

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Hermitage Announces New Programs in February and March featuring Leading Artists and Award Winners in Theater, Music, Visual Art, and Literature

These unique and engaging Hermitage programs are presented throughout Sarasota County and offer Gulf Coast audiences a rare ‘sneak peek’ into the creative process with some of the world’s leading writers, composers, playwrights, and more. Some of the newly announced artists include Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner Madeleine George (Hulu’s “Only Murders in the Building”), recipient of the Hermitage Prize in Composition at the Aspen Music Festival and School Sofia Rocha, innovative vocalist and spoken-word artist Fay Victor, and Tony Award-winning producer Tom Kirdahy.

(December 12, 2022) — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Sarasota County, Florida) today announced new programs for February and March of 2023. These events will be presented on the Hermitage’s historic beachfront campus on Manasota Key and throughout Sarasota County. Hermitage programs introduce world-renowned artists to Florida’s Gulf Coast community for candid and engaging conversations, musical performances, play readings, work-in-process showings, and educational opportunities for students and adults.

Newly announced February and March programs include continuing partnerships with ASALH (Association for the Study of African-American Life and History), Asolo Repertory Theatre, and the Town of Longboat Key, among others. New partnerships include a collaboration with Venice Symphony and the Pops Orchestra, as well as Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center. Featured artists and performers include Hermitage Major Theater Award winner **Madeleine George**, Tony and Olivier

Award-winning producer **Tom Kirdahy**, Hermitage Prize in Composition at the Aspen Music Festival and School recipient **Sofia Rocha**, multidisciplinary artist **Shannon Finnegan**, acclaimed pianist and composer **Conrad Tao**, acclaimed author **Daniel Gumbiner**, award-winning theater maker **Don Nguyen**, groundbreaking jazz vocalist **Fay Victor**, playwright and screenwriter **Stacey Rose**, percussionist **Lesley Mok**, performer and teaching artist **Tamara Anderson**, and internationally exhibited visual artist **B. Ingrid Olson**.

The aforementioned artists coming in February and March join previously announced Hermitage programs in December and January. The final program of 2022, “Notes: On Writing and Music,” features author **Chigozie Obioma**, one of only a few novelists to have all their works shortlisted for the Booker Prize in Fiction, alongside composer, electronic instrument creator, and percussionist **Levy Lorenzo**. This event will be on Thursday, December 15 at 5pm on the Hermitage Beach, presented in partnership with the Johann Fust Library Foundation.

The Hermitage’s 20th Anniversary Season continues in January with programs spanning genre and presented throughout Sarasota County as well as online. “Distinction and Unity,” a multidisciplinary event featuring genre-bending author **DaMaris B. Hill**, composer and performer **Molly Joyce**, and visual artist **Kenneth Tam** takes place on the Hermitage Beach on Friday, January 6 at 5pm. On Thursday, January 12 at 5pm, “Violin and Voice” unites violinist, arts leader, and frequent Beyoncé collaborator **Lady Jess** with the poignant and humorous words of award-winning playwright **Terry Guest**, previously seen by Sarasota audiences at Urbanite Theater and as part of the “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” series. The Hermitage returns to Bookstore1 in Sarasota on Friday, January 20 at 6pm for “Man V. Nature: The Art of the Story Collection,” featuring Hermitage Fellow and author **Diane Cook** whose debut publication garnered critical acclaim and is described by *goodreads* as having “perfect rhythm and unyielding brutality.” Playwright and theater director **Kareem Fahmy** kicks off the Hermitage’s 2023 “Artists and Thinkers” series with “Kareem Fahmy’s Distinct Society,” presented virtually on Monday, January 23 at 5pm ET, only a few days before the play’s world premiere production. Lastly in January, “Shariffa Ali: Roots, Routes, and Rhythm” features Hermitage Major Theater Award

Winner **Shariffa Ali** with an update on her in-process commission; this event is part of the “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” series and will be presented on Thursday, January 26 at 5pm.

The newly announced programs in February and March begin with “The Art of Producing,” part of the Hermitage “Artists and Thinkers” series and the third in a cycle of popular conversations with Tony and Olivier Award-winning producer **Tom Kirdahy**. Kirdahy is great champion of new work and a friend to the Hermitage. This event is presented in collaboration with the Town of Longboat Key, where Mr. Kirdahy resides part of the year, as well as Asolo Repertory Theater where his work was recently seen on stage with *Hood: A Robinhood Musical*. This candid conversation between Kirdahy and fellow Tony Award winner **Andy Sandberg**, Artistic Director and CEO of the Hermitage, will offer insight into the often-hidden role a producer plays in bringing shows to life on Broadway, Off-Broadway, and London’s West End, as well as the touring and regional market. Presented at Longboat Key’s Bayfront Park as the sun sets over Sarasota Bay on Friday, February 3 at 5pm.

“Mastering the Monologue,” with theater maker **Don Nguyen**, is a masterclass on the often-tricky task of writing and performing a monologue. Presented in collaboration with New College of Florida on Friday, February 17 at 5pm, this intimate engagement at the New College campus in Sarasota provides a rare opportunity to observe both the performance of theatrical text and a dissection of its inner workings. A recipient of the New York Stage and Film Founder’s Award, Don Nguyen is a multifaceted artist whose plays are “intriguing and empathetic” (*Seattle Times*) with “a genuine sweetness” (*The New York Times*).

