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The Hermitage Artist Retreat Announces The Return of Its Outdoor Beach Programs!

Starting with

“Genius Loci: A Sense of Place in Story, Music, & Poetry”

Friday, October 9, 6 p.m.

The first event in this beachfront series – with new social distancing measures – features composer and bassist Michael Kurth, poet Lynnell Edwards, and author Justin Torres.

(September 22, 2020) The Hermitage Artist Retreat announces the return of its popular beachfront series with “Genius Loci: A Sense of Place in Story, Music, & Poetry,” Friday, October 9, 6 p.m., at the Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. This outdoor event features three Hermitage artists-in-residence: composer and bassist Michael Kurth, poet Lynnell Edwards, and author Justin Torres. In Edwards’ book of poetry *This Great Green Valley* and Torres’ book and film *We the Animals*, each captures the sense of place of their childhoods. Composer and bassist Michael Kurth, meanwhile, defines his place as the bottom staff of an orchestral score. The artistic realms include music, film, and the spoken and written word. In every realm, each artist has created a place of their own. As the sun sets over the Gulf of

Mexico, Edwards and Torres will read from their celebrated works, and Kurth will delight audiences with his string bass and bass ukulele.

Admission is free but registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org. *Capacity will be limited to accommodate safe social distancing, so early reservations are recommended. Masks are strongly encouraged.*

“We are beyond excited to welcome audiences back to the Hermitage with the return of our outdoor beach series,” notes Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg. “Over the past few months, we have put tremendous thought and care into figuring out how to safely return to live programming while expanding our digital offerings, so that we can continue to build connections between our Hermitage Fellows and this extraordinary community.” The Hermitage resumed its artist residency program in July, with new social-distancing measures in place.

This outdoor event will be the first of many programs and collaborations throughout the season, spanning Sarasota County and the surrounding region. The Hermitage will offer both live outdoor programs and virtual offerings throughout the year featuring celebrated playwrights, visual artists, musicians, poets, and more—all free to the members of our community. *(Additional programs will be announced in the coming weeks.)* The Hermitage is also moving forward with its fall fundraiser, the 2020 “Artful Lobster: An Outdoor Celebration!” on Saturday, November 14.

Lynnell Edwards is author of several poetry collections, including *This Great Green Valley*, *Covet*, *The Highwayman’s Wife*, *The Farmer’s Daughter*, and the *Kings of the Rock Hot Shop*. Her work has appeared in *New Madrid*, *Connecticut Review*, *Cincinnati Review*, and *Pleiades*, and her poems have been featured on Verse

Daily. She is an associate professor of English at Spalding University in Louisville, Kentucky. Edwards is a founding member of Louisville Literary Arts and serves on the Kentucky Women Writers Conference Board. A recipient of the AI Smith Fellowship, Edwards holds a Ph.D. in rhetoric and composition and a master's degree in creative writing, both from the University of Louisville.

Michael Kurth was born in Virginia and grew up near Baltimore. After starting to play double bass in fourth grade he went on to get his bachelor's degree at Peabody Conservatory. Kurth has been a member of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra bass section since 1994. He was named "Best New Composer 2017" by *Atlanta Magazine*. The Atlanta Orchestra has given world premieres and released an album of many of his orchestral and choral works. In addition, his works have been commissioned and performed by symphonies, choruses, ensembles, instrumentalists, and colleges. He serves as Composer-in-Residence for the Riverside Chamber Players of Roswell, GA., which has premiered many of his chamber works and recorded "The Music of Michael Kurth: String Quartets." He teaches at Emory University.

Justin Torres has published short fiction in *The New Yorker*, *Harper's*, *Granta*, *Tin House*, *The Washington Post*, and other publications, as well as non-fiction pieces in publications like *The Guardian* and *The Advocate*. A graduate of the Iowa Writers' Workshop, Justin's New York Times bestselling novel *We the Animals* has been translated into 15 languages and was recently adapted into a film. It premiered at the Sundance Film Festival and was nominated for five Independent Spirit Awards. He was a Wallace Stegner Fellow at Stanford University, a fellow at the Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study at Harvard, and a Cullman Center Fellow at the New York Public

Library. The National Book Foundation named him one of the 2012's "5 under 35." He was the recipient of a grant from the National Endowment of the Arts, a Rolón Fellowship in Literature from United States Artists, and the VCU Cabell First Novelist Award. He lives in Los Angeles where he is an assistant professor of English at UCLA.

The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies. Artists come from around the world and across multiple disciplines create and develop new works of visual art, theater, music, literature, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows are asked to participate in community programs, affording audiences in our region the unique opportunity to engage with some of the world's leading artists and to get a "sneak peek" into extraordinary projects and artistic minds before their works go on to major galleries, concert halls, theaters, and museums around the world. These free programs include performances, lectures, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

For reservations or more information about the Hermitage, visit

HermitageArtistRetreat.org

About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:

The Hermitage is a nonprofit artist retreat located in Manasota Key, Florida, inviting accomplished artists across multiple disciplines for residencies on its beachfront campus, which is on the National Register of Historic Places. Hermitage artists are invited to interact with the local community, reaching thousands of Gulf Coast residents and visitors each year with unique and inspiring programs. Hermitage Fellows have included nine Pulitzer Prize winners, along with multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar, and MacArthur Fellowship award winners. Works created at this beachside retreat by a diverse group of Hermitage alumni

have gone on to renowned theatres, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the \$30,000 Hermitage 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 HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

The Hermitage is supported by:

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