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The Hermitage Artist Retreat

One of the Region's Earliest Arts Organizations to Offer

A Safe New Model for Live Performance

Announces

Upcoming Programs: February Through Early April

*Highlights include renowned mime and performing artist, **Bill Bowers**; ETHEL cellist **Dorothy Lawson**; rising star of performance art, **Richard Kennedy**; and Guggenheim Fellowship winner and poet, **Jeffrey Skinner**.*

(February 15, 2021) The Hermitage Artist Retreat is one of the region's most early adapters to offer a safe new model for live events and performance during the pandemic. The organization began to offer in-person events in early October at venues across Sarasota County, including Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Historic Spanish Point, and on the Hermitage Beach, in addition to its ongoing virtual programming which is available to audiences around the country. Over the past few months, the Hermitage has safely and successfully presented nearly 20 unique in-person programs, implementing strict social distancing policies and outdoor-only venues, accommodating audiences ranging from 100 to 200, who regularly provide feedback on the Hermitage's health and safety protocols. "By doing this, we've been able to engage local audiences — and give a rare and empowering opportunity to

dozens of performers, musicians, visual artists, writers, teaching artists, and more to share their talents and their work in progress with audiences,” says Andy Sandberg, the Hermitage’s Artistic Director and CEO. “We are fortunate in that we are not limited by production values or the need for an indoor performance space. What we offer is a unique look into the creative process and early development of works by notable artists from around the world. Therefore, we feel it is our responsibility and an opportunity to provide both artists and audiences a safe and inspiring way to gather.” Many Hermitage artists and audiences alike have noted that these experiences have been a highlight and an escape from the pandemic while many of their regular arts and cultural offerings have been shut down or limited to online-only programming.

The Hermitage’s upcoming programs feature in-person and virtual events starring award-winning playwrights, musicians, composers, poets, authors, visual artists, choreographers, and performers.

Reminder! “Blank Slate: Pushing Boundaries”

Featuring Morgan Bassichis and Richard Kennedy

February 19 at the Hermitage Beach

Reminder! “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens”

Two Events with Cellist Dorothy Lawson of ETHEL

February 24 at Selby Gardens

In collaboration with Selby Gardens’ “Lichtenstein Nights”

and March 3 at Historic Spanish Point

In collaboration with Selby Gardens’ “Performances at the Point”

New! Writing Under the Banyan Tree:

“Voicing Empathy” & “Slush Pile to Publication”

With Hermitage Fellows Sam Max, Sarah Gorham, and Jeffrey Skinner

March 5 on the Hermitage Great Lawn

New! “Between Two Worlds”

With Hermitage Fellows Gowri Savor and Monica Youn

March 12 at the Hermitage Beach

New! “The Great American Mime”

With Hermitage Fellow Bill Bowers

March 19 on the Hermitage Beach

New! “Transformations in Music & Words”

With Hermitage Fellows Henry Clarke and Denise Dillenbeck

April 2 on the Hermitage Beach

The Hermitage’s busy season continues with a variety of in-person and virtual programs featuring Hermitage artists-in-residence who present performances and conversations about their works-in-progress and offer insight into their creative process. **Registration is required for each event—and is now available on the Hermitage website at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.**

Here’s a quick preview of upcoming events, including new and previously announced programs:

- **REMINDER!** Friday, February 19, 5 p.m.: “Blank Slate: Pushing Boundaries” featuring Morgan Bassichis and Richard Kennedy. Two Hermitage artists-in-residence—performer, musician, and comedian Morgan

Bassichis and multidisciplinary artist, choreographer, and performer Richard Kennedy—will share space on the Hermitage beach and offer insight into their unique worlds of creative, avant-garde, and unfiltered performance. *Hermitage beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*