“Jazz and Theater: Keeping the Beat” reunites the Hermitage with the Manasota chapter of ASALH at the Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center to present Jazz vocalist **Fay Victor** and playwright **Stacey Rose**. Presented at Fogartyville’s hybrid indoor-outdoor space on Thursday February 23 at 5pm, this program combines the unparalleled stylings of Fay Victor with the biting wit of Stacey Rose. With her scat stylings recognized by *The New York Times* as “her own hybrid of song and spoken word,” Fay Victor will share improvisatory work and speak about her career as a musical artist breaking boundaries. With a focus on “life as the other,” playwright and

screenwriter Stacey Rose's work has been seen on stages and screens across the United States including Barrington Stage, Rattlestick Playwrights Theater in New York, and Fox's *9-1-1*.

On Thursday, March 2 at 5:30pm, Tamara Anderson, Lesley Mok, and B. Ingrid Olson put the Hermitage's multidisciplinary mission on display with "Tell and Show: Art and Performance Expressing Identity." Working across different mediums but all using material from their own lives to inform the substance of their craft, each will share work and discuss their artistic process. **Tamara Anderson** has been seen on stage and screen and celebrated for her charm, humor, and impressive vocals. **Lesley Mok's** innovative and dynamic compositions have been performed by such leading ensembles as the International Contemporary Ensemble, Metropolis Ensemble, and JACK Quartet. Visual artist **B. Ingrid Olson's** works have been exhibited around the world including the MoMa in New York, Harvard's Carpenter Center, the Aspen Art Museum, and i8 Gallery in Reykjavík.

Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner **Madeleine George** has a gift for delivering a powerful message in a joyous package, which she will speak about with Hermitage audiences in "Comedy and Community" on Friday, March 10 at 5:30pm. Like her work on Hulu's hit television series "**Only Murders in the Building**," or her plays *Hurricane Diane* and the Pulitzer Prize finalist *The (Curious Case of the) Watson Intelligence*, her commission-in-process promises to tackle cultural and systemic mores all in the high stakes world of amateur bowling. With her unique blend of comedy and heart, George will share prior work and discuss her goals for the new HMTA commission, as well as how she hopes it will help to build and enhance a sense of community.

Sofía Rocha, the 2022 recipient of the Hermitage Prize in Composition presented at the Aspen Music Festival and School, shares her original musical compositions as part of the Hermitage "Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" series in "Making Musical Waves." Rocha, no stranger to Florida having grown up in Naples, has studied and presented work across the United States with noted ensembles such as JACK Quartet, DeCoda, loadbang, and Brentano String Quartet, among others. For this musical program on Thursday, March 16 at 6:30pm, the Hermitage is partnering with

the Venice Symphony and the Pops Orchestra to offer live performances of this next-generation composer's nuanced and evocative work, all with unique insights from the creator, set against the backdrop of the botanical gardens. This season of "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" is sponsored in part by *Scene Magazine*.

(Full program details for all events are provided below.)

Nearly all Hermitage programs are free and open to the public (with a \$5/person registration fee), offering Gulf Coast audiences a rare chance to engage and interact with some of the world's leading talent. Due to capacity limitations and social distancing, **registration is required** at **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

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 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.

See below for complete program details and artist bios.

For more information about the Hermitage and upcoming programs, or to support the Hermitage's hurricane repair efforts, visit **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

FULL PROGRAM DETAILS

Previously announced program descriptions:

- **"Notes: On Writing and Music" featuring Hermitage Fellows Chigozie Obioma and Levy Lorenzo – Thursday, December 15th @ 5pm on the Hermitage Beach:** Featuring two artists who both bring an international perspective, the program spans literature and music. Nigerian-born **Chigozie**

Obioma, whose two novels *The Fisherman* and *An Orchestra of Minorities* were both shortlisted for the Booker Prize in Fiction, reads selections of his work and discusses his creative process. He is joined by Filipino-American musician, instrument designer, and returning Hermitage Fellow **Levy Lorenzo**, whose quirky and innovative work has been described as “a potent force on the side of exuberance, pleasure and awe of virtuosity” by *The New York Times*. Join these two incredible artists as the sun goes down on the Hermitage Beach. *Presented in partnership with The Johann Fust Library Foundation. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd, Englewood, FL 34223*

- **“Distinction and Unity” featuring Hermitage Fellows DaMaris B. Hill, Molly Joyce, and Kenneth Tam – Friday, January 6th @ 5pm on the Hermitage Beach:** Distinction is a term that is used to both elevate as well as separate. Join three distinguished Hermitage Fellows spanning literature, music, and visual art, each working through different styles and life experiences, each achieving recognition for the inventive work they create. Author **DaMaris B. Hill**’s latest work has been called “urgent” and “luminous” by *Publisher’s Weekly*. **Molly Joyce** is a composer and performer whose work focuses on disability as a creative source; she has been described as one of the “most versatile, prolific, and intriguing composers working under the vast new-music dome” by *The Washington Post*. Visual artist **Kenneth Tam**’s work focuses on ritual and reframing masculinity with a self-described “strain of absurdity and awkward humor.” **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd, Englewood, FL 34223**
- **“Violin and Voice” featuring Hermitage Fellows Lady Jess and Terry Guest – Thursday, January 12th @ 5pm on the Hermitage Beach:** Celebrated violinist, arts leader, and advocate **Lady Jess** combines talents with award-winning playwright **Terry Guest** in this dynamic program. This incredible duo will share words and music inspired by their experiences living and making work in the United States and around the world. Presented on the Hermitage Beach as the sun sets, don’t miss the chance to meet these two remarkable artists as they create the works of tomorrow. *Presented in Partnership with Sarasota Magazine and Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd, Englewood, FL 34223*
- **“Man V. Nature: The Art of the Story Collection” featuring Hermitage Fellow Diane Cook – Friday, January 20th @ 6pm at Bookstore1 (Downtown Sarasota):** Award-winning author and Hermitage Fellow **Diane Cook**’s debut work *Man V. Nature* is a collection of stories “told with perfect rhythm and unyielding brutality” (*goodreads*). Hear the creator of this remarkable work read selections from the text and discuss the intricacies of weaving a story collection around a theme. If you’d like to read the book in advance, contact Bookstore1

about joining their reading group. *Presented in Partnership with Bookstore1 (Downtown Sarasota). **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). 117 S Pineapple Ave, Sarasota, FL 34236*

