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**The Hermitage Announces a Special Benefit Concert  
for Ongoing Hurricane Repairs  
“HERMITAGE TURNS 20:  
Andy Sandberg & Broadway Friends in Concert”  
March 20<sup>th</sup> at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall**

*Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg takes to the stage to sing a concert alongside Broadway guest stars to celebrate the Hermitage’s 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season and to raise valuable funds for the Hermitage following the impact of Hurricane Ian. He will be accompanied by Hermitage Fellow and 2023 Grammy Award nominee Rona Siddiqui.*

January 30, 2023 — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Sarasota County, Florida) today announced a **one-night-only benefit concert** to celebrate the 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season of the Hermitage and to raise funds for ongoing repairs to the Hermitage following the impact of Hurricane Ian earlier this season. On **Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:30pm**, Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg** returns to his roots as a performer to sing this benefit concert at Sarasota’s iconic Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. Sandberg – a director, writer, performer, and Tony Award-winning producer – will be joined on stage by Broadway guest stars (to be announced at a later date) and accompanied by Hermitage Fellow and 2023 Grammy Award nominee **Rona Siddiqui**.

While many in Florida know Sandberg for his leadership role at the Hermitage, he has nearly two decades of experience in theater and television. As a performer, he has traveled the world with the Yale Whiffenpoofs and Alley Cats and has played iconic roles such as Tony in *West Side Story*, Leo Frank in *Parade*, Freddy in *My Fair Lady*, Huck in *Big River*, and many original works. As a director, writer, and producer, his works have been seen on and off

Broadway, on London's West End, and recently on the Hallmark Channel, where he wrote the scripts for the movies "Haul Out the Holly," starring Lacey Chabert, and "Five More Minutes," based on the hit song by Scotty McCreery.

As Artistic Director of the Hermitage, Sandberg spends the majority of his time championing leading artists and performers who are developing new work. For this one night only, Sandberg will *perform* a concert of Broadway songs to raise valuable funds for the Hermitage. He will be joined by some of Broadway's brightest stars who are coming to Florida to celebrate the impact of this vital national arts organization on the Sarasota community and beyond. Additional guest performers will be announced at a later date.

"It's been many years since I've performed a concert of this scale, and I cannot think of a better cause than supporting this organization I love so dearly," said Sandberg. "I am incredibly proud of the work our team has been doing to keep the Hermitage driving forward in the months following Hurricane Ian, and I am certainly not above singing for our supper – quite literally!"

Tickets for this concert are \$25, \$50, and \$75 (additional phone and online booking fees may apply). A limited number of \$250 VIP tickets, which include a reception following the performance, are available (*\$175 of this \$250 price is a tax-deductible contribution to the Hermitage*). Thanks to generous underwriting from sponsors, all proceeds from ticket sales will directly benefit the Hermitage Artist Retreat.

Tickets are available at the **Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall box office**, 777 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236; by calling **(941) 263-6799**; or online at **HermitageArtistRetreat.org** and **VanWezel.org**.

*For more information about the Hermitage, this benefit concert, and other upcoming Hermitage programs, visit **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.*

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### **WHAT HERMITAGE ARTISTS ARE SAYING...**

***"An organization that does more for artists than any I have encountered."***

*—Craig Lucas, Tony Award Nominee & Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner*

***"The Hermitage is where the work you don't see getting done is done. It all has to start with an idea – the Hermitage is where those ideas are grown. I'll be here every time something pummels the Gulf Coast and attacks our beloved Hermitage.***

***I'm here for the Hermitage until I am no more."***

*—Gavin Creel, Tony Award-Winning Broadway Performer and Composer*

***“The impact of the Hermitage extends far beyond the weeks that artists are in residence. The inspiration that we draw there – we take back home with us. What the Hermitage offers artists and composers like me is truly rare.”***

*—Adam Gwon, Award-Winning Musical Theater Composer*

***“Art and theater are our spiritual daily bread, and we’re making it here at the Hermitage... and we go from here to break bread in every community we travel to.”***

*—Paula Vogel, Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-Winning Playwright*

***“The Hermitage sparks an authentic creative magic. The campus on Manasota Key fosters the space to dream in ways the rest of the world rarely allows. The lush surrounding nature, the opportunity to connect with other artists, and an enthusiastic audience at the weekly presentations is the perfect alchemy in which to create.”***

*—Christopher Burney, Hermitage Curatorial Council; Former Artistic Director of NY Stage & Film*

***“The Hermitage breeds something unique, and without it, I cannot tell you how much work would not happen.”***

*—Jeanine Tesori, Tony Award-Winning Composer & Pulitzer Prize Finalist*

***“A spark plug for ideas and collaborations: a miraculous co-mingling of music, literature, visual art, theater, nature, and wildlife”***

*—Claire Chase, Flutist, MacArthur “Genius” Fellow & Avery Fisher Prize Winner*

***“The invitation from the Hermitage was like someone opened the door and invited me to create a work that is responsive to this time, a work that can be reflective of this time.”***

*—Aleshea Harris, Playwright and Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner*

## **The Hermitage Artist Retreat**

Artistic Director and CEO: Andy Sandberg

Sarasota County, Florida

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

**Underwriters for the March 20<sup>th</sup> Benefit Concert include:**

### **Emerald Sponsors (\$25,000)**

Steve and Dale Adler

Carole Crosby and Larry Wickless

Liz and Duncan Richardson

### **Sapphire Sponsors (\$10,000)**

Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation  
Pat Appold  
Sondra and Gerald Biller  
Marletta Darnall  
Charlie Huisking

### **The Hermitage is supported by:**

*Hermitage programs are supported, in part, by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax Revenues; the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Arts and Culture, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture, and the National Endowment for the Arts; as well as the Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation, and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.*

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### **BIOS:**

#### **ANDY SANBERG**

(Performer)

**Andy Sandberg** was appointed Artistic Director and CEO of the Hermitage in 2019. An accomplished director, writer, and Tony Award-winning producer whose national and international career has been committed to new work and artist development, Sandberg was selected to lead the organization following an extensive national search.

