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**Hermitage Announces Second Year of “Cross Arts Collaborative”
in Support of Sarasota Artists and Performing Arts Institutions**

*Now in its second season, the Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative will support Sarasota’s thriving arts institutions by offering performing artists at collaborating institutions the gift of time and space to focus on generating new works of their own creation. The partners for this year’s initiative are **Asolo Repertory Theatre** and **Sarasota Contemporary Dance**.*

May 24, 2023 (Sarasota County, Florida) — The Hermitage Artist Retreat is pleased to announce the continuation of the Sarasota **Cross Arts Collaborative**, made possible once more with generous support from the Koski Family Foundation. This initiative is designed to give frequent performers and company members from leading Sarasota arts organizations a chance to expand their artistic practice from ‘performer’ to ‘creator.’

As with the inaugural year, the Hermitage is awarding Cross Arts Collaborative residencies to artists from two selected partner institutions. This program is designed to inspire and encourage generative work created by some of the best and brightest in our vibrant performing arts community. Artists are invited by their respective organizations to submit proposals for consideration; finalists are then submitted to the Hermitage for consideration, and recipients are selected in consultation with current or past members of the Hermitage National Curatorial Council. Recipients will receive two weeks of uninterrupted time at the Hermitage Artist Retreat this summer to develop a new generative project, and the work will then be shared with the Sarasota community in a free public program this fall.

In the second season of the Hermitage’s Cross Arts Collaborative, this distinguished honor has been awarded to **Lizzie Hagstedt**, a musician, soundscape

designer, and frequent collaborator with **Asolo Repertory Theatre**, and **Jessica Obiedzinski**, a dancer and longstanding company member of **Sarasota Contemporary Dance**.

The inaugural season of the Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative offered this opportunity to **Derric Gobourne, Jr.**, of Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe and **Tsebiyah Mishael Derry** through Florida Studio Theatre. Gobourne, known to Sarasota audiences from many roles with WBTT such as Little Stevie Wonder in their production of *The Best of Stevie*, used his time at the Hermitage to create a music video for his original music as well as author a children's book, and Derry, who has previously worked with FST as a performer, used her time to write original songs and poetry to serve as the foundation of an album. They showcased the fruits of their residencies in a full-capacity program on WBTT's rooftop in November.

While the Hermitage's nationally renowned residency program brings leading artists from across the country and around the world to create work on its beachfront Manasota Key campus, the Hermitage also seeks to enrich the incredible and growing arts scene in Sarasota, as showcased by performing arts institutions such as Sarasota Contemporary Dance and Asolo Repertory Theatre.

"We want to offer this one-of-a-kind opportunity to some of the leading artists in Sarasota, by creating space for a talented performer to focus on being a generative artist," said Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. "We know there are actors, dancers, musicians, and performing artists working amidst our circle of frequent collaborators who have passion projects waiting in the wings. This could be an actor writing a play between production contracts, a violinist composing a symphony after rehearsals, a dancer yearning to expand into the choreographer's space – or someone looking to work across an entirely new genre. This residency is designed for an artist who is hungry to expand their creative practice and explore a new 'hat' within the arts and entertainment space." Sandberg added that the Cross Arts Collaborative initiative would not be possible without the generous support of the Koski Family Foundation, longtime supporters and champions of the Hermitage.

"We are thrilled to be continuing our longstanding collaboration with the Hermitage," said **Peter Rothstein**, incoming Artistic Director of Asolo Repertory

Theatre. “This Cross Arts Collaborative is a meaningful initiative providing an opportunity to support the artists who consider the Asolo a creative home.” **Lizzie Hagstedt**, the selected artist from Asolo Repertory Theatre, may be familiar to Sarasota audiences from her original compositions in *Lifespan of a Fact*, as well as an early sampling of her original musical “Sophie Blanchard’s High-Flyin’ Rock’n’Roll Extravaganza,” featured online in 2021 as part of the Asolo’s “Ground Floor Series: Making Musicals.” As part of her time at the Hermitage, Hagstedt plans to further develop the full version of this show, an all-femme actor/musician story about the life and pyrotechnic death of 19th-Century aeronaut Sophie Blanchard.