- **VIRTUAL EVENT: “Artists and Thinkers Series: Kareem Fahmy’s Distinct Society” featuring Hermitage Fellow Kareem Fahmy – Monday, January 23rd @ 5pm ET Presented on Zoom:** In Hermitage Fellow **Kareem Fahmy’s** play *A Distinct Society*, a sleepy library that straddles the U.S.-Canada border becomes an unlikely crucible for five people from around the world when families separated by the “Muslim ban” begin using the library as a meeting place. Having its world premiere at Pioneer Theater in Salt Lake City only a few days after this event, hear from the playwright about the origins of the story, the literary and cultural influences at play, and what this moment in history has to tell us about our present. Moderated by Hermitage Programs Manager James Monaghan, this Zoom conversation kicks off this season’s Hermitage “Artists and Thinkers” series, presented online. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/household registration fee).
- **Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens Series – “Shariffa Ali: Roots, Routes, and Rhythm” featuring 2022 Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner Shariffa Ali – Thursday, January 26th @ 5pm at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota):** 2022 Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner **Shariffa Ali** shares her latest thinking on her new Hermitage commission in development. In collaboration with her longtime friend and South African-born vocalist **Vuyo Sotashe**, her project centers on small-town South Africa where a middle school choir, their principal, and their parents conspire to disguise the town’s most beloved singer as a girl in order to have him sing as a female soloist in a national competition. Learn about the origin for this in-progress commission, hear text and songs influencing the story, and get to know the theater-makers behind it in this next exciting installment of the “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” series. *The Hermitage Major Theater Award and Shariffa Ali’s residency is made possible with generous support from Flora Major and the Kutya Major Foundation.* **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **1534 Mound St., Sarasota, FL 34236.**

Newly announced program descriptions:

- **Artists and Thinkers Series “The Art of Producing: A Conversation with Tony Award-winning Producer Tom Kirdahy” – Friday, February 3rd @ 5pm at Longboat Key’s Bayfront Park:** Tony and Olivier Award-winning producer **Tom Kirdahy** is a champion of new work, as well as reimagining classics to make them vital for today’s audience. Immersed in the world of Broadway, Off-Broadway, London’s West End, and the touring market, Kirdahy is also immersed in Sarasota where he finds inspiration from the beach between projects. Join Hermitage Artistic Director and fellow Tony Award winner Andy Sandberg for the next installment of this candid conversation series that takes an in-depth look at

the forces shaping the theater as we know it. *Presented in Partnership with the Town of Longboat Key and Asolo Repertory Theatre. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). 4052 Gulf of Mexico Drive, Longboat Key, FL 34228*

- **“Mastering the Monologue” featuring Hermitage Fellow Don Nguyen – Friday, February 17th @ 5pm at New College of Florida:** One of the trickiest formats to get ‘right’ in performance or on the page, the monologue reveals individual character in an immediate and intimate manner. Come experience the process from the creative and audience sides, as celebrated playwright and theater-maker **Don Nguyen** discusses the process of writing and shares examples of the form. A recipient of the New York Stage and Film Founder’s Award, Don is a multidisciplinary artist whose plays are intriguing and empathetic with a genuine sweetness. Come hear the unique voice of this creator as the sun sets over the Hermitage beach. *Presented in Partnership with New College of Florida. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). 5800 Bay Shore Rd, Sarasota, FL 34243*
- **“Jazz and Theater: Keeping the Beat” featuring Hermitage Fellows Fay Victor and Stacey Rose – Thursday, February 23rd @ 5pm with ASALH at Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center (Downtown Sarasota):** Known for her improvisational prowess, jazz vocalist and spoken-word storyteller **Fay Victor** joins playwright **Stacey Rose**’s biting wit and keen observation in this musical and theatrical experience, presented in partnership with **ASALH**. Rose is a provocative voice at the forefront of celebrating and exploring the Black experience. Victor is considered a pioneer in her field, with The New York Times describing her unique hybrid of spoken word and singing as the “scat style for today’s avant-garde.” Hear work from these innovative Hermitage Fellows and gain insight into their creative process. *Presented in Partnership with ASALH at Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center (Downtown Sarasota). **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). 525 Kumquat Ct, Sarasota, FL 34236*
- **“Tell and Show: Art and Performance Expressing Identity” featuring Hermitage Fellows Tamara Anderson, Lesley Mok, and B. Ingrid Olson – Thursday, March 2nd @ 5:30pm on the Hermitage Beach:** For any artist, their lived experience forms an integral part of the work they create; from childhood exploits to difficult decisions as an adult to the culture we breathe in everyday, these threads weave their way into the fabric of work. Sometimes subtly and sometimes overtly, these three incredible artists use their skills to transform everyday experiences into moving and thought provoking works of art. **Tamara Anderson** has been seen on stage and screen winning accolades with “intoxicating charm, infectious humor, and a fabulous voice.” **Lesley Mok**’s innovative and dynamic compositions have been performed by such leading ensembles as the International Contemporary Ensemble, Metropolis Ensemble, and JACK Quartet. **B. Ingrid Olson**’s works have been exhibited around the

world including the MoMa in New York, Harvard's Carpenter Center, the Aspen Art Museum, and i8 Gallery in Reykjavík. Hear from these remarkable artists as they talk process and share work on the Hermitage beach. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd, Englewood, FL 34223**

