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**The Hermitage Artist Retreat
and Selby Gardens Announce a New Collaboration:
“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens”**

A New Outdoor Series

Part of the “Hermitage North” initiative to expand the reach of the Hermitage throughout Sarasota County and beyond, this new series launches on October 23 with “Triple Current: Music of Arabia & America,” featuring composer, santur player, trumpeter, and vocalist Amir ElSaffar.

(October 5, 2020) The Hermitage Artist Retreat and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens announce a new collaboration, “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens,” launching with a five-program series as part of the 2020-2021 season. The outdoor series features performances and talks by Hermitage artists-in-residence and alumni. Four will take place at Selby Gardens’ Downtown Sarasota campus; one will be at Selby Gardens Historic Spanish Point campus. The series premieres with “Triple Current: Music of Arabia & America,” featuring the celebrated composer, santur player, jazz trumpeter and vocalist Amir ElSaffar, on Friday, October 23, 6 p.m., on the northern grounds of the Selby Gardens Event Center. **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.*

The events in the inaugural season of “**Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens**” include:

- **Friday, October 23, 6 p.m.**, at Selby Gardens’ Downtown Sarasota campus (*at the northern grounds of the Events Center*)
- **Friday, January 22, 5:30 p.m.**, at Selby Gardens’ Downtown
- **Wednesday, February 24, 6 p.m.**, at Selby Gardens’ Downtown; part of Selby Gardens’ “Lichtenstein Nights” concert series
- **Wednesday, March 3, 6 p.m.**, at Historic Spanish Point
- An **additional date in May** to be announced at Selby Gardens

Each program will feature a celebrated Hermitage artist (or artists) to be announced.

“We are so looking forward to collaborating with Selby Gardens on this new series,” says Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg. “As we continue to expand our Hermitage programming throughout the region while finding safe ways to gather in person, we are thrilled to welcome audiences to engage with Hermitage artists against the backdrop of Selby Gardens’ two beautiful campuses.” As with the Hermitage beach programs on Manasota Key, all seating will be outdoors and socially distanced.

“All of us at Selby Gardens are honored to be able to provide a safe and beautiful outdoor setting for these Hermitage programs during this challenging time,” adds Selby Gardens’ President and CEO Jennifer Rominiecki. “We look forward to this dynamic collaboration between our beloved cultural institutions.”

The “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” series launches with a performance by composer, santur player, jazz trumpeter, and vocalist Amir ElSaffar, Friday, October 23 at 6 p.m. *The Chicago Tribune* has hailed ElSaffar, a Hermitage Fellow, as “one of the most promising figures in jazz today.” As part of “Triple Current: Music of Arabia & America,” ElSaffar will preview a new work that is set to premiere in November in New York. ElSaffar’s piece, commissioned by the Jazz Coalition, uses the currents of electronics as they’ve never been used before. Sarasota audiences will be the first to hear this brand new work. “Triple Current” promises a gentle sonic sound from an extraordinary Hermitage artist that reflects the peace and beauty evoked by Selby Gardens.

An expert trumpeter with a classical background, Amir ElSaffar has created techniques to play microtones and ornaments idiomatic to Arabic music that are not typically heard on the trumpet. He is a purveyor of the centuries-old, now endangered, Iraqi maqam tradition, which he performs actively as a vocalist and santur player. ElSaffar is the recipient of a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award and the Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University. His work has been commissioned by the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Chamber Music America, Jazz Institute of Chicago, as well as traditional Middle Eastern ensembles, chamber orchestras, string quartets, and contemporary music ensembles, and dance troupes. ElSaffar’s commission performed at the Newport Jazz Festival made a clear emotional connection to the audience with its visceral passion reflecting the sectarian violence of the Middle East and received a rousing standing ovation. With resonance as his governing principle, ElSaffar creates a

unique microtonal musical environment that moves beyond the notions of style and tradition.

These outdoor events will be the first of many “Hermitage North” 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. The Hermitage is also moving forward with its fall fundraiser, the 2020 “Artful Lobster: An Outdoor Celebration!” on Saturday, November 14.

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 and upcoming programs, 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 theaters, 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:

Hermitage programs are supported, in part, by an award from the National Endowment for the Arts; by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues; and by the Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council of Arts and Culture and the State of Florida (Section 286.25 Florida Statutes), as well as the Gulf Coast Community Foundation and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

The expansion of the Hermitage North initiative is made possible with generous support from Gulf Coast Community Foundation: celebrating 25 years, better together.