- **REMINDER! Wednesday, February 24, evening: “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” continues with cellist Dorothy Lawson (in collaboration with Selby Gardens’ “Lichtenstein Nights”).** Acclaimed cellist, member of ETHEL, and Hermitage Fellow Dorothy Lawson will share her music as part of this special “Lichtenstein Nights” evening. Lawson is a founding member and artistic director of ETHEL, one of America's most adventurous string quartets. *Selby Gardens, 1534 Mound St, Sarasota. Tickets (prices varied) are available at <https://selby.org/dsc/dsc-special-events/lichtenstein-nights/>. Additional information is available at HermitageArtistRetreat.org. **Dorothy Lawson’s Hermitage Artist Residency is sponsored by Dr. Susan M. Brainerd & Alan R. Quinby***
- **REMINDER! Wednesday, March 3, evening: “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” continues with cellist Dorothy Lawson (in collaboration with Selby Gardens “Performances at the Point”).** Acclaimed cellist, member of ETHEL, and Hermitage Fellow Dorothy Lawson will share her music as part of this special “Performances at the Point” evening. Lawson is a founding member and artistic director of ETHEL, one of America's most adventurous string quartets. *Tickets (prices varied) are available at <https://selby.org/dsc/dsc-special-events/performances-at-the-point/>. Historic Spanish Point, 337 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey. Additional information is available at HermitageArtistRetreat.org. **Dorothy Lawson’s Hermitage Artist Residency is sponsored by Dr. Susan M. Brainerd & Alan R. Quinby.***

- **NEW!** Friday, March 5, 4 p.m.: **Writing Under the Banyan Tree: “Voicing Empathy” with Sam Max & “Slush Pile to Publication” with Sarah Gorham & Jeffrey Skinner.** Hermitage Fellows Sam Max (playwright), Sarah Gorham (poet and essayist), and Jeffrey Skinner (poet) will offer an afternoon writing workshop beside the Hermitage’s banyan tree. Sam Max will offer a workshop for writers and non-writers using brief exercises, guided prompts, and approachable free-writing techniques to give voice to unlikely subjects. The objective is to tap into our innate storytelling potential as human beings and expand the possibilities of our empathy. Sarah Gorham and Jeffrey Skinner, co-founders of independent literary press Sarabande Books, will offer a behind-the-scenes look into what it takes to get a literary work published. Gorham and Skinner will take questions about how a book makes its way from the “slush pile” to publication. **Sam Max** is a writer and director and a resident playwright of New Dramatists. Max’s play *Coop* was selected for the 2020-21 Theatertreffen-Stückemarkt in Berlin and premiered at the Paradise Factory. Max is an alum of The Public’s Devised Theater Working Group and Pipeline Theatre Company’s PlayLab, and, in 2018, they were named one of Hollywood’s “Top 100 New Writers.” **Sarah Gorham** is a poet and essayist, and most recently the author of *Alpine Apprentice* and *Study in Perfect*, the latter selected by Bernard Cooper for the 2013 AWP Award in Creative Nonfiction. Gorham is also the author of four collections of poetry. Other honors include grants and fellowships from the National Endowment for the Arts and three state arts councils. She is co-founder and editor-in-chief at Sarabande Books, an independent, nonprofit, literary publisher. **Jeffrey Skinner** is the recipient of a 2014 Guggenheim Fellowship in poetry. His most recent book of poems, *Chance Divine*, won the Field Prize and was published in 2017. In 2015, Skinner was given one of eight American Academy of Arts & Letters Awards, for exceptional accomplishment in writing. In 2006, he was awarded his second Creative Writing Fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts. He has published six previous full collections of

poems, and his full-length play, *Down Range*, has had successful limited runs in New York City, Chicago, and Harrisburg, PA. He is co-founder of Sarabande Books. *On the Great Lawn at the Hermitage, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*