Jessica Obiedzinski, the selected performer from Sarasota Contemporary Dance (SCD), will use the time to develop and choreograph a solo dance piece focused on the physical impact trauma has on the body. “SCD is honored to be a part of the Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative, offering a unique opportunity to create for our very own company member,” noted SCD Founder and Artistic Director **Leymis Wilmott**. “Jessica’s persistence and dedication to her dance and healing practice is a daily-lived experience. As a dance maker, she continues to be interested in the effects of emotional trauma and how that is embodied. This opportunity is encouraging Jessica to go deeper into her research and choreographic practice, and I am so excited for her and where this launchpad experience might propel her work next.”

After their time in residence, the Hermitage will collaborate with the selected partner institutions to bring a public program to the Sarasota community to highlight Jessica and Lizzie’s work. Details about this year’s event will be announced at a later date.

The Hermitage is a leading national arts incubator and the *only* major arts organization in Florida’s Gulf Coast region exclusively committed to supporting the development and creation of new work across all artistic disciplines. 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.

For more information about the Hermitage and upcoming programs, visit **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

Artist Bios

Lizzie Hagstedt was a 2021 Jonathan Larson Grant finalist. Current projects include *Sophie Blanchard’s High-Flyin’ Rock’n’Roll Extravaganza* (Asolo Rep Ground Floor), *Hereville* with Robby Sandler (92Y Musical Theatre Development Lab, 2023 reading with Kids of Stage in San Diego, upcoming readings through the Lipinsky Family San Diego Jewish Arts Festival), *Oneida* with Beth Blatt (2022 reading at The Tank NYC, VoxFest at Dartmouth College, Pallas Theatre Collective Table Read Award Winner), and her newest, *Wild West Show* with Lisa Helmi Johanson. Other credits include original scores for Asolo Rep: *Our Town*, *Lifespan of a Fact*, and four years of educational tours including an original musical adaptation of *The Odyssey* entitled *Looking for Ithaca*. Her musical *Misha Loves JaJa More Than Cheese* with Jerry Colker received two readings at Theatre 40 in Beverly Hills, and *Rose Petals* with Sarah Rebell received a NYMF reading. LizzieHagstedt.com

Jessica Obiedzinski is a native sixth-generation Floridian and has been dancing for five consecutive seasons with Sarasota Contemporary Dance (SCD), acting as dance performer, choreographer, and rehearsal director. Jessica has presented works in the Tampa Bay area and most recently for the SCD season during “Voice’s, Rising Choreographers” in 2021. Jessica has a love for wellness practices and is exploring the topic of mental health and the roles that trauma plays on our physical bodies during these difficult times. She has been a company member with Elizabeth Streb, Susan Vencl, and Beth Soll’s companies in NYC and worked extensively with Lynn Simonson and Laurie DeVito on Simonson technique practices. She has a deep understanding of Pilates and Yoga and is a certified Simonson Dance Technique teacher. Jessica is expanding artistic practice through this collaboration thanks to Leymis Bolaños-Wilmot with Sarasota Contemporary Dance and the Hermitage Artist Retreat. Her inspiration comes from patterns in nature and the ways the body copes with life’s unexpected tides. Taking time to heal and listen internally through journaling, watercolor painting, and of course, dancing.

Previously Announced Hermitage Programs:

