

**Hermitage and Booker High School
Launch New Partnership & Artist Series,
Plus New December Programs Announced!**

*Jazz musician and Hermitage Fellow **Luke Stewart** will launch the new “Hermitage @ Booker” series with “The Edge of Music” on December 17. Plus, Hermitage Fellows **Lisa E. Harris** and **James Anthony Tyler** will present a new program on the Hermitage Beach in collaboration with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe and Resilient Retreat on December 3.*

October 20, 2021—The Hermitage Artist Retreat and Booker High School are teaming up to connect leading Hermitage Fellows from around the world with students and families, as well as members of the Sarasota community. This new “Hermitage @ Booker” series, a collaboration between the Hermitage Artist Retreat and Booker High School’s Visual & Performing Arts (VPA) program, launches with “The Edge of Music,” a public event on Friday, December 17, featuring Hermitage Fellow, jazz bassist, and composer **Luke Stewart**. Hailed by *Downbeat Magazine* as one of the “25 most influential jazz artists” of his generation, the DC/NYC-based musician is known for his bold experimentation on the cutting edge of musicianship. He will share an improvisational selection of his work, lead a “jam session” with local artists and students, discuss his creative process, and talk about forging a career in the music industry. “The Edge of Music” begins at 5:30pm ET in the outdoor courtyard at Booker High on Friday, December 17 (3201 North Orange Ave, Sarasota, FL 34234; free with a

\$5/person registration fee at HermitageArtistRetreat.org). Additional events in the “Hermitage @ Booker” series will be announced at a later date.

The Hermitage has shared the gift of education with Booker High School and Booker Middle School students for many years, as well as other schools throughout the region, bringing leading artists from across the country into the classrooms, building bridges with students and teachers alike. As the Hermitage continues to expand its partnership with Booker High School, the organization will continue to present classroom programs and teacher workshops, as well as introducing new mentorship opportunities connecting aspiring young artists with the Hermitage’s extraordinary visiting musicians, playwrights, visual artists, dancers, and more. New support for this expanded community engagement is provided this season by the Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, as well as additional support for teaching artist residencies provided by the Koski Family Foundation.

Also in December, the Hermitage is partnering with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe and Resilient Retreat to present the beach program “Connections” on Friday, December 3, at 5pm ET, featuring Hermitage Fellows **Lisa E. Harris** and **James Anthony Tyler**, who will share work and experiences that illuminate how we connect with the world around us. The evening will feature an exploration of songs and short stories from Harris, as well as a reading of Tyler’s quietly provocative play *Hop thA A* (Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd., Englewood; free with a \$5/person registration fee at HermitageArtistRetreat.org).

Lisa E. Harris is a trained classical voice and opera singer who uses voice, movement, text, and new media to explore healing in performance. The *Huffington*

Post named her “One of Fourteen Artists that are Transforming Opera.” Harris performed at the 52nd Venice Biennale and is a featured vocalist on the Grammy-nominated album *All Rise: A Joyful Elegy for Fats Waller*. **James Anthony Tyler** received a Horton Foote Playwriting Award and an inaugural playwright commission from Audible. He was the staff writer for *Cherish the Day*, a show created by *Selma* film director Ava DuVernay for the OWN Network.

[See below for complete artist bios.](#)

“We are excited to launch this expanded collaboration with Booker High School,” says Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “We are delighted to partner with Dr. Shelley and her extraordinary faculty to bring this new initiative to life and to build meaningful connections between some of the nation’s leading artists and the innovative young minds in our community. We look forward to introducing more students and area residents to the bold new works and creative journeys of acclaimed Hermitage Fellows from around the world. We are also delighted to be continuing our longstanding relationship with Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe and building a new partnership with our friends at Resilient Retreat.”

“As we seek to embolden our students to soar to new heights, we are thrilled to have Hermitage Fellows work with our students and present their process to the community,” says Booker High School Principal **Dr. Rachel Shelley**. “The Hermitage partnership is an extraordinary opportunity for the Booker High School VPA Magnet Program to connect student learning with the experiences of acclaimed professionals working in the visual and performing arts.”

The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies, where diverse artists from around the world and across multiple disciplines create and develop new works of theater, music, visual art, literature, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows participate in free community programs, offering audiences in the region a unique opportunity to engage with some of the world's leading artists and to get an authentic "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 and innovative programs include performances, lectures, readings, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

The Hermitage recently announced that all of the Hermitage's live programming through the end of 2021 will continue entirely outdoors, all with socially distanced seating.

The newly announced programs include:

- **"Connections," Friday, December 3, 5pm ET:** Whether connecting to your breath, the ground you stand on, or a new companion on a train, Hermitage Fellows **Lisa E. Harris** and **James Anthony Tyler** will share art and experiences that illuminate how we connect with the world around us. The evening will feature an exploration of songs and short stories from Harris, as well as a reading of Tyler's quietly provocative play *Hop thA A*. The connections between these two unique and extraordinary artists provide the starting point for a discussion to conclude the program. This event is presented in partnership with **Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe** and **Resilient Retreat**. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee).** **The Hermitage**

Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd., Englewood 34223 (Also Available via Live-Stream)

- **“The Edge of Music,” Friday, December 17, 5:30pm ET:** Celebrated jazz bassist and composer **Luke Stewart** is known for his bold experimentation on the cutting edge of musicianship. He shares an improvisatory selection of his work, leads a “jam session” with local artists and students, and discusses his creative process as well as his experiences forging a career in the music industry. This event is presented in partnership with **Booker High School**. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee or student promo code: “student”). **Booker High School (outdoor courtyard), 3201 North Orange Ave, Sarasota, FL 34234**

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 14 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, the newly announced \$35,000 Hermitage Major Theater Award for an original theater commission, and the Aspen Music Festival’s Hermitage Prize in Composition.