Since joining the Hermitage in January of 2020, Sandberg has guided the organization through a period of significant growth and transition, despite the challenges of COVID-19. Over the past three seasons, the organization has dramatically expanded its programming, more than tripled its fundraising, embarked on a new strategic plan, completed a campus-wide restoration, and established dozens of new collaborative partnerships throughout the region and across the country. Under Sandberg's leadership through the pandemic, the Hermitage was one of the nation's earliest and most successful adapters to find safe and innovative opportunities for live programming, creating unique outdoor and virtual experiences for artists and audiences alike.

Sandberg's theatrical work has been represented in New York City, London, and throughout the United States. In 2009, at the age of 25, he became the youngest producer in history to win a Tony Award. Sandberg's Broadway and West End producing credits include the hit revival of *Hair* (2009 Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics Circle Awards); the Broadway revival of Gore Vidal's *The Best Man*, starring James Earl Jones, Angela Lansbury, John Larroquette, Candice Bergen, and Eric McCormack (2012 Tony, Drama Desk, Drama League, Outer Critics Circle Nominations); and Will Eno's *The Realistic Joneses*, a critically acclaimed new play starring Toni Collette, Michael C. Hall, Tracy Letts, and Marisa Tomei.

Sandberg directed the London premiere of Jeannette Bayardelle's *Shida*, which opened to rave reviews and earned 2019 Off West End Award nominations for Best Musical, Best Director, and Best Lead Actress. He previously directed the world premiere of *Shida* Off-Broadway at Ars Nova (four AUDELCO Award Nominations, including Best Director and Best Musical) and at the American Repertory Theater (Cambridge, MA). Sandberg has been represented Off-Broadway as the director of *Straight*, named a Critics' Pick by *The New York Times*, which cited that the production was "directed with polished finesse." He previously wrote and directed the critically

acclaimed world premiere of *Application Pending*, a comedy about kindergarten admissions (BroadwayWorld Award: Best Off-Broadway Play, Drama Desk Nomination: Outstanding Solo Show, Winner: Book Pipeline Prize). Additional world premieres that he has directed include Alan Brody's historical drama *Operation Epsilon* (four IRNE Awards, including Best Play and Best Director), the Off-Broadway comedy *Craving for Travel* (also co-author), and the Off-Broadway musicals *The Last Smoker in America*, *Neurosis*, and *R.R.R.E.D.* In 2020, he directed *How to Succeed in Business Without Really Trying* for the Maltz Jupiter Theater.

As a performer, Sandberg has toured the world with the Yale Whiffenpoofs and the Alley Cats. He has performed leading roles in productions of *Big River*, *West Side Story*, *Assassins*, *My Fair Lady*, *The Last Five Years*, *Sweeney Todd*, *Little Shop of Horrors*, *Parade*, and more. He played opposite Golden Globe nominee Lea Michele and Tony Award winner Katie Finneran in the original musical *Hot & Sweet*.

Sandberg has also written original movies for the Hallmark Channel, including the popular films "Haul Out the Holly" (2022, starring Lacey Chabert) and "Five More Minutes" (2021, based on the hit song by Scotty McCreery).

Born and raised in New York, Sandberg is a graduate of Yale University with a B.A. in English and Theater Studies. He is a member of the Stage Directors and Choreographers Society (SDC), Actors' Equity Association (AEA), and the Off-Broadway League. He has served on the boards of The Browning School (NYC), the Arts & Cultural Alliance of Sarasota County, the Yale Dramatic Association, the Whiffenpoof Alumni Association, and the Yale Alley Cats Alumni Organization (founder and longtime president). He also served as President of the Browning Alumni Association. [AndySandberg.com](http://AndySandberg.com)

## **RONA SIDDIQUI**

(Music Director / Piano)

**Rona Siddiqui** is a Hermitage Fellow who has presented original work on the Hermitage Beach in 2020 and again as part of the "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" series in 2021. She is an award-winning composer, lyricist, orchestrator, and music director based in New York City. Siddiqui recently served as music director for the Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning musical *A Strange Loop*, written by Hermitage Fellow Michael R. Jackson, for which she received a Grammy Award nomination and an Obie Award, alongside the cast and creative team. The recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant and the Billie Burke Ziegfeld Award, Siddiqui was named one of Broadway Women's Fund's "Women to Watch." Her musicals include *Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan*, an autobiographical comedy about growing up bi-ethnic in America, as well as *One Good Day*, *Hip Hop Cinderella*, and *Treasure in NYC*. Siddiqui is the recipient of the ASCAP Foundation Mary Rodgers/Lorenz Hart Award and the ASCAP Foundation/Max Dreyfus Scholarship. She has written pieces for *Wicked's* Anniversary Commemoration, 24-Hour Musicals, Prospect Theater Company, The Civilians, Playwrights Horizons, NYC Gay Men's Chorus, and 52nd St Project, and has performed concerts of her work at The John F. Kennedy Center and Feinstein's/54 Below. She has also orchestrated for Broadway Records, Broadway Backwards, NAMT and Pittsburgh Civic Light Opera. [RonaSiddiqui.com](http://RonaSiddiqui.com)