visit www.HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

**The Hermitage is supported by:**

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**About the Greenfield Prize:**

The Greenfield Prize at the Hermitage Artist Retreat is a groundbreaking partnership between the Philadelphia-based Greenfield Foundation and the Hermitage Artist Retreat. Pursuing the mission "to bring into the world works of art that will have a significant impact on the broader or artistic culture," the prize seeks to identify individuals whose past work and future prospects position them to achieve this lofty and ambitious goal. The prize is awarded annually and includes a $30,000 commission for a new piece of work to be created within a two-year time frame. A residency at the Hermitage Artist Retreat on Manasota Key in Englewood, Florida, ensures time and space in which to do the work. The Greenfield Prize rotates each year among three artistic areas: drama, music, and visual arts.