NEW! Friday, March 12, 5:30 p.m.: “Between Two Worlds” with Hermitage Fellows Gowri Savor and Monica Youn. Visual artist Gowri Savor discusses the importance of mapping systems within her work, and will facilitate an interactive, communal mapping experience that aims to connect us in this challenging time of physical distancing. Poet Monica Youn will read from her manuscript in progress, which includes poems on the theme of deracination—to form a racial identity based on other people's stereotypes, rather than from any central core of authenticity. **Gowri Savor** is a visual-teaching artist, whose practice includes sculpture, drawing and the Indian art of Rangoli. Savor is the founder of A River of Light, an organization committed to bringing art to the community through participatory art events, parades and installations. She has been a teaching artist for more than 20 years, with experience in arts integration and community building. **Monica Youn** is the author of *Blackacre*, which won the William Carlos Williams Award of the Poetry Society of America. It was also shortlisted for the National Book Critics Circle Award and the Kingsley Tufts Award, longlisted for the National Book Award, and named one of the best poetry books of 2016 by The New York Times, The Washington Post, and BuzzFeed. Her previous book, *Ignatz*, was a finalist for the National Book Award. She has been awarded the Levinson Prize from the Poetry Foundation, a Guggenheim Fellowship, a Hermitage Fellowship, Witter Bytter Fellowship from the Library of Congress, and a Stegner Fellowship, among other honors. The daughter of Korean immigrants, and a member of the Racial Imaginary Institute, she teaches at Princeton and in the MFA programs at NYU and Columbia. *Hermitage beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*

- NEW! Friday, March 19, 5:30 p.m.: “The Great American Mime” with Hermitage Fellow Bill Bowers.** Celebrated mime, actor and educator Bill Bowers will make the ancient art form of mime accessible to a contemporary audience. This Hermitage Fellow and “speaking mime” deftly intersperses narrative with stunning visual portraits. He invites a look at the humor, pain, and beauty of our humanity through simplicity and grace. Bowers’ Broadway credits include Zazu in *The Lion King* and Leggett in *The Scarlet Pimpernel*. Bowers has written and performed his own plays Off-Broadway and in theaters around the world. He has been hailed by critics as “the great American mime,” winning top honors at festivals throughout the world. Bowers is a student of the legendary Marcel Marceau. *Hermitage beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*
- NEW! Friday, April 2, 5:30 p.m.: “Transformations in Music & Words” with Hermitage Fellows Henry Clarke and Denise Dillenbeck.** Music can transform a single life, and literature can transform a whole culture. Violinist Denise Dillenbeck will share musical samples as she reads from her memoir, *How Beethoven Saved Me*, exploring the relevance of classical music and its power to transform a life. Henry Clarke will read from his latest work, as he challenges us to explore how writing helps us to record, interpret, and shape our culture and society. **Henry Clarke** is a writer and actor. Television credits include *Chuck, House, Lie to Me, Blacklist: Redemption, Power, The Good Fight, FBI*, and a Chinese television show called *Action English*. He has performed Off-Broadway with the SourceWorks Theater and Mint Theater, and regionally with the American Repertory Theater, American Conservatory Theater, Hartford Stage, L.A. Theater Works, and Shakespeare & Co., among many others. As a writer, his plays have been performed in festivals and university theaters, and one was commissioned by the U.S. Embassy for two tours of China. Clarke holds a BA in English from Harvard University, an MFA in Playwriting from

Smith College, and an MFA in Acting from The Moscow Art Theater School. He is currently writing a triptych of novels that explores the overwhelming systems of power and privilege that keep the bad guys on top, and what the good guys can do about it. **Denise Dillenbeck** is a versatile musician with a focus in solo performance. She has toured Europe and America with the Philadelphia Orchestra, and has played with the Seattle Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Pennsylvania Ballet Theater, Philly Pops, and many other orchestras across the U.S. She is currently concertmaster of the Yakima Symphony, York Symphony, Siletz Bay Music Festival Orchestra, Lake Chelan Bach Festival Orchestra and the Northwest Sinfonietta. As a teaching artist in the Philadelphia Orchestra's Community Partnership Program, Dillenbeck led urban elementary school students in experiential music learning and directed workshops on aesthetic education for classroom teachers and music educators. The San Francisco Chronicle hails her playing as "simply first-rate." *Hermitage beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood. Registration required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.*

- Additional programs may be announced.

Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org. *All live events will be held outdoors, and capacity will be limited to accommodate safe social distancing. Early reservations are recommended. Masks are requested and strongly encouraged for all live programs. To accommodate capacity restrictions, social-distancing measures, and virtual licensing costs, a \$5 per person registration fee will be added for most events (except where other pricing is indicated above as part of collaborative partnerships).*

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 twelve Pulitzer Prize winners, Poets Laureate, MacArthur 'Genius' Fellows, and multiple Tony, Emmy, Grammy, Oscar winners and nominees. 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:

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