- **“Comedy and Community” featuring Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner Madeleine George – Friday, March 10th @ 5:30pm on the Hermitage Beach: Madeleine George** is one of the first recipients of the **Hermitage Major Theater Award**, a \$35,000 national commission presented by the Hermitage to create an original work of theater. A writer for Hulu's hit series **“Only Murders in the Building”** (starring Steve Martin, Martin Short, and Selena Gomez), Madeleine is working on her newest play at the Hermitage as a result of her HMTA commission. A Pulitzer Prize finalist for her work *The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence*, her award-winning works of theater are funny and infinitely human, formally inventive and smartly observed. Sometimes absurd and always deeply felt, works like the New York Theater Workshop production of *Hurricane Diane* bring the Greek goddess to modern day New Jersey while skewering passivity towards climate change. Come hear what is next for this brilliant writer and what she has planned for her Hermitage Major Theater Award commission. *Made possible with generous support from the Kutya Major Foundation.* **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd, Englewood, FL 34223**
- **“Sofía Rocha: Making Musical Waves” featuring the 2022 Hermitage Prize in Composition winner Sofia Rocha – Thursday, March 16th @ 6:30pm at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota):** Now in its tenth year, the **Hermitage Prize in Composition** is presented annually in collaboration with the **Aspen Music Festival and School**. This distinguished honor awards the gift of time, space, and support to an exceptional student in Aspen's world renowned composition program. This year's winner, **Sofía Rocha**, has deep ties to the Gulf Coast of Florida, having grown up in Naples, and writes music of uncompromising emotional intensity. Join us for a “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” to hear from this inventive next-generation composer as she contextualizes selections of her work being performed by the Pops Orchestra of Bradenton and Sarasota and the Venice Symphony. *Presented in Partnership with the Pops Orchestra and Venice Symphony at Selby Gardens, sponsored in part by Scene Magazine (Downtown Sarasota).* **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236**

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 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 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 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.

ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:

Thursday, December 15th @ 5pm, "Notes: On Writing and Music," with Hermitage Fellows **Chigozie Obioma** and **Levy Lorenzo** (Live and outdoors on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)

Presented in partnership with the Johann Fust Library Foundation

Friday, January 6th @ 5pm, "Distinction and Unity," with Hermitage Fellows **DaMaris B. Hill**, **Molly Joyce** and **Kenneth Tam** (Live and outdoors on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)

Thursday, January 12th @ 5pm, "Violin and Voice," with Hermitage Fellows **Lady Jess** and **Terry Guest** (Live and outdoors on the Hermitage Beach, Manasota Key)

Presented in partnership with Sarasota Magazine and Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast

Friday, January 20th @ 6pm, "Man V. Nature: The Art of the Story Collection," with Hermitage Fellow **Diane Cook** (Live and indoors at Bookstore1, Downtown Sarasota)

Presented in partnership with Bookstore1

Monday, January 23rd @ 5pm ET, Hermitage "Artists and Thinkers Series: Kareem Fahmy's Distinct Society," with Hermitage Fellow **Kareem Fahmy** (Presented Live on **Zoom**)

Presented with support from Florida Humanities

Thursday, January 26th @ 5pm, “Shariffa Ali: Roots, Routes, and Rhythm,” with 2022 Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner **Shariffa Ali** (Live and outdoors at Marie Selby Gardens, Downtown Sarasota Campus)

Presented in partnership with the Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and the Kutya Major Foundation

Friday, February 3rd @ 5pm, Artists and Thinkers Series “The Art of Producing,” with Tony and Olivier Award Winner **Tom Kirdahy** (Live and outdoors at Longboat Key’s Bayfront Park)

Presented in partnership with the Town of Longboat Key and Asolo Repertory Theatre

Friday, February 17th @ 5pm, “Mastering the Monologue,” with Hermitage Fellow **Don Nguyen** (New College of Florida, Black Box Theater)

Presented in partnership with New College of Florida

Thursday, February 23rd @ 5pm, “Jazz and Theater: Keeping the Beat,” with Hermitage Fellows **Fay Victor** and **Stacey Rose** (Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center)

Presented in partnership with ASALH at Fogartyville Community Media and Arts Center

Thursday, March 2nd @ 5:30pm, “Tell and Show: Art and Performance Expressing Identity,” with Hermitage Fellows **Tamara Anderson**, **Lesley Mok** and **B. Ingrid Olson** (Hermitage Beach)

Friday, March 10th @ 5:30pm, “Comedy and Community,” with Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner **Madeleine George** (Hermitage Beach)

Presented with generous support from the Kutya Major Foundation

Thursday, March 16th @ 6:30pm, “Sofía Rocha: Making Musical Waves,” with Hermitage Prize in Composition Winner **Sofía Rocha** (Marie Selby Botanical Garden, Downton Sarasota)

Presented in partnership with the Venice Symphony and the Pops Orchestra

COMPLETE ARTIST BIOS

(in chronological order of upcoming programs)

