

MEDIA CONTACT

Hermitage Media Relations; 941-475-2098, Ext. 8;
Communications@HermitageArtistRetreat.org



AN OUTDOOR CELEBRATION!

Award-Winning Musical Theater Composer Adam Gwon and Internationally Acclaimed Folk Musician Reggie Harris to Perform at the Hermitage's 2022 Artful Lobster: An Outdoor Celebration!

Saturday, November 12, 11:30am – 2pm

Adam Gwon is a Kleban Award and Richard Rodgers Award-winning composer whose work has garnered multiple NY Times Critic's Picks and been performed by such luminaries as Audra McDonald and Brian d'Arcy James. Reggie Harris has been a leading voice in the International Folk Music Scene for over 40 years and won the 2021 Spirit of Folk Award. This popular event on the Hermitage's Manasota Key campus raises valuable funds for the Hermitage's nationally renowned artist residency program.

September 19, 2022 — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat**, now celebrating its 20th Anniversary Season, announced today that Hermitage Fellow **Adam Gwon**, an acclaimed musical theater composer whose work has been described by *The New York Times* as “funny and urbane with a sweetness that doesn’t cloy,” will headline the Hermitage’s signature fall fundraising event, “The Artful Lobster: An Outdoor

Celebration!” on Saturday, November 12th from 11:30am to 2pm at the Hermitage campus on Manasota Key (Sarasota County, Florida). Gwon is joined by **Reggie Harris**, a returning Hermitage alumnus, remarkably gifted musician and storyteller, and pillar of the international folk music scene for more than 40 years. Harris will also be presenting a community program at Booker High School as part of the “Hermitage @ Booker” series on Friday, November 4th.

Now in its 14th year, the Artful Lobster raises valuable funds for the Hermitage’s nationally renowned artist residency program, supporting the creative process of artists from around the world in the fields of music, theater, visual art, literature, dance, and more. This popular event, which takes place outdoors beneath a large tent on the Hermitage’s beachfront campus, features a lobster feast catered by Michael’s On East, in addition to live performances from renowned Hermitage Fellows. The co-chairs for the 2022 Artful Lobster are **Maryann Casey** and **Elizabeth Moore**.

A recipient of the Kleban Award, the Fred Ebb Award, the Richard Rodgers Award, and the Frederick Loewe Award, among others, Adam Gwon’s work has been performed on six continents and across the United States at venues such as Roundabout Theatre, Signature Theatre, South Coast Repertory, Carnegie Hall, the Kennedy Center, and more.

A consummate storyteller and teaching artist, Reggie Harris’ music has regularly topped the folk charts. His skill and charm deliver a message of joy, unity, tolerance, and peace through the powerful medium of live music.

(Complete bios for both artists can be found below.)

“We are incredibly excited to have Adam Gwon and Reggie Harris returning to the Hermitage to perform at this year’s Artful Lobster,” says Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “Adam and Reggie are both extraordinary talents and great friends to the Hermitage. We are thrilled that they will be joining us to celebrate our 20th Anniversary Season. The audience at this year’s Artful Lobster is in for a real treat!”

Sponsorship levels for this event range from \$1,000 to \$5,000. A limited number of single tickets will be available for \$500 each, subject to availability. Sponsorships and tickets may be purchased by contacting Hermitage Development Director Amy Wallace

at (941) 475-2098, Ext. 2. Capacity for this event is limited, so early bookings are strongly recommended.

Sponsors and partners for the 2022 Hermitage Artful Lobster include Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Herald Tribune Media Group, Key Agency, *Sarasota Magazine*, and CHUBB. A full list of this year's sponsors, benefactors, and partners can be found at **HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster**.

The Hermitage hosts artists on its Gulf Coast Manasota Key campus for multi-week residencies, where diverse and accomplished 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 innovative programs include performances, lectures, readings, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

To learn more about the Hermitage, this year's Artful Lobster, and upcoming Hermitage programs, visit **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

About the Hermitage Artist Retreat
Sarasota County, Florida
Artistic Director and CEO: Andy Sandberg

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 15 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 recently 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

Monday, September 19 @ 7pm, “Kudzu Calling,” with Hermitage Fellow **Donnetta Lavinia Grays** (Presented virtually on Zoom)

Presented in partnership with Suncoast Black Arts Collaborative

Friday, September 23 @ 5:30pm, “Scale and Beauty,” with Returning Hermitage Fellow **Anne Patterson** (Live and outdoors at Sarasota Art Museum; also available via Live-Stream)

Presented in partnership with Sarasota Art Museum

Thursday, October 6 @ 6pm, “Violin and Voice” with Returning Hermitage Fellows **Lady Jess** and **Terry Guest** (Live and outdoors at Bay Preserve in Osprey)

Presented in Partnership with Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast

Playwright and returning Hermitage Fellow Terry Guest joins this event in place of Hannah Hasan.

