



The Hermitage Raises More Than \$225,000 at 2021 Artful Lobster – A Record-Breaking Celebration!

(November 17, 2021 – Englewood, FL / Sarasota County) The Hermitage Artist Retreat raised more than \$225,000 at the 2021 Artful Lobster luncheon on November 13. Now in its thirteenth year, the Artful Lobster raises valuable funds for the Hermitage's renowned artist residency program and community programming initiatives. Amidst limited capacity and added safety precautions, 200 guests attended the sold-out event, which took place outdoors beneath a large tent on the Hermitage's historic beachfront campus and was co-chaired by **Charlie Huisking** and **Charlotte Perret**, with Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg** as master of ceremonies. Michael's On East served a plentiful barbecue and much-heralded lobster feast.

Dorothy Lawson, a Hermitage Fellow and founding cellist and artistic director of the genre-bending string quartet ETHEL, headlined the event and riveted the audience

with her virtuosic cello performance and tales of her time at the Hermitage. She was introduced by popular radio personality **Terrance McKnight**, evening host of WQXR New York Public Radio and a member of the Hermitage National Curatorial Council. Lawson played an original song from a full-length musical experience that she and her fellow ETHEL musicians created during their Hermitage residency. To celebrate the Hermitage's free community programs and collaborations, **Raleigh Mosely II**, a friend of the Hermitage and frequent performer with the Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, powerfully delivered an original song written by musical theater composer and Hermitage Fellow **Rona Siddiqui**. Following lunch, Lawson returned to the stage to perform her interpretation of a piece by Bach, which she dedicated to the memory of the late **Susan Brainerd**, a recent Hermitage trustee who sponsored Lawson's last visit to the Hermitage earlier this year.

"When Bach composed his cello suites, nobody was writing that kind of music – it was brand new," said Terrance McKnight as he introduced Lawson and shared his perspective on the role of the Hermitage. "Legendary artists like Bach composed some of the music we have today because of a *benefactor*. This is such an important conversation to have today because the work that *you* all are doing by supporting the Hermitage is inspiring these artists."

"Great music, great art, great theater, great literature, great television – none of this happens without great *artists*," added Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Sandberg. "We are thankful to all who attended or supported this year's festivities. The generous outpouring of support for the work we are doing at the Hermitage is a

demonstration of our community's extraordinary commitment to the arts and the creative process.”

Sponsors and partners for the 2021 Artful Lobster include Gulf Coast Community Foundation, CHUBB, Key Agency, *Herald-Tribune/LOCALiQ*, and *Sarasota Magazine*. A full list of this year's sponsors, benefactors, and partners can be found at **HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster2021**.

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, dance, and more. As part of their residencies, Hermitage Fellows participate in free community programs, offering audiences in our 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.

All of the Hermitage's live programming through the end of 2021 will continue entirely outdoors with socially distanced seating. Additional events for 2022 will be announced in the coming weeks.

For more information about Hermitage artists, upcoming programs, and events, 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 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.

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:

Thursday, Nov 18 @ 5pm, "Hermitage at The Bay: Sound and Color" with Hermitage Fellows **Jared Miller, Iva Gueorguieva*** (Live at The Bay Park)

**Iva Gueorguieva's Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by Gerald & Sondra Biller*

Friday, Dec 3 @ 5pm ET, "Connections" with Hermitage Fellows **Lisa E. Harris** and **James Anthony Tyler** will (Live at the Hermitage Beach / Also via Live-Stream)

Sunday, Dec 12 @ 2pm, "Hermitage at The Bay: Muse(ic) and Poetry" with Hermitage Fellows **Francine J. Harris, Mae Yway**, and **Ishion Hutchinson** (Live at The Bay Park)

Friday, Dec 17 @ 5:30pm, "The Edge of Music," with Hermitage Fellow **Luke Stewart** (Live at Booker High School)

COMPLETE ARTIST BIOS

Dorothy Lawson

Dorothy Lawson is a founding member, Artistic Director, and cellist of ETHEL — one of America’s most adventurous string quartets. Lawson has performed with the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, the White Oak Dance Project, Philharmonia Virtuosi, the American Symphony Orchestra, the Toronto Symphony Orchestra, and numerous new music ensembles. Canadian-born, she completed degrees at the University of Toronto and the Vienna Academy, and she earned MM and DMA degrees from The Juilliard School. As a member of the ETHEL quartet, Lawson has performed on 40+ albums, premiered 225 new works, and performed in 14 countries, 45 states, and 250 cities. She has been in residence at the Hermitage Artist Retreat with ETHEL and is a proud Hermitage Fellow herself in the field of music composition.

Rona Siddiqui

Rona Siddiqui, a Hermitage Fellow who presented her original songs last season on the Hermitage Beach and at Selby Gardens, is an award-winning musical theater composer, lyricist, orchestrator, and music director based in New York City. The recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant and the Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award, Siddiqui was named one of the Broadway Women’s Fund’s “Women to Watch.” Siddiqui also music directed Hermitage Fellow Michael R. Jackson’s Pulitzer Prize-winning musical *A Strange Loop*, for which she received an Obie Award, along with the cast and creative team. RonaSiddiqui.com

Raleigh Mosely II

Raleigh Mosely II made his Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe debut in *Broadway in Black*. Originally from Miami, he currently resides in Orlando where he earned his BFA in musical theater from the University of Central Florida. Theater credits include *Jesus for the People: Our Passover Lamb*, *Spunk and the Harlem Literati*, *Hair*, *Ragtime*, and *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*.