- **“Moved to Music: Violin on the Bay” with Hermitage Fellows Rebecca Crenshaw and Mazz Swift, Friday, May 26, 6:30pm:** The ability of music to elevate our moods, build community, and express big ideas is central to the work of acclaimed musicians and Hermitage Fellows Rebecca Crenshaw and Mazz Swift. Juilliard-trained violinist Mazz Swift is a returning Hermitage alum and a 2022 finalist for the Hermitage Greenfield Prize. Hailed as “soaring and lyrical” by Jazz Right Now, Swift’s style encompasses a wide range of established genres as well as unique improvisational techniques Mazz has created. Rebecca Crenshaw balances the skillsets of modern rock-folk performance with a pedagogical and yoga practice to create a holistic experience rooted in creativity. Listen to selections of original work on the violin and hear what is inspiring these two remarkable performers. *Presented in Partnership with Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Van Wezel Terrace, 777 N Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34236***
- **VIRTUAL PROGRAM – Hermitage Artists and Thinkers Series “Stewing with Zora Howard” with Hermitage Fellow and Pulitzer Prize Finalist Zora Howard, Wednesday, May 31, 6:30pm:** In Pulitzer Prize finalist and Hermitage Fellow Zora Howard’s STEW, it’s too hot and too early for all the drama. As the generations of Tucker women convene in the kitchen to prepare a meal for a large gathering later that day, it begins to emerge that “the secrets we keep from our mothers eventually become the secrets we keep from ourselves.” Presented on Zoom with the support of Florida Humanities, Hermitage Programs Director James Monaghan is joined by Howard to explore the cultural and historical elements of the play. How does food and its preparation contain generational memory? How have historical and economic trends shaped the societal role of the Tucker family? Join the conversation from the comfort of your home and learn what makes this drama so delicious. *Presented with support from Florida Humanities. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/household registration fee). **Presented on Zoom***
- **NEW LOCATION / Now at Bookstore1 (Sarasota) – “The Radiant Tarot: Pathway to Creativity” with Hermitage Fellow Tony Barnstone, Friday, June 16, 6:30pm:** The Hermitage is about creating new works. When in conversation with Hermitage Fellow and creator Tony Barnstone’s *The Radiant Tarot: Pathway to Creativity* an entirely new – yet ancient – approach is revealed. Inspired by the words of Rilke and William Blake amongst many other artists and practitioners, the artwork and guidebook of this Tarot deck are aimed at awakening creativity and personal growth. In this program, Barnstone, author of the guidebook, will illuminate some of the impulses behind its creation, its potential interpretations, and the creative projects it has already inspired. Hear from this multidisciplinary author of more than 20 books and begin to uncover the connections in the cards. *Presented in Partnership with Bookstore1. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Bookstore1, 117 S Pineapple Ave, Sarasota, FL 34236***

- **“The Many Languages of Jennifer Croft” with Hermitage Fellow Jennifer Croft, Tuesday, June 20, 6:30pm:** There is very little lost in translation with Hermitage Fellow Jennifer Croft’s writing and much is added by her original works that span languages as well as genres. Croft is the recipient of the 2020 William Saroyan International Prize for Writing and the 2018 Man Booker International Prize. Hear selections of Croft’s work and discuss the mercurial art of translation with this celebrated practitioner. *Presented in Partnership with Sarasota County Libraries and the Johann Fust Library Foundation. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood, FL 34223***
- **“Songs from the Sand: A Hermitage Cabaret” Featuring the work of Hermitage Fellows performed by some of Sarasota’s Greatest Talents, Friday, June 23, 7:00pm:** From Adam Gwon to Jeanine Tesori, Michael R. Jackson to Kit Yan, Rona Siddiqui to Zoe Sarnak, the Hermitage has provided space and time to some of the most exciting musical theater writers working in the industry today. Hear selections from creators such as these performed by some of Sarasota’s finest performers at one of the area’s most beautiful environments, Waterside at Lakewood Ranch. In addition to the works themselves, hear little known stories about the creation of some of New York Theater’s recent success stories all as the sun sets over the water. *Presented in Partnership with Waterside at Lakewood Ranch. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Waterside Pavilion at Lakewood Ranch, 1561 Lakefront Drive, Sarasota, FL 34240***

The Hermitage Artist Retreat

Sarasota County, Florida
 Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO

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 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.

ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:

Friday, May 26, 6:30pm, “Moved to Music: Violins on the Bay,” with Hermitage Fellows **Rebecca Crenshaw** and **Mazz Swift**, at the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall Terrace

Presented in partnership with the Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall

Wednesday, May 31, 6:30pm, “Stewing with Zora Howard,” with Hermitage Fellow and Pulitzer Prize Finalist **Zora Howard**, Presented on Zoom

Presented with support from Florida Humanities

NEW LOCATION! **Friday, June 16, 6:30pm, “The Radiant Tarot: Pathway to Creativity,”** with Hermitage Fellow **Tony Barnstone**, at Bookstore1 in Downtown Sarasota

Tuesday, June 20, 6:30pm, “The Many Languages of Jennifer Croft,” with Hermitage Fellow **Jennifer Croft**, on the Hermitage Beach

Presented in partnership with Sarasota County Libraries and the Johann Fust Library Foundation

Friday, June 23, 7pm, “Songs from the Sand: A Hermitage Cabaret,” featuring the work of Hermitage Fellows and leading musical theater composers, performed by Sarasota artists, at Waterside Pavilion at Lakewood Ranch

Presented in partnership Lakewood Ranch Communities

HermitageArtistRetreat.org