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**Hermitage Announces Fourth Annual Concert in the
Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series:
“Piano in the Key of Vijay” Featuring Award-Winning
Pianist and Composer Vijay Iyer**

*“Piano in the Key of Vijay,” with Grammy Award-nominated composer and past Hermitage Greenfield Prize winner **Vijay Iyer**, will be presented at **Selby Gardens** (Downtown Sarasota) on **Thursday February 20th at 7pm** – the fourth performance in the Hermitage’s annual Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series.*

January 13, 2024 — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Sarasota County, Florida) is pleased to announce the fourth annual concert in the **Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage**, featuring Grammy-nominated composer and award-winning pianist **Vijay Iyer**. This event will take place on **Thursday, February 20th at 7pm** at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota). This alumni music initiative was launched in 2022 to a full-capacity crowd at Selby Gardens with “Soulful Strings: An Evening of Harp Music,” featuring celebrated harpist and Hermitage alumna **Ashley Jackson**. The 2023 concert, “The Pop-Rock-Folk World of Zoe Sarnak,” featured award-winning New York City-based Hermitage alumna **Zoe Sarnak**, with Sarasota-based vocalists and musicians performing Sarnak’s original songs at Nathan Benderson Park. Last year’s concert, “Piano Classics Remade,” featured world-renowned pianist and Hermitage alumnus **Conrad Tao** performing for a sold-out crowd at Selby Gardens.

This year, the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage continues this popular series with Grammy Award-nominated pianist, composer, and past Hermitage Greenfield Prize winner **Vijay Iyer**. Described by *The New York Times* as a “social conscience, multimedia collaborator, system builder, rhapsodist, historical thinker, and multicultural gateway,” Hermitage Fellow and composer-pianist Vijay Iyer has earned a place as one of the leading music-makers of his generation. Beyond his recognition as a **Hermitage Greenfield Prize** winner in the discipline of music, his honors include a MacArthur Fellowship, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a United

States Artist Fellowship, three Grammy Award nominations, and the Alpert Award in the Arts.

The Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage offers the opportunity for a distinguished Hermitage alum to return for additional residency time and a special community concert. This initiative is made possible by a generous multi-year gift from the Ruby E. and Carole Crosby Family Foundation. Current Hermitage Board President **Carole Crosby** initiated this gift as a special tribute to her mother Ruby, who helped to inspire her own deep love of music. A musician herself, Carole Crosby graduated from the Curtis Institute of Music and played the harp in both the Atlanta Symphony and Detroit Symphony.

“The Hermitage brings some of the most talented artists and performers in the world to our community,” said Crosby. “Music was always incredibly important to me and to my mother, so it’s an honor to celebrate her memory with this initiative spotlighting and supporting some truly extraordinary composers and musicians. I am deeply inspired by the Hermitage’s commitment to these artists and the impact these magnificent talents are having in our region.”

“We are incredibly excited to welcome Vijay Iyer back to the Gulf Coast to share his talents with our growing Hermitage audience,” added Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “Vijay is one of the most innovative composers of his generation, not to mention an early recipient of the Hermitage Greenfield Prize. As we continue to reengage with and provide more opportunities for Hermitage alumni, this generous gift from Carole Crosby in her mother’s honor allows our community to celebrate and reconvene with groundbreaking musical talents who have come to know Sarasota through their time at the Hermitage.”

There isn’t much Hermitage Greenfield Prize winner **Vijay Iyer** hasn’t done in the world of music. A Grammy Award-nominated composer, he has performed at the world’s most iconic venues, composed works premiered by leading institutions such as the London Philharmonic, and collaborated with celebrated musicians and ensembles similarly admired for their innovative approach, such as Hermitage Fellow Claire Chase and the International Contemporary Ensemble. His newest albums are *Defiant Life*, his second suite of duets with visionary composer-trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith; *Compassion*, featuring his acclaimed trio with drummer Tyshawn Sorey and bassist Linda May Han Oh; *Trouble*, a composer portrait album comprising three of his orchestral works, including the titular violin concerto performed by Jennifer Koh; and *Love in Exile*, his Grammy Award-nominated collaboration with Arooj Aftab and Shahzad Ismaily. He teaches at Harvard University. The original composition resulting from Vijay’s Hermitage Greenfield Prize, *Bruits*, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2022, performed by the critically acclaimed ensemble Imani Winds.