Chigozie Obioma

Hermitage Fellow **Chigozie Obioma** was born in Akure, Nigeria. His two novels, *The Fishermen* (2015) and *An Orchestra of Minorities* (2019), were shortlisted for The Booker Prize, making him one of only two novelists to be shortlisted for multiple works. They have won awards including the inaugural FT/Oppenheimer Award for Fiction, the NAACP Image Award and the LA Times Book Prize, and been nominated for many others. His

books have been translated into more than 29 languages. *The Fishermen* was adapted into an award-winning stage play by Gbolahan Obisesan that played in the UK and South Africa between 2018-2019. He was named one of Foreign Policy's "100 Leading Global Thinkers of 2015." His works have been published in *The Guardian*, *VQR*, *Paris Review*, *New York Times*, and elsewhere. He is the James E. Ryan Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln and divides his time between the US and Nigeria. ChigozieObioma.com

Levy Lorenzo

Born in Bucharest, Filipino-American **Levy Marcel Ingles Lorenzo, Jr.** works at the intersection of music, art, and technology. On an international scale, his body of work spans custom electronics design, sound engineering, instrument building, installation art, free improvisation, and classical percussion. With a primary focus on inventing new instruments, he prototypes, composes, and performs new electronic music. Lorenzo's work has been featured at MoMA PS1, MIT Media Lab, STEIM, pitchfork.com, BBC, Burning Man, and *The New York Times* which named him an "electronics wizard." A core member of the acclaimed International Contemporary Ensemble, he fulfills multiple roles as sound designer, electronics performer, and percussionist. Other performance engagements include Claire Chase's *Density 2036* project, and the Peter Evans Ensemble. Dr. Lorenzo holds a position as Assistant Professor of Creative Technologies at The New School, College of Performing Arts. LevyLorenzo.com

DaMaris B. Hill

Returning Hermitage Fellow **DaMaris B. Hill** is the author of *A Bound Woman Is a Dangerous Thing: The Incarceration of African-American Women from Harriet Tubman to Sandra Bland* (2020 NAACP Image Award nominee for Outstanding Literary Work in Poetry), *The Fluid Boundaries of Suffrage and Jim Crow: Staking Claims in the American Heartland*, Vi-zə-bəl Teks-chərs (Visible Textures). Hill is inspired by the anxieties of our contemporary existence, complicated by fears that certain linear narratives of history fail to be inclusive. "I belong to a generation of people who do not fear death, but are afraid that we may be forgotten," she states. Driven by a keen interest in the work of Toni Morrison and theories regarding 'rememory' as a philosophy and aesthetic practice, Hill uses digital material and critical fabulation research methods to write about "America" and geographic place. Similar to her creative process, Hill's scholarly research is interdisciplinary. Hill is an Associate Professor of Creative Writing at the University of Kentucky. For more information: DaMarisHill.com

Molly Joyce

Hermitage Fellow **Molly Joyce** has been hailed as one of the "most versatile, prolific, and intriguing composers working under the vast new-music dome" by *The Washington Post*. Her work is concerned with disability as a creative source. She has an impaired left hand from a previous car accident, and the primary vehicle in her pursuit is her electric vintage toy organ, an instrument she bought on eBay which engages her disability on a compositional and performative level. Molly's creative projects have been presented and commissioned by Carnegie Hall, TEDxMidAtlantic, Hirshhorn Museum and Sculpture Garden, Bang on a Can Marathon, Danspace Project, Americans for the Arts, National

Sawdust, Gaudeamus Muziekweek, National Gallery of Art, Classical:NEXT, and in Pitchfork, Red Bull Radio, and WNYC's New Sounds. She is a graduate of Juilliard, Royal Conservatory in The Hague, Yale, and alumnus of the YoungArts Foundation. She holds an Advanced Certificate in Disability Studies from City University of New York, and is a doctoral student at the University of Virginia in Composition and Computer Technologies. She has served on the composition faculties of New York University, Wagner College, and Berklee Online.

Kenneth Tam

Hermitage Fellow **Kenneth Tam** works in video, sculpture, installation, and photography, using the male body as a starting point for discussions about performance, physical intimacy and private ritual. Tam received his BFA from the Cooper Union. He has had solo exhibitions at the Minneapolis Institute of Art; MIT List Center for Visual Arts; the Visual Arts Center at UT Austin, Commonwealth and Council, LA; Night Gallery, LA; Queens Museum, NY and at the ICA LA. Tam has participated in group shows at 47 Canal, NY; Hollybush Gardens, London; the Hammer Museum, LA; InPractice at SculptureCenter, Queens, The Shed's Open Call. He has participated in residencies including Artist Lab at 18th Street Arts Center; LMCC Workspace; The Core Residency Program at The Museum of Fine Arts, Houston; Pioneer Works; and at The Kitchen. Tam is a Lecturer at Princeton University, Visiting Lecturer at Harvard University and film/video faculty at Bard MFA. He was born in and currently lives in Queens, NY.

