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Media Contact:

Hermitage Media Relations; 941-475-2098, Ext. 8;

Communications@HermitageArtistRetreat.org



**The Hermitage Raises Nearly \$300,000 at
the 15th Annual Artful Lobster — A Record-Breaking
Celebration!**

November 14, 2023 — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Sarasota County, Florida) raised over \$292,000 at the **2023 Hermitage Artful Lobster** luncheon on Saturday, November 11th. Now in its 15th year and following the 20th anniversary of the Hermitage, this annual event raises valuable funds for the Hermitage’s internationally 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. Over 200 guests attended the sold-out event, which took place outdoors on a beautiful November afternoon at the Hermitage’s historic beachfront campus. This year’s Artful Lobster was co-chaired by **Terry Brackett** and **Suzette & Tim Flood**, with Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg** serving as the master of ceremonies.

The event was headlined by world-renowned and Grammy Award-winning string quartet **ETHEL**. This was the first time in many years that all four members of **ETHEL** — **Ralph Farris**, **Kip Jones**, **Dorothy Lawson**, and **Corin Lee** — were together at the Hermitage to help commemorate this milestone anniversary of this popular fall benefit. As part of the afternoon’s festivities, **ETHEL** delighted attendees with an uplifting and inspiring performance featuring selections from *The River* and *Circus: Wandering City*, two original works that were developed at the Hermitage. Highlights from the energetic performance included an audience participation segment and **ETHEL** member Kip Jones leaping through the crowd while playing the violin. Known for their acclaimed

performances across the United States and around the world, ETHEL is comprised of four distinguished Hermitage alumni; this quartet of brilliant musicians has a deep connection with the Hermitage Artist Retreat, dating back to 2015. ETHEL's residency and appearance at the 2023 Hermitage Artful Lobster were generously sponsored by **Carol White Bold** and **Larry Bold**. The outdoor event also featured a captivating performance by **Emi Ferguson**, a new Hermitage Fellow and celebrated flutist. Sharing from her book *Iconic Composers*, Ferguson charmed the audience with stories of **John Williams** overcoming his critics by telling tales from his once-ridiculed-now-iconic score to *Jaws*. Ferguson went on to perform an enchanting Williams composition from the film *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

(Complete bios for ETHEL and Emi Ferguson can be found below.)

"Great music, great art, great theater, great literature, great dance, great television – none of this happens without great *artists*," said the Hermitage's Andy Sandberg. "We are thankful to all who attended and supported this year's Artful Lobster festivities. The generous outpouring of support for the work we are doing at the Hermitage is a demonstration of our community's extraordinary commitment to the arts and the creative process." Sandberg added that the proceeds from this year's fall fundraiser will also support ongoing improvements and protections for the Hermitage campus following the impact of Hurricanes Ian and Idalia.

Sponsors and partners for the 2023 Artful Lobster included Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Key Agency, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, and *Sarasota Magazine*. A full list of this year's sponsors, benefactors, and partners can be found at HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster2023.

A leading national arts incubator, the Hermitage is the only major arts organization in Florida's Gulf Coast 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 and accomplished artists from around the world and across multiple disciplines create and develop new works of theater, music, visual art, literature, dance, film, 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, conversations, readings, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

For more information about Hermitage artists, upcoming programs, and events, visit HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

The Hermitage Artist Retreat

Sarasota County, Florida

Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO

The Hermitage is a leading national arts incubator and nonprofit artist retreat located on Manasota Key, Florida. For more than two decades, the Hermitage has invited 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 and accomplished group of Hermitage alumni have gone on to renowned theaters, concert halls, and galleries throughout the world. Each year, the Hermitage awards the Hermitage Greenfield Prize for a new work of art, the 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 through the Division of 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:

Tuesday, November 14th @ 5pm, "Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative: Theater and Dance," featuring Hermitage Cross Arts Recipients **Lizzie Hagstedt** and **Jessica Obiedzinski**, at The Bay Park (Sarasota) *Presented in partnership with Asolo Repertory Theatre, Sarasota Contemporary Dance, and The Bay Sarasota*

Thursday, November 16th @ 5pm, "Hermitage Sunsets @ Nathan Benderson Park: Theater on the Lake," featuring Hermitage Fellows **Terry Guest** and **James Anthony Tyler**, at The Nathan Benderson Family Finish Tower (Sarasota/Bradenton) *Presented in partnership with Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy, Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe, and Urbanite Theatre*

Thursday November 30th @ 5pm, "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: The State of the Arts in Florida," featuring friend of the Hermitage **Tom Kirdahy**, Hermitage Curatorial Council member **Nataki Garrett**, and President of Manasota ASALA **David Wilkins**, at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Historic Spanish Point Campus (Osprey) *Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and Manasota ASALH*

Thursday, December 14th @ 4pm, "The People and Places that Make Us," featuring Hermitage Fellow **Cleyvis Natera**, at Johann Fust Community Library (Boca Grande) *Presented in partnership with Johann Fust Library Foundation*

Friday, January 5th @ 5pm, "The Blurred Line: a Visual and Theatrical Experience," featuring Hermitage Fellows **Halley Feiffer** and **Anthony Hawley**, at Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key) *Presented in partnership with Asolo Repertory Theatre*

Friday, January 12th @ 5pm, “Merman’s Apprentice: Musical Theater’s Golden Age,” featuring Hermitage Fellows **Stephen Cole** and **David Evans**, at Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key)

