

**Hermitage to Launch Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Initiative  
with “Soulful Strings: An Evening of Harp Music”  
featuring Celebrated Harpist Ashley Jackson, June 7**

*“Soulful Strings: An Evening of Harp Music,” presented at the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown) on Tuesday, June 7 at 8pm, is the first performance in the Hermitage’s new Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series.*

April 20, 2022 (Sarasota County, Florida) — The Hermitage Artist Retreat is pleased to announce the launch of the new **Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage**. The premiere event, “Soulful Strings: An Evening of Harp Music,” will be presented on Tuesday, June 7 at 8pm at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, featuring acclaimed harpist and returning Hermitage Fellow **Ashley Jackson**. The outdoor event is free and open to the public with a \$5/person registration fee.

The Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage offers the opportunity for a distinguished Hermitage alumni composer or musician to return for additional residency time and a special community concert. This initiative is made possible by a generous multi-year gift from the Ruby E. and Carole Crosby Family Foundation. Hermitage Trustee **Carole Crosby** initiated this gift as a special tribute to her mother Ruby, who helped to inspire her deep love of music. Ashley Jackson is a particularly fitting Hermitage alumna to launch this new initiative, as Carole Crosby is a

harpist herself, having graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music and played in both the Atlanta Symphony and Detroit Symphony.

“I am continually inspired by the Hermitage’s commitment to artists and the impact these magnificent talents are having in our community,” said Hermitage Trustee **Carole Crosby**. “Music was always incredibly important to me and to my mother, so it is an honor to celebrate her memory with this new initiative spotlighting and supporting some truly extraordinary composers and musicians.”

“We are incredibly grateful to Carole Crosby for this generous gift and her continued belief in the work we are doing,” added Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “As we look to reengage with and provide new opportunities for returning Hermitage alumni, this generous gift from Carole in honor of her mother allows us to celebrate some of the brilliant musical talents who have come to know Sarasota through their time at the Hermitage and to share their latest work with the members of our community.”

Praised for her “soulful” and “eloquent” playing (*Musical America*), Hermitage alumna and celebrated harpist **Ashley Jackson** enjoys a multifaceted career as a highly sought-after musician and collaborator in New York and beyond. As a soloist, she has performed at Lincoln Center, *Celebrate Brooklyn!*, and the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture. She has also performed with the New York Philharmonic, the Louisiana Philharmonic, the Qatar Philharmonic, and is a regular member of the Harlem Chamber Players. Jackson is currently working on her debut solo album *Ennanga*, an exploration of African-American spirituals and their influence on other forms of American musical expression. She is currently an Assistant Professor

and the Director of Undergraduate Studies for the Music Department at Hunter College. Jackson holds a Doctor of Musical Arts degree from The Juilliard School, a Master of Music degree from the Yale School of Music, and a Bachelor of Arts degree from Yale University. AshleyJacksonHarp.com

Ashley Jackson's concert and Hermitage residency are made possible through the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage. This first concert in the annual series will be presented outdoors at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota).

Hermitage programs like these are free and open to the public with a \$5/person registration fee. Due to capacity limitations and social distancing, **registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.**

**The newly announced program description:**

- **“Soulful Strings: An Evening of Harp Music,” Tuesday, June 7 @ 8pm:**  
Celebrated harpist and Hermitage Fellow **Ashley Jackson** returns to Sarasota to launch the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage – a new initiative launched this year by Carole Crosby to honor the legacy of her mother and their shared love of music. Jackson is the winner of the distinguished Theodore Presser Award, which honors musicians dedicated to artistry as well as citizenship. Jackson's work is spurred on by academic excellence and a commitment to diversifying the classical music canon and audience. Preparing to launch her first solo album, *Ennanga*, and praised by *Musical America* for her “soulful” and “eloquent” playing, this special concert will feature works from across her impressive repertoire. Ashley Jackson is the first Hermitage alumna selected to participate in the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage, and her concert will be held outdoors at Selby Gardens. *Ashley*

*Jackson's concert and Hermitage residency are made possible through the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Marie Selby Botanical Garden (entrance at 1534 Mound St, Sarasota, FL 34236)***

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### **About the Hermitage Artist Retreat:**

The Hermitage is a non-profit 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](http://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 State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture and the Florida Council on Arts and Culture (Section 286.25 Florida Statutes), as well as the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

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### **PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:**

**Thursday, Apr 21, 6pm**, "Music Around the World" with Hermitage Fellow **Kavita Shah**  
(Live at The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Sarasota)

*Presented in partnership with The John & Mable Ringling Museum of Art*

**Saturday, Apr 23, 3:30pm**, “National Water Dance: Dancing Out of Time” with Sarasota Contemporary Dance (Live on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)  
*Presented in partnership with Sarasota Contemporary Dance*

**Friday, May 6 @ 6:30pm**, “Sounding the Deep: Words and Music Inspired by Nature,” featuring works by Hermitage Fellows **Jessica Huang** and **Scott Lee** (Live on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)  
*Presented in partnership with the Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast*

**Friday, May 13 @ 6:30pm**, “A Reading with Hermitage Fellow and Tony Nominee **Bess Wohl**” (Live on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)

**Friday, May 20 @ 5pm**, “Hermitage Poet’s Corner: The Contemporary Word,” with Hermitage Fellows **DaMaris B. Hill** and **Kiryia Traber** (Live at Bookstore1, Downtown Sarasota)  
*Presented in partnership with Bookstore1*

**Thursday, May 26 @ 6pm**, “Worlds: A Part” with Hermitage Fellows **Pauchi Sasaki** and **Monica Youn** (Live at Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, Osprey)  
*Presented in partnership with Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast*

**Tuesday, June 7 @ 8pm**, “Soulful Strings: An Evening of Harp Music” with Hermitage Fellow **Ashley Jackson** (Live at Selby Gardens Downtown)  
*Made possible by the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Initiative at the Hermitage*

[HermitageArtistRetreat.org](http://HermitageArtistRetreat.org)