



The Hermitage Artist Retreat and the Van Wezel Foundation

present

“UNSCRIPTED+: Community Edition”

With Acclaimed Arts Educator Eric Booth

Thursday, January 14, 7 p.m.

UNSCRIPTED is an innovative collaboration between the Van Wezel Foundation and the Hermitage Artist Retreat during which audiences experience an off-script interactive encounter with an award-winning Hermitage artist. The third event in this interactive digital series features Eric Booth, named one of the “50 of the most influential people in the arts” and called “the father of the teaching artist profession.”

(December 28, 2020) The Hermitage Artist Retreat and the Van Wezel Foundation present

“UNSCRIPTED+: Community Edition,” with arts advocate, educator, and author Eric Booth, on

Thursday, January 14, at 7 p.m., via Zoom. This intimate, "off-script" series takes audiences on an insider's journey of the artistic process, produced by award-winning writers, musicians, composers, choreographers, visual artists, educators, and other Hermitage Fellows from around the globe.

Previous UNSCRIPTED programs have featured Hermitage Fellows Claire Chase (flutist, MacArthur “Genius” recipient, Avery Fisher Prize winner); Ann Patterson (visual artist, sculptor, author); Melissa

Studdard (poet); Christopher Theofinidis (composer); and Patrick Harlin (composer, visual media artist). **The event is offered via Zoom, and registration is required at artsUNSCRIPTED.org.**

"Eric Booth has always been a passionate advocate for the arts and the essential role of teaching artists, and we are incredibly fortunate to have him as a member of the Hermitage's National Curatorial Council," notes Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO of the Hermitage Artist Retreat. "In discussing this next 'Unscripted' with our friends and colleagues at the Van Wezel Foundation, we decided to open this special 'Community Edition' of this collaborative online series to a wider audience, announcing Eric in advance to encourage attendance from members of our community who are particularly interested in arts education."

UNSCRIPTED+ attendees will have the pleasure to interact with Booth and learn more about teaching artistry. "We invite our community to come with us for an inside perspective on arts and education. For over 30 years the Van Wezel Foundation's mission has focused on teaching students in, through, and about the arts. We are proud to partner with the Hermitage Artist Retreat to present a teaching artist on the cutting edge of this meaningful work," adds Cheryl Mendelson, CEO of the Van Wezel Foundation.

In 2015, Eric Booth was honored with American for the Arts' Arts Education Leadership Award, and was named by them as one of "the 50 most influential people in the arts in the U.S." He began his career as a Broadway actor, and entered the world of business. (His company became the largest of its kind in the U.S. in seven years.) He is the author of seven books; his most recent is *Tending the Perennials: The Art and Spirit of a Personal Religion*. Booth has served on the faculty of Juilliard, Tanglewood, The Kennedy Center, and Lincoln Center Education, where now he is the leader of their Teaching Artist Development Labs, and currently serves as a member of the Hermitage Artist Retreat's National Curatorial Council. He serves as a consultant for many arts organizations (including seven of the 10 largest U.S. orchestras), cities, states, community organizations, and businesses around the U.S. A frequent keynote speaker (including the closing keynote at UNESCO's first World Arts Education Conference and the keynote to the world's first

conference on arts and communities), Booth founded the International Teaching Artist Conferences, and was given the first honorary doctorate for a career as a teaching artist. He is often called "the father of the teaching artist profession." As an actor, Booth performed in many plays on Broadway, Off-Broadway and around the country, playing over 23 Shakespearean roles. *For more information, visit EricBooth.net.*

UNSCRIPTED is a first-time partnership between the Hermitage and Van Wezel Foundation. In the spirit of the series name, there is no single venue or stage, and every performance takes place in a variety of forms and locations. Whether it be a virtual zoom room, on the beach, in a studio, or even in a private living room, each presentation is a one-of-a-kind interactive experience.

To register for UNSCRIPTED, visit artsUNSCRIPTED.org

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 twelve 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.

About The Van Wezel Foundation

Since 1987, the Van Wezel Foundation has partnered with the City of Sarasota to foster a connection between the people, the bay and the spirit of human creativity. The Foundation's mission is to create a world-class performing arts center that enriches the community, supports arts education and inspires young minds. Each year, the Foundation provides grants to the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall to support arts education throughout our region. Together, we serve more than 35,000 students with enriching arts-based education opportunities and professional development for more than 400 teachers across five counties. In 2018, the city of Sarasota approved a master plan to develop 53 acres on the Bayfront into a vibrant, accessible park with a new performing arts center at the heart of it. The Foundation is leading *The Future is Now Campaign* to help the community realize the promise of the master plan. To learn more about the new Sarasota Performing Arts Center and get involved, visit vwfoundation.org/SPAC. For more information on the Foundation, visit vwfoundation.org.