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THE HERMITAGE
artist retreat



**“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens”
Announces Dates for Fifth Anniversary Season;
Tony Award Winner Britton Smith and Renowned Flutist
Claire Chase Announced as First Performers**

*The six-part “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” series will kick off its fifth anniversary season with award-winning theater artist and 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize finalist **Britton Smith**, followed by the return of acclaimed flutist, composer, and Hermitage Fellow **Claire Chase**. Four additional dates have been announced throughout the 2024-2025 season, spanning Selby Gardens’ Downtown Sarasota and Historic Spanish Point campuses.*

August 7, 2024 (Sarasota County, Florida) — The Hermitage Artist Retreat’s popular series, “**Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens**,” continues into its fifth anniversary as part of the Hermitage’s 2024-2025 season. The outdoor series — a celebrated collaboration between the Hermitage and Marie Selby Botanical Gardens — features performances and explorations of works-in-progress by Hermitage artists-in-residence and alumni. “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” events are currently scheduled to take place at Selby Gardens’ Downtown Sarasota campus and the Historic Spanish Point campus in Osprey.

The first of these events, “**Let the Music Set You Free**,” features Broadway veteran, Tony Award-winning co-founder of Broadway Advocacy Coalition, and 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize finalist **Britton Smith**. As the bandleader for the alternative soul band Britton and the Sting, this visionary artist and advocate is a force of nature determined to unite the world through a passion for music and theater. Britton's vibrant work bears witness to the inspiration that can be found within and around us all. Catch this dynamic performer like never before in a stripped-down presentation surrounded by the beautiful sanctuary of Selby Gardens’ Downtown Sarasota campus on Thursday October 17th at 5:30pm.

The second of these events is “**Solo Flute — Destiny of Density**,” where award-winning flutist, composer, and returning Hermitage Fellow **Claire Chase** will share selections of her genre-defining work and discuss her innovative approach to music.

This event will take place on Thursday, December 5th at 5:30pm, at Selby Gardens' Historic Spanish Point campus in Osprey. Chase is a world-renowned musician and composer who was also one of the inaugural artists in the "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" series, in addition to performing at two past Hermitage Artful Lobster events. A soloist, collaborative artist, curator, and advocate for new and experimental music, she has been described by *The New York Times* as "the most important flutist of our time." Chase was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2012, and in 2017 was the first flutist to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. A professor of music at Harvard University, she recently concluded her term as a member of the Hermitage National Curatorial Council.

Confirmed dates for this fifth season of "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" include:

- **Thursday, October 17, 2024, at 5:30pm**, Downtown Sarasota Campus
- **Thursday December 5, 2024, at 5:30pm**, Historic Spanish Point
- **Thursday January 30, 2025, at 5:30pm**, Downtown Sarasota Campus
- **Thursday February 20, 2025, at 5:30pm**, Historic Spanish Point
- **Thursday, March 6, 2025, at 5:30pm**, Downtown Sarasota Campus
- **Thursday, May 1, 2025, at 6:30pm**, Historic Spanish Point

Admission for these events has no ticket cost, though availability is subject to capacity limitations; advance registration is required (\$5/person) at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

Each program will feature a celebrated Hermitage artist (or artists) to be announced. Last year's "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" spotlighted the works and talents of celebrated mime and storyteller **Bill Bowers**, who shared the stage with internationally renowned composer and singer **Kavita Shah**; Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**, fresh from his production of *Operation Epsilon* in London; Hermitage Curatorial Council member **Nataki Garrett**, Tony Award-winning Broadway producer **Tom Kirdahy**, and Manasota ASALH President **David Wilkins**, who offered an enlightening panel discussion about the State of the Arts in Florida; and award-winning flutist **Emi Ferguson** with classical composer **Jim Stephenson**, who delighted audiences with an original performance. Previous seasons of "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" have included Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award winner **Michael R. Jackson**, award-winning Chicago playwright **Terry Guest**; Kleban Prize winner **César Alvarez**, world-renowned violinist and Beyoncé collaborator **Lady Jess**; acclaimed classical harpist **Ashley Jackson**; interdisciplinary performance artist **Ni'Ja Whitson**, opera singer and Sarasota native **Thea Lobo**, composer **Sofía Rocha**, winner of the 2022 Hermitage Prize in Composition at the Aspen Music Festival; 2022 Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner **Shariffa Ali**; celebrated cellist **Karen Patterson**, and more.