Lady Jess

Hermitage Fellow **Lady Jess** performs regularly in New York City and Los Angeles. She is the Artistic Director and lead violinist of the Urban Playground Chamber Orchestra (UPCO) in New York, leads strings under the baton of Darin Atwater's Soulful Symphony in Baltimore, and is a regular session musician in Los Angeles. She is a soloing member of Beyoncé Knowles-Carter's band and has toured with the superstar. Artist credits include collaborations with Stevie Wonder, The Roots, J.Lo, Max Richter, Alicia Keys, Imagine Dragons, Hans Zimmer, Diana Ross, Spike Lee, Miley Cyrus, Stewart Copeland, Terence Blanchard, Jay Z, Solange, and more. TV credits include: *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon* (with The Roots), *Saturday Night Live*, and more. Recent projects include the Emmy-nominated documentary *Homecoming* with accompanying live album, the "On The Run II Tour" with Beyoncé and Jay-Z, the Grammy-nominated joint album *Everything Is Love*, and the soundtrack to Disney's re-released *The Lion King* with Hans Zimmer. As a session musician in Los Angeles, she can also be heard on the soundtrack of *Charlie's Angels, It II*, and more. While in LA, Lady Jess also performs with the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, most recently for performances of Disney's *The Little Mermaid* and Disney Pixar's *Coco Live*. In 2021, she served as contractor and concertmaster for the Academy Award-winning film *Judas and the Black Messiah*. For a complete Bio: LadyJessMusic.com

Terry Guest

Hermitage Fellow **Terry Guest** is a Chicago-based playwright, actor, and teaching artist whose works include *A Ghost in Satin* (Williamstown Theatre Festival), *The Magnolia Ballet* (2022-2023 rolling world premieres), *Marie Antionette and the Magical Negros*,

Andy Warhol Presents: The Cocaine Play, Ghost Town (Chicago Children's Theatre), and *At the Wake of a Dead Drag Queen* (The Story Theatre), which also played a critically acclaimed run in Sarasota at Urbanite Theatre last season. His latest play is in development at the Goodman Theater. Follow Terry on Instagram @TerryExplainsItAll or at TerryCGuest.com

Diane Cook

Hermitage Fellow **Diane Cook** is the author of the novel *The New Wilderness*, shortlisted for the 2020 Booker Prize, and the story collection *Man V. Nature*, a finalist for the Guardian First Book Award, the Believer Book Award, the PEN/Hemingway award, and the *Los Angeles Times* Award for First Fiction. She is a former producer for the radio show *This American Life*. She lives in Brooklyn, New York with her family.

Kareem Fahmy

Hermitage Fellow **Kareem Fahmy** is a Canadian-born playwright and director of Egyptian descent and was a 20-21 TCG Rising Leader of Color. His plays, which include *American Fast, A Distinct Society, The Triumphant, Pareidolia, The In-Between*, and an adaptation of the acclaimed Egyptian novel *The Yacoubian Building*, have been developed at the Atlantic Theatre Company, New York Stage & Film, Oregon Contemporary Theatre, Capital Repertory Theatre, TheatreWorks Silicon Valley, Northlight Theatre, Target Margin Theater, The Lark, Fault Line Theater, and Noor Theater. He has directed and developed new plays at theaters around the country, including MCC, Ensemble Studio Theatre, The New Group, New Dramatists, The Civilians, Geva Theatre, Pioneer Theatre, Portland Stage, Silk Road Rising, San Diego Rep, and Berkeley Rep. Fellowships/Residencies: Sundance Theatre Lab, Oregon Shakespeare Festival (Phil Killian Directing Fellow), The O'Neill (National Directors Fellow), Second Stage (Van Lier Directing Fellow), Soho Rep (Writer/Director Lab), Lincoln Center (Directors Lab), New York Theater Workshop (Emerging Artist Fellow & Usual Suspect). Kareem is co-founder of the Middle Eastern American Writers Lab at The Lark and of Maia Directors, a consulting group for organizations and artists engaging with stories from the Middle East. MFA in Theatre Directing: Columbia University.

Shariffa Ali

Shariffa Chelimo Ali, born in Kenya and raised in South Africa, is an international theater maker, creative leader, director, and academic committed to advancing radical change through the power of art and activism. As a filmmaker, Ali's works have been featured at acclaimed film/VR festivals and institutions throughout the world, including Sundance Film Festival (USA); Zeitz Museum of Contemporary African Art (South Africa); Brooklyn Film Festival (USA); Pan African Film Festival (USA); Electric Africa VR festival (South Africa) and DOK Neuland (Germany). As a theater artist and academic, Ali has taught at NYU, Brooklyn College, Yale University, and Princeton University. Past theater productions include *Eclipsed, Detroit '67, Intimate Apparel, We Are Proud to Present*, and an original new musical called *We Were Everywhere*. In 2022, Ali was named Elizabeth M. Swayzee Artist-in-Residence at Miami University, where she curated the inaugural Black Roots Festival in the spring of 2022.

Tom Kirdahy

Tom Kirdahy is a Tony and Olivier Award-winning producer whose projects have spanned Broadway, Off-Broadway, and the West End, as well as national and international tours. Select New York and London credits include: *Hadestown* (8 Tony Awards, including Best New Musical), *The Inheritance* (Tony Award for Best Play; 11 Tony nominations), *The Piano Lesson*, *Little Shop of Horrors* (Drama Desk Award, Best Musical Revival), Terrence McNally's *Frankie and Johnny in the Clair de Lune* (2 Tony nominations, including Best Revival). Additional Tony nominations: *The Visit*, *Mothers and Sons*, *After Midnight*, *Ragtime*, and *Master Class*. He is the recipient of the Robert Whitehead Award for Outstanding Achievement in Commercial Theater Producing. Kirdahy serves on the Broadway League Board of Governors and the Board of Trustees of Broadway Cares/Equity Fights AIDS. As an attorney, he spent nearly two decades providing free legal services to people living with HIV/AIDS and served for many years on the Executive Committee of the NYC LGBT Center. Graduate Studies: New York University School of Law, NYU CAS. For more information: TomKirdahyProductions.com

