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Hermitage Receives Grant from Barancik Foundation to Protect Freedom of Artistic Expression and Support Diverse Community Programming

A \$400,000 grant from Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation will provide essential support to the Hermitage's diverse artist-in-residence program, the impact of Hermitage artists and programs throughout the Gulf Coast region, and the organization's ongoing commitment to bold, forward-thinking, and culturally consequential new works.

June 1, 2023 (Sarasota County, Florida) – A \$400,000 grant from Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation has been awarded to the Hermitage Artist Retreat in support of its efforts and impact as a leading national arts incubator for diverse and original works of music, theater, literature, visual art, dance, and more. The Hermitage offers one-of-a-kind artistic programming with a focus on community impact, education, and social justice. This grant will allow the Hermitage to further its commitment to celebrating bold and innovative new work without censoring or inhibiting the creativity of these extraordinary talents.

Over the past several seasons, the Hermitage has dramatically expanded its community programming, taking steps to ensure these unique work-in-process presentations are accessible to all. Each year, the Hermitage welcomes nearly 100 of the world's leading artists, and our free community programming now includes over 50 free events annually at locations throughout our Gulf Coast region, offering audiences rare insight into the creative process. In today's complicated cultural climate, freedom of artistic expression is often being challenged, and this grant from Barancik Foundation will help provide the Hermitage with more flexibility and resources to manage the

complex layers of protecting artistic integrity. As an incubator for diverse and original works across all artistic mediums, the Hermitage offers transformative experiences to artists and audiences alike, inviting leading artists from around the world to its beachfront campus on Manasota Key and offering rare ‘sneak peeks’ of bold and original new works to the members of our community.

“These candid, often interactive experiences provide an unparalleled level of access to some of the world’s leading creators, writers, and performers,” says Andy Sandberg. “As our programs and collaborations continue to evolve and expand throughout our region and across the nation, we are deeply committed to protecting every Hermitage Fellow’s freedom of artistic expression – this will always be core to our values. This means that our growing Hermitage audiences are getting a rare and always authentic look into the creative process of these diverse and accomplished talents.”

Past Hermitage programs have ranged from concerts with Grammy and Tony Award-winning composers and performers, readings and conversations with Pulitzer Prize-winning authors and playwrights, open studios from some of the world’s leading contemporary artists, candid and inspiring talks with creative trailblazers, and more.

This recent \$400,000 grant from Barancik Foundation is designed to help support these efforts, including the Hermitage’s growing community outreach and education initiatives, enhancing this prestigious national organization’s support for its artists and returning alumni talent, and broadening the organization’s reach and impact in schools and underserved communities all while providing artists with the ability to explore their craft and achieve their greatest potential, unencumbered by censorship.

“One of the many things the Hermitage does well is intentionally engage with audiences that might not otherwise have access to creative experiences,” commented Barancik Foundation President | CEO Teri A Hansen. “Andy and team truly demonstrate a collaborative spirit that is enriching the arts and culture of our region.”

“This generous support from Barancik Foundation is going to not only allow us to provide more resources for the diverse and accomplished Hermitage artists who are making a meaningful and lasting impact in our community, but also to support our passionate and dedicated team in delivering the level and quality of unique programming we are committed to delivering,” added Sandberg. “It has been an exciting

period of growth for the Hermitage, and now this grant will help us take the organization to the next level.”

The Hermitage offers year-round outdoor artist programs, free and accessible to the members of our community. In recent years, venues have expanded beyond the Hermitage’s beautiful beachfront campus to include outdoor locations throughout Sarasota County and beyond, including Marie Selby Botanical Gardens, Nathan Benderson Park, Booker High School, Conservation Foundation of the Gulf Coast, Historic Spanish Point, The Ringling Museum, Sarasota Art Museum, Boca Grande, and more. New and ongoing collaborations have included programs with ASALH, Asolo Repertory Theatre, CreArte Latino, Embracing Our Differences, EnsembleNew SRQ, Florida Studio Theatre, New College of Florida, Art Center Sarasota, Van Wezel Performing Arts Hall, Sarasota Opera, Unidos Now, Urbanite Theater, Venice Theatre, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, Sarasota Contemporary Dance, ALSO Youth, and more.

The Hermitage is a leading national arts incubator, and the only major arts organization in the 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 artist minds before their works go on to major galleries, concert halls, theatres, 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 or to register for upcoming community programs, visit **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.*

The Hermitage Artist Retreat

Sarasota County, Florida

Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO

Now celebrating its 20th Anniversary Season, 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.

Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation

The Charles and Margery Barancik family has long believed in the power of philanthropy to shape our world and enrich the lives of all people. It was the expression of this belief that led them in 2014 to establish Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation — a private, family foundation located in Sarasota, Florida. Barancik Foundation creates initiatives and awards grants in Sarasota and beyond in the areas of education, humanitarian causes, arts and culture, the environment, and medical research/resources. For more information, visit BarancikFoundation.org.