Friday, October 21 @ 6pm, “As the Musical Turns: A Soap Inspiration,” A Candid Conversation with Returning Hermitage Fellow **Michael R. Jackson** (Live and outdoors on the Hermitage Beach)

Friday, October 28 @ 5:30pm, “From Composition to Performance: Music Start to Finish,” with Hermitage Fellows **Nkeiru Okoye** and **David “Doc” Wallace** (Live and outdoors on the Hermitage Beach)

Wednesday, November 2 @ 6pm, “Richard Kennedy: Performance and Conversation” with Hermitage Fellow **Richard Kennedy** at The Ringling Museum’s Historic Asolo Theater

Presented in partnership with The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art

Friday, November 4 @ 5:30pm, Hermitage @ Booker Series – “Reggie Harris and the Power of Music,” with Returning Hermitage Fellow **Reggie Harris** (Live and outdoors at Booker High School)

Presented in partnership with Booker High School VPA

ARTIST BIOS

Adam Gwon

Hermitage Fellow Adam Gwon is a musical theater writer named one of "50 to Watch" by *The Dramatist* magazine and hailed "a promising newcomer to our talent-hungry musical theater" whose songs are "funny, urbane, with a sweetness that doesn't cloy" by *The New York Times*. His musicals have been produced on six continents, in more than half a dozen languages. Off-Broadway: *Scotland, PA* (Roundabout Theatre, Drama Desk Award nomination, NYT Critic's Pick), *Ordinary Days* (Roundabout Theatre; Keen Company, Drama League Award nomination, Best Revival), *Old Jews Telling Jokes* (Westside Theatre, NYT Critic's Pick); Regional: *String* (Village Theatre), *Cake Off* (Signature Theatre, Helen Hayes Award nomination; Bucks County Playhouse), *Cloudlands* (South Coast Repertory), *The Boy Detective Fails* (Signature Theatre), *Bernice Bobs Her Hair* (Lyric Theatre of Oklahoma); West End: *Ordinary Days* (Trafalgar Studios). Other projects include *The Waves in Quarantine* (a film collaboration with Lisa Peterson and Raúl Esparza), songs as a staff writer on the hit web series *Submissions Only*, and for Stephen Schwartz and John Tartaglia's *The Secret Silk* on Princess Cruise Lines. Adam is the proud recipient of the Kleban Award, the Fred Ebb Award, the Richard Rodgers Award, the Frederick Loewe Award, the Second Stage Theatre Donna Perret Rosen Award, the Weston Playhouse New Music Award, the ASCAP Harold Adamson Award, and the MAC John Wallowitch Award, as well as commissions from Roundabout Theatre Company, Playwrights Horizons, Keen Company, Signature Theatre, South Coast Repertory, the Kimmel Center, and Broadway Across America. His songs have been heard at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, the Kennedy Center, and more, performed by such luminaries as Audra McDonald, Kelli O'Hara, and Brian d'Arcy James. Recordings of Adam's work include the cast album of *Ordinary Days* (Ghostlight Records), Audra McDonald's *Go Back Home* (Nonesuch), *Artists in Residence* (Broadway Records), *The Essential Liz Callaway* (Working Girl Records), Tracy Lynn Olivera's *Because*, and *Over the Moon: The Broadway Lullaby Project* (Entertainment One). Adam has been a Fellow at the Hermitage Artist Retreat, the O'Neill Music Theater Conference, MacDowell, and the Dramatists Guild. He is a graduate of NYU's Tisch School of the Arts, and a member of ASCAP and the Dramatists Guild. He served on the Tony Awards Nominating Committee from 2015-2018, and currently sits on the Dramatists Guild Council and the Boards of Roundabout Theatre Company and Primary Stages.

Reggie Harris

Hermitage Fellow Reggie Harris is a singer-songwriter, storyteller, and world-renowned song-leader who is a powerful interpreter of the global music narrative. A passionate, engaging, inspirational entertainer and concert artist, Harris is recognized for focusing new energy on the important role of music in the discourse for inclusion and the struggle for human rights using the lessons of history as a base. Considered by many to be an expert on the music of the Underground Railroad and the Modern Civil Rights Movement, he is at home on stage as performer, lecturer, or leading discussion in seminars or in the classroom. Known for over 40 years as one-half of the eminently prominent duo, Kim & Reggie Harris, Reggie continues to crisscross the country, carrying the message of joy, unity, tolerance, and peace through the powerful medium of live music. Harris remains in high demand for concerts, schools, university residencies, community-building, festivals, and teaching workshops. A 2021 winner of both the Spirit of Folk Award from Folk Alliance International and the W.E.B. Du Bois Legacy Award, Harris is a charismatic community builder who was featured in 2020 on CNN's "Silence is Not an Option with Don Lemon." He was recently featured in *The New York Times* to discuss his familial connection as the descendant of slavery as a great-great-great grandson of confederate

General Williams Carter Wickham and his slave Bibhanna Hewlett with his white cousins. A teaching artist in the Kennedy Center's CETA program (Changing Education Through the Arts) and a fellow for the prestigious Council of Independent College lecture program, he also serves as Co-President and Director of Music Education for the Living Legacy Project, an advocacy group that sponsors Civil Rights pilgrimages throughout the South and online education seminars worldwide. His 2018 album *Ready to Go* ranked as #5 on the Folk DJ Charts and was in the top 30 on the US Folk DJ charts for much of 2018. The title cut was the #1 song for May 2018. In 2019, Reggie and Greg Greenway released *Deeper Than the Skin* in response to their challenging and insightful presentation of the same name. Reggie is currently a rotating DJ featured on *Prisms: The Sound of Color* on SiriusXM's "The Village." His April 2021 release *On Solid Ground*, the number one CD on the FolkDJ Charts for May 2021, is a collection of 13 songs compiled in response to the challenges and changes in American civic circles stirred by the COVID pandemic and years of racial and political unrest. Reggie's leadership in racial and interfaith dialogue continues to open opportunities for dialogue and courageous conversation. He is a featured artist in the "Americans Who Tell the Truth" series by Maine artist Rob Shetterly and a recipient of the 2018 Magic Penny Award for Lifetime Achievement for his impact in music from the Children's Music Network. His recordings and collaborative discography contribute to the national dialogue on history, wellness, and to opening a dialogue of courageous conversations.