Thursday, January 18th @ 5pm, “Opera, Oratorio, and Off-Broadway: Writing and Performing across Mediums,” featuring Hermitage Fellows **Jacquelyn Reingold, Joan La Barbara,** and **Laura Kaminsky** at Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key)

Friday, January 19th @ 5pm, “Songs from the Sand: A Hermitage Cabaret,” featuring the works of Hermitage Composers, at Longboat Key Town Center (Longboat Key) *Presented in partnership with The Town of Longboat Key*

Thursday, January 25th @ 5pm, “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: Music on the Wind,” featuring Hermitage Fellows **James M. Stephenson** and **Emi Ferguson**, at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota) *Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and Venice Symphony*

Friday, February 2nd @ 5pm, “Hermitage Sunsets @ Nathan Benderson Park: Musical Moods,” featuring Hermitage Fellows **Amir ElSaffar** and **Chris Ryan Williams**, at Nathan Benderson Park (Sarasota/Bradenton) *Presented in partnership with Nathan Benderson Park*

Monday, February 19th @ 10:30am, “Music Mondays: Hermitage Alum Doug Wright Writes Broadway,” featuring Hermitage Fellow **Doug Wright**, at Church of the Palms (Sarasota) @ 10:30am and again at Venice Presbyterian Church (Venice) @ 3pm *Presented in partnership with Sarasota Institute of Lifetime Learning*

ARTIST BIOS

ETHEL

Established in New York City in 1998, **ETHEL** celebrates 25 years of setting the standard for contemporary concert music: “indefatigable and eclectic” (*New York Times*), “vital and brilliant” (*New Yorker*), and “infectiously visceral” (Pitchfork). This irrepressible foursome of composer-performers — **Ralph Farris** (viola), **Kip Jones** (violin), **Dorothy Lawson** (cello), and **Corin Lee** (violin) — blends uptown panache with downtown genre mashup. Since its inception, **ETHEL** has released nine feature recordings; performed as guests on 50+ albums; won a Grammy Award with jazz legend Kurt Elling; and toured internationally with rock icons Todd Rundgren & Joe Jackson. Beyond their connection to the Hermitage as distinguished alumni artists, the quartet has performed across the United States and worldwide. At the heart of **ETHEL** is a collaborative ethos — a quest for common creative expression, forged in listening and community. The quartet designs productions that organically inspire engagement — programs such as *The River*, featuring Taos Pueblo elder, flutist and storyteller, Robert Mirabal (*The River* [Innova Recordings] was nominated for a Native American Music Award); and *Signature Sessions*, a hyper-engaging survey of the quartet’s 25 years of inspired music-making. **ETHEL** has premiered over 250 works, many of them commissioned by the quartet. As a collective of composers themselves, the ensemble has received commissions from The John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art, Brooklyn Academy of Music, Georgia Tech’s School of Architecture, and the NEA. 2022 marked **ETHEL**’s return to live performances on their celebrated weekly series as Resident The 2023-24 (the group’s 25!) sees **ETHEL** return to Venice, Italy, for a live installation in collaboration with WXY, at the Biennale Architettura 2023; after which the quartet travels to The Netherlands for performances of the music of Bart van Dongen and Jacob TV; they then return to the US for a residency at University of Oklahoma. Late autumn brings a return (with Robert Mirabal) to the National Gallery of Art; and later-season highlights include appearances at the Wexner Center for the Arts (OH) and

Denison University's TUTTI Festival. ETHEL has given master classes and workshops at The Juilliard School, Eastman School of Music, Berklee College of Music, and the Tasmanian Youth Orchestra. The quartet was a 2019/20 Creative-in-Residence at Brooklyn Public Library; a 2019 Levi Family Distinguished Visiting Artist at The Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University; and for 10 years, Quartet-in Residence of the Grand Canyon Music Festival's Native American Composer Apprentice Project. The group is currently Ensemble-in-Residence at Denison University, where, in 2017, the members were awarded Doctorates of Humane Letters, *honoris causa*. ETHEL has been featured on Conan O'Brien, ABC Radio Australia, SiriusXM, John Schaefer's *New Sounds*, Fred Child's *Performance Today*, Randy Cohen's *Person Place Thing*, NPR's *Weekend Edition*, the soundtracks of *Dan In Real Life* and HBO's *Deadwood*, and at several TED conferences.

ETHEL's Hermitage Residency was generously sponsored by Carol White Bold and Larry Bold.

Emi Ferguson

Hailed by critics for her “tonal bloom” and “hauntingly beautiful performances,” English-American performer, composer, and Hermitage Fellow Emi Ferguson stretches the boundaries of what is expected of modern-day musicians. Ferguson is a 2023 Avery Fisher Career Grant awardee and can be heard live in concerts and festivals around the world as a soloist and with groups including AMOC, the New York New Music Ensemble, the Handel and Haydn Society, and the Manhattan Chamber Players. Emi was a featured performer alongside Yo-Yo Ma, Paul Simon, and James Taylor at the 10th Anniversary Memorial Ceremony of 9/11 at Ground Zero, where her performance of “Amazing Grace” was televised worldwide. She has premiered works by many of today's leading composers and has been a featured performer at Marlboro, Lucerne, Ojai, Lake Champlain, Bach Virtuosi, and more festivals. Emi is currently on the faculty of the Juilliard School, the Bach Virtuosi Festival, and has taught on the faculty of the University of Buffalo. Born in Japan and raised in London and Boston, she now resides in New York.

HermitageArtistRetreat.org

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