“Piano in the Key of Vijay” will be presented at Selby Gardens’ Event Center (Downtown Sarasota) on **Thursday, February 20th at 7pm**. This program is free and

open to the public with a \$5/person registration fee. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.** *Capacity will be limited, and registration is available on a first-come, first-served basis, at which time registration will shift to a waitlist. Previous events in this series have reached capacity, so early registration is strongly encouraged.*

(Full program details are provided below.)

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.

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

FULL PROGRAM DETAILS

“Piano in the Key of Vijay,” Thursday, February 20 @ 7pm at Selby Gardens (Downtown Sarasota): There isn’t much Hermitage Greenfield Prize winner Vijay Iyer hasn’t done in the world of music. A Grammy Award-nominated composer, he has performed at the world’s most iconic venues, composed works premiered by leading institutions such as the London Philharmonic, and collaborated with celebrated musicians and ensembles similarly admired for their innovative approach, like Hermitage Fellow Claire Chase and the International Contemporary Ensemble. It is no surprise that *The New York Times* described him as a “social conscience, multimedia collaborator, system builder, rhapsodist, historical thinker, and multicultural gateway.” This prolific composer and performer continues to inspire musicians and audiences alike with daring fusions of musical styles from across the world and his virtuosic skills at the piano. Hear selections of Vijay’s vast catalogue of work — performed on the piano by the artist himself — and gain new insights into his creative process as he returns to the Hermitage through the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Initiative. *Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Vijay Iyer’s concert and Hermitage residency are made possible through the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Estimated running time: 60-70 minutes; indoor venue. Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota / Event Center), 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236.*

PREVIOUSLY ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAM

Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: “Book, Music, and Lyrics” with Hermitage Fellow Mark Sonnenblick, Thursday January 30, 2025 @ 5:30pm: Fresh off the ‘heels’ of his collaboration with Elton John on the West End premiere of *The Devil Wears Prada* and celebrated for his talents as a lyricist, book writer, and composer, Hermitage Fellow **Mark Sonnenblick’s** work has been called “lushly romantic” by *The New York Times*, as well as “sly and unexpectedly subversive” by *The New Yorker*. With a career that already spans stage and screen, including songs on such hits as Apple’s *Spirited*, starring Ryan Reynolds and Will Ferrell, Searchlight Pictures’ *Theater Camp*, and Netflix’s *Lyle, Lyle, Crocodile*, Sonnenblick’s abilities span styles. An Emmy Award and Drama Desk nominee as well as a recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant, Sonnenblick shares stories and songs from his work so far, and previews some of what might be next. *Presented in Partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org (\$5/person registration fee). Estimated running time: 60-70 minutes; outdoor venue. Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota / behind Payne Mansion), 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236.*** Mark Sonnenblick’s Hermitage Residency is generously sponsored by the Huisking Family Fund of the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

RUBY E. CROSBY ALUMNI ARTIST BIO

Vijay Iyer

Described by *The New York Times* as a “social conscience, multimedia collaborator, system builder, rhapsodist, historical thinker and multicultural gateway,” Hermitage Fellow and composer-pianist **Vijay Iyer** has earned a place as one of the leading music-makers of his generation. Beyond his recognition as a **Hermitage Greenfield Prize** winner in the discipline of music, his honors include a MacArthur Fellowship, a Doris Duke Performing Artist Award, a United States Artist Fellowship, three Grammy Award nominations, and the Alpert Award in the Arts. His newest albums are *Defiant Life* (ECM, 2025), his second suite of duets with visionary composer-trumpeter Wadada Leo Smith; *Compassion* (ECM, 2024), featuring his acclaimed trio with drummer Tyshawn Sorey and bassist Linda May Han Oh; *Trouble* (BMOP/sound, 2024), a composer portrait album comprising three of his orchestral works, including the titular violin concerto performed by Jennifer Koh; and *Love in Exile* (Verve, 2023), his Grammy Award-nominated collaboration with Arooj Aftab and Shahzad Ismaily. He teaches at Harvard University. The original composition resulting from Vijay’s Hermitage Greenfield Prize, *Bruits*, was nominated for a Grammy Award in 2022, performed by the critically acclaimed ensemble Imani Winds.

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:

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HermitageArtistRetreat.org

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