Don Nguyen

Hermitage Fellow and playwright **Don Nguyen** was born in Vietnam, grew up in Nebraska, and currently lives in NYC. Full-length plays include *The Supreme Leader* (Dallas Theater Center), *Hello, from the Children of Earth* (The Playwrights Realm), *Red Flamboyant* (Firebone Theatre), *Sound* (Azeitrope/ACT), *The Commencement of William Tan* (Yale Cabaret), *The Man from Saigon* (A.C.T New Strands Festival), and *The World is not Silent* (Alley All New Festival / NYSAF 2022). Recipient of the 2015 GAP Prize from the Aurora Theatre and a NYSAF Founder's Award. Finalist for The O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, The Princess Grace Award, and The Woodward International Playwriting Prize. Nominations include: the Laurents/Hatcher Award and the L. Arnold Weissberger Award. Don was a member of the Ma-Yi Writers Lab, the Public Theater's inaugural Emerging Writers Group, The Civilians inaugural R&D Group, and a frequent volunteer at the 52nd Street Project. For more information: TheNuge.com

Stacey Rose

Playwright and Hermitage Fellow **Stacey Rose** is a Charlotte-based, award-winning, nationally produced playwright. Her work celebrates and explores Blackness, Black identity, body politics, and the dilemma of life as the "other." Stacey has held fellowships/residencies with the Arts & Science Council, Dramatists Guild, Playwrights' Center, Sundance Theatre Lab, The Goodman Theatre, The Civilians, Toft Lake Center, and now the Hermitage Artist Retreat. Her work has been presented at the Fire This Time Festival, The Lark, The Amoralists Theatre Company, Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre, National Black Theatre, Pillsbury House Theater, Barrington Stage, and Kansas City Rep. Stacey's plays *America v. 2.1*, *As Is*, and *Legacy Land* were featured on the Kilroy's List. Stacey is a recipient of a 2019 Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Women's Commissioning Grant in partnership with Rattlestick Playwrights Theatre and an Alfred P. Sloan foundation commission in partnership with Manhattan Theatre Club. She currently writes for *9-1-1* on Fox. Along with director Martin Damien Wilkins, Stacey co-founded the Queen City New Play Initiative to support local and southern playwrights in the creation of new work for the stage.

Fay Victor

Hermitage Fellow, jazz vocalist, and spoken word storyteller **Fay Victor** is a sound artist, composer, educator. “She’s essentially invented her own hybrid of song and spoken word, a scat style for today’s avant-garde,” - *The New York Times*. Fay Victor uses performance, improvisation, and composition to examine representations of modern life and blackness. Based in Brooklyn, NY, Fay’s ‘everything is everything’ creative aesthetic permeates her working approach to the vocal instrument. Having released eleven critically acclaimed albums as a leader, including her latest release, “*We’ve Had Enough!*” with her improvising quartet SoundNoiseFUNK (ESP-Disk) in October 2020 and having performed with luminaries such as Gary Bartz, Archie Schepp, Nicole Mitchell, Randy Weston, Roswell Rudd and Moor Mother, Victor has shown the through line of her unique vocal force and expansion. An innovative educator, Victor is on the faculty of the College of Performing Arts at the New School, where she teaches interdisciplinary practices and Vocal Performance, and at the ROC Nation School for Sports, Music and Entertainment at Long Island University, where she runs a private vocal studio. Website: FayVictor.com Follow Fay Victor @freesongsinger on IG, FB, Twitter

Tamara Anderson

Hermitage Fellow **Tamara Della Anderson** is a multi-faceted actor, singer, writer, and producer. She has been featured in musicals and plays across the United States and on television and film in *The Blacklist* and *Unbreakable Kimmy Schmidt*, among others. She is on the advisory committee of the National Teaching Artists Guild, and her production company, the Gumbo Lab, is a space for BIPOC artists to work on new projects. Check out her latest film *Not Okay* on Hulu!

B. Ingrid Olson

B. Ingrid Olson, born in Denver, Colorado, currently lives and works in Chicago, Illinois. In 2022, Olson had concurrent solo exhibitions, “History Mother” and “Little Sister,” at the Carpenter Center for the Visual Arts at Harvard University in Cambridge, Massachusetts. Recent solo and two-person exhibitions include “Fingered Eyed,” i8 Gallery, Reykjavík (2019); “Forehead and Brain,” Albright-Knox Art Gallery, Buffalo, New York (2018); “Klein / Olson, The Renaissance Society,” Chicago, Illinois (2017). Select group exhibitions include “The Inconstant World,” Institute of Contemporary Art Los Angeles, Los Angeles, California (2021); “Dependent Objects,” The Museum of Contemporary Art, Chicago, Illinois (2021); “Being: New Photography 2018,” The Museum of Modern Art, New York, New York (2018); and “Lost Without Your Rhythm,” Aspen Art Museum, Aspen, Colorado (2018). Olson graduated with a BFA in 2010 from the School of the Art Institute of Chicago.