For more information, 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 Arts and Culture, 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, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

About Booker High School (VPA):

Booker High School's Visual and Performing Arts (VPA) magnet program offers rigorous, pre-professional training in the arts in five disciplines: Dance, Digital Film & Motion Design, Music, Theatre, and Visual Art. Some notable VPA graduates are "American Idol" semifinalist and Broadway/film actress Syesha Mercado, Oscar-winning film make-up artist Bill Corso, and NBC's "Chicago Fire" star Charlie Barnett. In addition to the VPA, Booker High School offers the Cambridge University AICE (Advanced International Certificate of Education) program, the JROTC program CTE (Career and Technical Education) program, and The Law Academy. Booker High School also partners with Inner City Hope USA to offer courses in coding and mobile app development. Located in Sarasota, Florida's "Art and Cultural Center," Booker High School is a comprehensive learning facility inhabiting a \$58-million state-of-the-art campus. The smallest comprehensive high school in the Sarasota County District, Booker has the lowest student-to-teacher ratio and offers individualized, differentiated instruction.

COMPLETE ARTIST BIOS

Luke Stewart

Hermitage Fellow Luke Stewart is a DC/NYC-based musician and organizer of important musical presentations, with a strong presence in the national and international Improvised Music community. He is noted in *Downbeat Magazine* in 2020 as one of "25 most influential jazz artists" of his generation. He was profiled in *The Washington Post* in early 2017 as "holding down the jazz scene," selected as "Best Musical Omnivore" in the *Washington City Paper's* 2017 "Best of DC," chosen as "Jazz Artist of the Year" for 2017 in *District Now*, and in the 2014 People Issue of the *Washington City Paper* as a "Jazz Revolutionary," citing his multifaceted cultural activities throughout DC. In New York City, Stewart collaborated with Arts for Art in hosting the first ever "Free Jazz Convention" to share resources and strategies among the community. He has also performed in a myriad of collaborations and performances in venues such as the Kitchen, the Metropolitan Museum of Art, Pioneer Works, Roulette, and Issue Project Room. Stewart is also a presence in the greater community of Creative Musicians, with regular multi-city ensembles. His regular ensembles include Irreversible Entanglements, Heroes are Gang Leaders, and Ancestral Duo, Six Six featuring guitarist Anthony Pirog, and experimental rock duo Blacks' Myths. As a solo artist, he has been compiling a series of improvisational sound structures for Upright Bass and Amplifier, utilizing the resonant qualities of the instrument to explore real-time harmonic and melodic possibilities. As a scholar/performer, he has performed and lectured at Harvard University, Johns Hopkins

University, Medgar Evers College, George Mason University, Wayne State University, University of Montana, New Mexico State University, and the University of South Carolina. He holds a BA in International Studies and a BA in Audio Production from American University, and an MA in Arts Management and Entrepreneurship from the New School. In 2019, Stewart was also a finalist for the Johnson Fellowship, citing his work in changing the musical fabric of Washington, DC.

Lisa E. Harris

Hermitage Fellow Lisa E. Harris is an interdisciplinary artist, performer, and composer from Houston, Texas. Harris is a trained classical voice/opera singer and is certified as a facilitator of Deep Listening, the sonic philosophies of composer Pauline Oliveros, from the Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute. Her work focuses on the energetic relationships between body, land, spirit, and place. She uses voice, movement, text, and new media to explore healing in performance. Recognized by The Huffington Post as “One of Fourteen Artists that are Transforming Opera,” Harris clarifies her artistic voice through experimental film, improvisational performance, and compositional practices, and further translates her music through the application of natural sciences, spirituality, popular song, melody, harmony, ritual, and ceremony. She recently performed “Work Songs” at the 52nd Venice Biennale. In 2007, Harris founded Studio Enertia, a multimedia production collective and in 2013 began the artists-run Studio Enertia Artist Residency Program in Houston. A collaborative artist with Jason Moran presents *A Fats Waller Dance Party*, Harris is a featured vocalist along with Meshell N'degecello on the Grammy-nominated album *All Rise: A Joyful Elegy for Fats Waller*. She is a 2015 Valiante Award recipient, a 2016 inaugural artist in residence at The New Quorum, and a 2017 MANCC Forward Dialogues Fellow at FSU. Her two new opera films *Cry of the Third Eye* and *Children of the Lost* use vocal composition and film to amplify the quelled voices of youth and displaced people due to rapid gentrification in Houston’s Third Ward. Harris obtained a Bachelor of Music Degree from Mannes School of Music at The New School and a Master of Music Degree from Manhattan School of Music.

James Anthony Tyler

Hermitage Fellow James Anthony Tyler is the recipient of the third annual Horton Foote Playwriting Award and an inaugural playwright to receive a commission from Audible. His plays include *Artney Jackson* (World Premiere at Williamstown Theatre Festival; 2018 Edgerton Foundation New Play Award), *Some Old Black Man* (Berkshire Playwrights Lab at St. James Place; 59E59 Theaters), and *Dolphins and Sharks* (LAByrinth Theater Company; Finborough Theatre in London). He has an MFA in Film from Howard University and an MFA in Dramatic Writing from New York University. He is also a graduate of The Juilliard School's Lila Acheson Wallace American Playwrights Program, and he recently was the Staff Writer for the new OWN Network show *Cherish the Day* created by Ava DuVernay.