“This fifth anniversary season of ‘Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens’ promises to be an unforgettable one,” says Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “Claire Chase and Britton Smith are two of the most dynamic artists and performers of their generation, and we are thrilled to invite audiences to share a magical evening with these Hermitage artists and more against the beautiful backdrop of these bayfront sanctuaries. This popular series has been a joyous collaboration with our friends at Selby Gardens, and we look forward welcoming new and returning audiences to experience a ‘sneak peek’ into the creative process of these extraordinary talents.”

“We are so excited to celebrate five years of this wonderful collaboration with the Hermitage Artist Retreat,” says Selby Gardens President & CEO **Jennifer Rominiecki**. “Welcoming world-class Hermitage artists to our newly revitalized bayfront sanctuary in downtown Sarasota and our vibrant Historic Spanish Point campus in Osprey is something we look forward to each year. Treating Gulf Coast patrons to these special programs has been such a joy, and we are thrilled that that the ‘Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens’ series continues to flourish.”

These outdoor events are one part of many ongoing programs and collaborations planned throughout the season, spanning Sarasota County and the surrounding region. The programs feature industry-leading playwrights, visual artists, musicians, poets, choreographers, and more — all free to the members of our community with a \$5/person registration fee.

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 year-round 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 the Hermitage and upcoming programs, visit: **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

See below for complete program details and artist bios.

FULL PROGRAM DETAILS

Newly Announced Hermitage Programs:

- **“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: Let the Music Set You Free” with Hermitage Greenfield Prize finalist Britton Smith, Thursday October 17, 2024 @ 5:30pm:** Launching the fifth season of “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” is Broadway veteran, Tony Award winner, and Hermitage Greenfield Prize finalist **Britton Smith**. The bandleader for the alternative soul band Britton and the Sting, this visionary artist and advocate is a force of nature determined to unite the world through a passion for music and theater. Britton's vibrant work bears witness to the inspiration that can be found within and around us all. Catch this dynamic performer like never before in a stripped-down presentation surrounded by the beautiful sanctuary of Selby Gardens as the sun sets over Sarasota Bay. *Presented in Partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Downtown Sarasota Campus, 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236*
- **“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: Solo Flute — Destiny of Density” with Hermitage Fellow Claire Chase, Thursday, December 5, 2024 @ 5:30pm:** Hermitage Fellow **Claire Chase** helped launch the inaugural season of “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens.” Now as the series celebrates its fifth anniversary, Chase returns to share new work in this immensely popular series. An internationally acclaimed composer and performer, Claire Chase has been described by *The New York Times* as “the most important flutist of our time.” She is a pioneer in the world of contemporary music with projects such as “Density 2036,” a 24-year commissioning project that aims to reimagine the literature of the modern flute. A MacArthur Fellow and the first ever flutist to receive the Avery Fisher Award from Lincoln Center, Chase also served on the Hermitage’s Curatorial Council. Surrounded by the idyllic beauty of Selby Gardens, don’t miss hearing the latest from this iconic performer in this popular Hermitage’s series. *Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Historic Spanish Point Campus, entrance at 401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229*
- **“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” Thursday January 30, 2025 @ 5:30pm. (Hermitage Artist TBA).** *Presented in Partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Downtown Sarasota Campus, 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236*
- **“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” Thursday February 20, 2025 @ 5:30pm. (Hermitage Artist TBA).** *Presented in Partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Historic Spanish Point Campus, entrance at 401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229*
- **“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” Thursday March 6, 2025 @5:30pm. (Hermitage Artist TBA).** *Presented in Partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Downtown Sarasota Campus, 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236*
- **“Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” Thursday May 1, 2025 @ 6:30pm. (Hermitage Artist TBA).** *Presented in Partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens.*

**Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee).
**Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Historic Spanish Point Campus, entrance at 401
North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229****

The Hermitage Artist Retreat

Sarasota County, Florida

Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO

The Hermitage is a leading national arts incubator and multidisciplinary 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 17 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 the National Endowment for the Arts; Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues; the Welles Murphey Fund at Gulf Coast Community Foundation; Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation; and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

Marie Selby Botanical Gardens provides 45 acres of bayfront sanctuaries connecting people with air plants of the world, native nature, and our regional history. Established by forward thinking women of their time, Selby Gardens is composed of the 15-acre Downtown Sarasota campus and the 30-acre Historic Spanish Point campus in the Osprey area of Sarasota County, Florida. The Downtown campus on Sarasota Bay is the only botanical garden in the world dedicated to the display and study of epiphytic orchids, bromeliads, gesneriads and ferns, and other tropical plants. There is a significant focus on botany, horticulture, education, historical preservation, and the environment. The Historic Spanish Point (HSP) campus is located less than 10 miles south along Little Sarasota Bay. The HSP campus, one of the largest preserves showcasing native Florida plants that is interpreted for and open to the public, celebrates an archaeological record that encompasses approximately 5,000 years of Florida history.

ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS

Friday, August 9 @ 6:30pm, "Translation-Traducción," featuring Hermitage Fellow **Mónica Lavín** and Translator-Collaborator **D.P. Snyder**, on the Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key) *Presented in partnership with UnidosNow*

Friday, August 23 @ 6:30pm, "The Lazour Brothers: A Lifelong Collabrotion," featuring 2024 **Hermitage Greenfield Prize** Finalists **Daniel Lazour & Patrick Lazour**, on the Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key)

Thursday, October 17 @ 5:30pm, “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: Britton Smith — Let the Music Set You Free,” featuring 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Finalist **Britton Smith**, at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota)
Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

Thursday, December 5 @ 5:30pm, “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: Solo Flute — Destiny of Density,” with Hermitage Fellow **Claire Chase**, at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Historic Spanish Point (Osprey)
Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens

ARTIST BIOS

Britton Smith

Britton Smith is an artist, activist, and Co-Founder/President of Broadway Advocacy Coalition. Founded in 2016, BAC has grown into a Tony Award-winning organization uniting artists with legal experts and community leaders to have lasting impact on policy issues including criminal justice reform, education equality, and liberation within the theatrical landscape. Smith is a proud co-creator of the organization’s staple methodology, Theater of Change, and was invited into Columbia Law School as an adjunct professor. Smith is also the front man and songwriter of the funk liberation band “Britton and The Sting,” which has been fueling the NYC music scene for years. Their shows feel like church in all of the best ways. Recently sold-out performances include the Apollo Music Cafe, Rockwood Music Hall, and Joe’s Pub. Britton has been featured in *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, *Fault Magazine*, and *The New Yorker*; Britton & The Sting was also featured in *Paper Magazine*’s “Bops Only: 10 Songs You Need to Start Your Weekend Right” list, as well as a featured 2020 NPR Tiny Desk Submission Top Pick. Acting credits include the STARZ comedy series “Run the World” (Gotham Awards Nominee) as Zane, and the Broadway musical *Be More Chill*, *Shuffle Along!*, and *After Midnight*. He was a featured soloist in PBS’ 50th Anniversary of Great Performances (2023). BrittonAndTheSting.com / [@BrittonSmithWorld](https://www.instagram.com/BrittonSmithWorld)

Claire Chase

Hermitage Fellow **Claire Chase** has been described by *The New York Times* as “the most important flutist of our time” and as “the North Star of her instrument’s ever-expanding universe.” An internationally renowned musician, interdisciplinary artist, and educator, Chase recently concluded her third year as a member of the Hermitage Artist Retreat’s distinguished National Curatorial Council. Passionately dedicated to the creation of new ecosystems for the music of our time, Chase has presented the world premieres of hundreds of new works by a new generation of artists. She was the first flutist to be awarded a MacArthur Fellowship in 2012, and in 2017 was the first flutist to be awarded the Avery Fisher Prize for Classical Music from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. Chase was the Richard and Barbara Debs Creative Chair at Carnegie Hall in the 2022-23 season, only the second time in that organization’s history that the position has been given to a performing artist. Chase has performed recently as a soloist with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Helsinki Philharmonic, BBC Scottish Symphony, Munich Chamber Orchestra, London Philharmonia, and San Francisco Symphony, where she is a Collaborative Partner with Esa-Pekka Salonen. In the 2022-23 season, Chase debuted a new double concerto by Felipe Lara with the vocalist and bassist Esperanza Spalding and the conductor Susanna Mälkki; this premiere was named one of the “Best Classical Music Performances of the Year” by *The New York Times*. Chase’s impressive discography includes eight solo albums of world premiere recordings and dozens of collaborative recordings with ensembles, composers, and sound artists from a wide range of musical genres. In 2013, Chase

launched the 24-year commissioning project “Density 2036.” Now in its eleventh year, Density reimagines the solo flute literature over a quarter-century through commissions, performances, recordings, education, and a community-focused approach to cultural production.

HermitageArtistRetreat.org

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