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The Hermitage Raises Over \$380,000 Toward Hurricane Recovery and Renowned Artist Residency Program at the 16th Annual Artful Lobster — A Record-Breaking Celebration!

November 11, 2024 — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Sarasota County, Florida) raised over \$380,000 at the **2024 Hermitage Artful Lobster** luncheon on Saturday, November 9th. 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. Proceeds from this year’s event are also going toward hurricane recovery efforts for the Hermitage’s Manasota Key campus. Over 200 guests attended the sold-out luncheon, which was the first event to take place at the outdoor courtyard of the Ora in Sarasota. (The event was moved from the Hermitage campus due to ongoing hurricane cleanup and repairs.) Marking his fifth anniversary at the Hermitage, Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg** served as the master of ceremonies.

The event was headlined by two returning Hermitage Fellows: Tony Award-nominated actor, singer, and writer **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer**, and Grammy Award-nominated composer, lyricist, orchestrator, and music director **Rona Siddiqui**. Both of these extraordinary talents are proud Hermitage alumnae who have described our Manasota Key campus as “an artistic home.” Kritzer and Siddiqui have performed at multiple Hermitage events, including the “Hermitage Turns 20: Andy Sandberg & Broadway Friends in Concert” at the Van Wezel, the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner, and several awe-inspiring performances on the Hermitage Beach.

Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer surprised the audience with an unforgettable performance of “Shy,” calling back to her memorable portrayal of Carol Burnett in the series finale of “The

Marvelous Mrs. Maisel.” In addition to lending her keyboard skills to the afternoon’s performances, **Rona Siddiqui** also performed her song “When Pigeons Fly,” from her original musical *Salaam Medina: Tales of a Halfghan*. Kritzer joined Siddiqui to present another original piece entitled “Om Shanti.” Following a video presentation about the impact of the hurricanes on the Hermitage, Kritzer delivered a powerful rendition of Celine Dion’s “That’s the Way It Is.” The afternoon’s performances also showcased some of Sarasota’s greatest local talents with Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative Fellow **Raleigh Mosely II** and frequent Hermitage guest performer **Martina Long**. The duo brought down the house with “I’m Gone” from the Broadway musical *Hands on a Hardbody*, written by Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning Hermitage Fellow and Trustee **Doug Wright**, in collaboration with Amanda Green and Phish’s Trey Anastasio.

(Complete bios for Kritzer, Siddiqui, Mosely, and Long can be found below.)

“This year’s Artful Lobster was an event to remember and an especially meaningful celebration of resilience,” said the Hermitage’s **Andy Sandberg**. “We are thankful to all who attended and supported this year’s festivities. The generous outpouring of support for the work we are doing at the Hermitage *and* our ongoing hurricane recovery efforts is a demonstration of our community’s extraordinary commitment to the arts and the creative process.”

This year’s Artful Lobster was co-chaired by **Alice & David Court** and **Peter Offringa & Allison Gregory**. Sponsors and partners for the 2024 Artful Lobster included Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Key Agency, *Sarasota Herald-Tribune*, and *Sarasota Magazine*. A full list of this year’s sponsors and partners can be found at HermitageArtistRetreat.org/ArtfulLobster2024.

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 innovative programs include performances, conversations, readings, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

Note: The Hermitage recently experienced devastating impact from hurricanes Helene and Milton, and the organization is working to reopen its beachfront campus on Manasota Key as quickly as possible.

For more information about the Hermitage or to make a tax-deductible contribution to the Hermitage’s hurricane repair efforts, please 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 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, Guggenheim and MacArthur 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.

ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:

Thursday, December 5 @ 5:30pm, Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: “Solo Flute — The Destiny of Density,” featuring Hermitage Fellow **Claire Chase**, at Selby Gardens’ Historic Spanish Point (Osprey) *Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens*
Claire Chase's Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by Carole Crosby & Larry Wickless

Monday, December 9 @ 7:30pm, “The Sore Loser,” featuring **Hermitage Major Theater Award Winner Madeleine George**, at Venice Theatre (Venice)
Presented in partnership with Venice Theatre
*The Hermitage Major Theater Award and Madeleine George's Hermitage residency are made possible with generous support from **Flora Major** and the **Kutya Major Foundation**.*

Friday, December 13 @ 5pm, “Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative: Opera and Theater,” featuring Hermitage Fellows **Anthony Barrese** and **Raleigh Mosely II**, at the Sarasota Opera House (Downtown Sarasota)
Presented in partnership with Sarasota Opera and Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe
*The Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative is made possible with generous support from **The Koski Family Foundation**.*

ARTIST BIOS

Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer

Hermitage Fellow **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** is a 2024 Tony Award Nominee for her showstopping turn as ‘Lady of the Lake’ in the Broadway revival of *Spamalot*. She previously starred on Broadway as Delia in *Beetlejuice*, for which she received Drama Desk, Drama League, and Chita Rivera Award nominations. Additional Broadway credits include *Something Rotten!*, *Elf*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, *Legally Blonde*, *A Catered Affair* (Drama Desk nomination) and *Hairspray*. Off-Broadway: *The Robber Bridegroom* (Lucille Lortel Award and Drama League Award), *Gigantic* (Lortel nomination), *ROOMS: A Rock Romance* (Outer

Critics Circle nomination), and others. She can be heard on several original cast recordings. TV: “Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” (as Carol Burnett in the series finale) “The First Lady,” “Bridge & Tunnel,” “New Amsterdam,” “Difficult People,” “Kevin Can Wait,” “Younger,” “Vinyl,” and “Law & Order.” Sarasota audiences have previously seen Leslie perform alongside Andy Sandberg in the Hermitage 20th Anniversary Concert (Van Wezel Hall) and at the 2023 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner (The Ringling Museum), as well as on the Hermitage Beach. @LeslieKritzer

Rona Siddiqui

Rona Siddiqui is a Hermitage Fellow who has presented original work on the Hermitage Beach and as part of the “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” series, in addition to serving as Music Director for the Hermitage’s 20th Anniversary Concert. She is the 2024 winner of the prestigious Ed Kleban Award for most promising musical theater lyricist. An award-winning composer, lyricist, orchestrator, and music director based in New York City, Siddiqui also 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*, *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 54 Below. RonaSiddiqui.com

Raleigh Mosley II

Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative Fellow **Raleigh Mosely II** has performed at various Hermitage programs and benefits. He made his Westcoast Black Theatre Troupe debut in the Summer 2017 production of *Broadway in Black*. Originally from Miami, he earned his BFA in musical theater from the University of Central Florida. His theater credits include *Dreamgirls*, *In the Heights*, *HAIR*, *Ragtime*, *Broadbend*, *Arkansas*, and *The 25th Annual...Spelling Bee*.

Martina Long

A full-time performer and frequent Hermitage guest performer, **Martina Long** has been a principal vocalist for Celebrity Cruise Lines, Prather Productions, and Gulf Coast Symphony, among others. She is currently a guest entertainer headlining her own solo show called *Women of the 60’s and Broadway...with a Twist!* on board Carnival Cruise Lines. She holds a BFA in musical theater from Florida Southern College.

HermitageArtistRetreat.org

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