Lesley Mok

Hermitage Fellow **Lesley Mok** is a drummer, composer, and improviser based in Brooklyn, NY. Interested in the ways social conditions shape our beings, Lesley’s work focuses on transposing, augmenting, and overacting humanness to explore ideas about normalcy, alienness, and privilege. She likes to write in a way that considers the whole expressive range of each instrument, often utilizing extreme ranges and dynamic timbres

in her writing as a framework for individuality and personal expression. Her ongoing explorations with composition and improvisation are most notably documented in her nine-piece improvising chamber ensemble, The Living Collection. Lesley's work has been recognized by the ASCAP Foundation and the Asian American Arts Alliance, and has been performed by International Contemporary Ensemble, Metropolis Ensemble, and JACK Quartet. She has collaborated with Tomeka Reid, Fay Victor, William Parker, Cory Smythe, Jen Shyu, Sara Serpa, Elias Stemeseder, David Leon, Anna Webber, Adam O'Farrill, and Edi Kwon.

Madeleine George

Madeleine George is the recipient of the Hermitage Major Theater Award. Her plays include *Hurricane Diane* (Obie Award), *The (curious case of the) Watson Intelligence* (Pulitzer Prize finalist; Outer Critics Circle John Gassner Award), *Seven Homeless Mammoths Wander New England* (Susan Smith Blackburn finalist), *Precious Little*, and *The Zero Hour* (Jane Chambers Award, Lambda Literary Award finalist). Her work has been performed in New York at Clubbed Thumb, Playwrights Horizons and New York Theatre Workshop, and around the country at Perseverance Theater in Juneau, the Huntington in Boston, the Old Globe in San Diego, Shotgun Players in Berkeley, City Theater in Pittsburgh, Theater Wit in Chicago, and Two River Theater in New Jersey, among many other places. She has been a Banff Arts Centre Resident Artist, a two-time Hedgebrook Writer in Residence, a three-time resident at SPACE on Ryder Farm, and a four-time MacDowell Fellow. She's a member of New Dramatists' Class of 2017, a Clubbed Thumb Writers Group member, and an alum of the Lark Playwrights Workshop, the O'Neill National Playwrights Conference, and the Soho Rep Writer/Director Lab. Honors include the Princess Grace Award, a Manhattan Theater Club Playwriting Fellowship, a Lilly Award, and a Whiting Award for Drama. Madeleine holds a BA from Cornell University and an MFA from NYU. She has taught writing in various forms at Barnard College, Bard College, NYU, Rutgers, the Universities of Michigan, Maryland, Arkansas, Indiana, and Minnesota, and Carnegie Mellon, Columbia, Cornell, and Brown. For many years she led free writing workshops around New York City, including at Queensboro Correctional Facility; Hopper House, an alternative-to-incarceration program for women; a pre-trial intervention program run by the Brooklyn DA; Island Academy, the public school on Rikers Island; a senior citizens group in Fort Greene Park; and the Ali Forney Center, a shelter for homeless LGBTQ youth. Since 2006, she has worked with the Bard Prison Initiative at Bard College, a degree-granting liberal arts program operating in seven New York State prisons. She currently serves as BPI's Director of Admissions. In 2022, Madeleine's translation of Chekhov's *Three Sisters* premiered at Two River Theater, where she recently completed a six-year stint as the Mellon Playwright in Residence. Her ten-episode audio adaptation of Alison Bechdel's comic strip *Dykes to Watch Out For* is forthcoming in 2023 from Audible Originals. Madeleine is a founding member of the Obie-Award-winning playwrights' collective 13P (www.13p.org). She's written on shows for FX and HBO, and she is currently a writer/producer on the Hulu mystery-comedy *Only Murders in the Building*, nominated for WGA and Emmy Awards for Best Comedy.

Sofia Rocha

Sofia Rocha, originally from Boulder, Colorado and having grown up in Naples, Florida, is the 2022 recipient of the **Hermitage Prize in Composition** at the Aspen Music Festival and School. Rocha writes music of uncompromising emotional intensity while exploring cognition, randomness, rhythm, and counterpoint within post-tonal frameworks. She writes for all manner of performing forces: instrumental, vocal, and electronic. Upcoming projects include newly commissioned works for the 2022 Aspen Music Festival as a Composition Fellow, the International Contemporary Ensemble, and the Fifth House Ensemble as a Fromm Foundation Fellow at the 2020 Fresh Inc. Festival. Rocha's first orchestral work, *Replier*, was chosen as the winner of the 2020 New England Philharmonic annual call-for-scores and will be premiered in May of 2022. Rocha has also received honors from ASCAP, OM/NI Composition Competition, and Tenebrae New Music Ensemble. She has worked with numerous ensembles including the Arditti Quartet, JACK Quartet, DeCoda, loadbang, Brentano String Quartet, Castle of our Skins, Transient Canvas, Hypercube, arx duo, and Duo Entre-Nous, as well as numerous solo performers. Rocha received her master's degree in composition from the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory as a Chancellor's Scholar and recipient of Elsberry & Gonder Family and Conservatory Scholarships. There, she studied with Chen Yi, Yotam Haber, Paul Rudy and Zhou Long. Rocha was also the 2019 Composer-in-Residence for the Graduate Fellowship String Quartet. She completed her undergraduate work at the Sunderman Conservatory of Music at Gettysburg College in 2019, receiving a BA in Music with Honors as a Wagnild Scholar and studying composition with Avner Dorman. She has attended June in Buffalo, Fresh Inc. Festival, the Atlantic Music Festival, Divergent Studio, and the Hypercube Composition Lab as a composer, studying and taking master classes with composers such as Augusta Read Thomas, Hannah Lash, Hilda Paredes, Jeffrey Mumford, Alex Temple, Richard Danielpour, Aaron Helgeson, Amy Beth Kirsten, and David Serkin Ludwig, among others. Besides composing, Rocha is also an avid trombonist and conductor, having performed with numerous symphony orchestras, wind ensembles, and jazz groups.

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