

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Media Contact:

Hermitage Media Relations; 941-475-2098, Ext. 8;
Communications@HermitageArtistRetreat.org

THE HERMITAGE
artist retreat



**Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-Winning Playwright
and Hermitage Fellow Doug Wright Returns to Sarasota**

*The Hermitage partners with Asolo Repertory Theatre and Florida State University's Master of Fine Arts in Acting Conservancy to bring Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winner **Doug Wright** to Sarasota for a special presentation.*

January 16, 2025 (Sarasota County, Florida) — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** announces a new program with Tony Award and Pulitzer Prize winner **Doug Wright** as he returns to Sarasota for “**The PlayWRIGHT’s the Thing.**” Join the Hermitage at the Asolo’s Cook Theater in the FSU Center for Performing Arts, as Wright engages in conversation with Hermitage Artistic Director **Andy Sandberg** on **Monday, February 10th at 6pm.** In addition, program attendees will have the opportunity to hear selections from Wright’s lesser-known original works, performed by some of Sarasota’s brightest talents.

With his hit Broadway play ***Good Night, Oscar*** gearing up for its regional premiere at Asolo Repertory Theatre this spring, Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright, screenwriter, and librettist **Doug Wright** has been creating celebrated works of theater and film for over two decades. Many of Wright’s worlds and characters have their basis in real life people and events, from Charlotte von Mahlsdorf in ***I Am My Own Wife***, to Big and Little Edie in ***Grey Gardens***, to the famous rivalry between Helena Rubenstein and Elizabeth Arden in ***War Paint***. Hear what draws this acclaimed playwright to these stories, as well as other fascinating insights into his process.

Wright is a proud Hermitage alumnus and trustee, and he served as a juror for the inaugural Hermitage Major Theater Award in 2021. He has remained an engaged and active member of the Hermitage alumni community. His Broadway credits include ***I Am My Own Wife*** (Pulitzer Prize; Tony Award), ***Grey Gardens***, ***Hands on a Hardbody***, ***War Paint***, and ***The Little Mermaid***. In film, Wright’s credits include screenplays for Fine Line Features, Fox Searchlight, and DreamWorks SKG, among others. His recent Amazon film ***The Burial*** stars **Jamie Foxx** and **Tommy Lee Jones**. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild, where he served as President for many years. He previously returned to the Gulf Coast just last year, where he presented Hermitage

programs in collaboration with SILL in Sarasota and Venice, as well as a Hermitage event in Boca Grande.

His most recent play, ***Good Night, Oscar***, originally directed by Hermitage Fellow **Lisa Peterson**, received critical acclaim at Chicago's Goodman Theatre before transferring to Broadway, where it earned Sean Hayes a Tony Award for Best Performance by a Lead Actor. **Asolo Repertory Theatre** will present the Florida premiere of *Good Night, Oscar* this spring, running April 2-26, 2025.

(Full program details for all events are provided below.)

All of these Hermitage programs are free and open to the public (with a \$5/person registration fee), offering Gulf Coast audiences a rare chance to engage and interact with some of the world's leading talent. Due to capacity limitations, **registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org.**

Please note: *due to the ongoing campus recovery and shifting residency schedules, some Hermitage programs this season will be announced on shorter notice than usual. Audiences are encouraged to keep an eye on HermitageArtistRetreat.org, where newly added events will be added as they open for registration.*

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.

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 or performance, 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.

FULL PROGRAM DETAILS

Newly Announced Hermitage Program:

- **“The PlayWRIGHT’s the Thing” with Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning Hermitage Fellow Doug Wright, Monday, February 10, 2025 @ 6pm:** With his hit Broadway play *Good Night*, Oscar gearing up for its Florida premiere in Sarasota this spring, Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright, screenwriter, and librettist **Doug Wright** has been creating celebrated works of theater and film for over two decades. Many of Wright’s worlds and characters have their basis in real life people and events, from Charlotte von Mahlsdorf in *I Am My Own Wife*, to Big and Little Edie in *Grey Gardens*, to the famous rivalry between Helena Rubenstein and Elizabeth Arden in *War Paint*. Hear what draws this acclaimed playwright to these stories, as well as other fascinating insights into his process as he engages in conversation with Hermitage Artistic Director Andy Sandberg. In addition to the conversation, hear selections from Wright’s original works, performed by some of Sarasota’s brightest talents. *Presented in Partnership with Asolo Repertory Theatre. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org* (\$5/person registration fee). *Estimated running time: 60-70 minutes; The Cook Theater (FSU Asolo Center for Performing Arts), 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, Florida 34243.*

Previously Announced Hermitage Programs:

- **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; Marie Selby Botanical Gardens – Downtown Sarasota Campus, 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236. Mark Sonnenblick’s Hermitage Residency*

generously sponsored by the Huisking Family Fund of Community Foundation of Sarasota County

- **“Piano in the Key of Vijay” with Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner Vijay Iyer Thursday, February 20 @:** 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.*

ARTIST BIO

Doug Wright

Hermitage Fellow and Trustee **Doug Wright** is a Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright. He is a proud Hermitage alumnus and also served as a juror for the inaugural Hermitage Major Theater Award in 2021. He has remained an engaged and active member of the Hermitage alumni community. Most recently, his play ***Good Night, Oscar***, starring Sean Hayes, opened at the Goodman Theater in Chicago under the direction of fellow Hermitage alum Lisa Peterson before transferring to Broadway. His film ***The Burial*** is currently on Amazon, starring Jamie Foxx and Tommy Lee Jones. Wright’s play ***Quills*** premiered at Washington, D.C.’s Woolly Mammoth Theatre Company in 1995 and subsequently had its debut Off-Broadway at New York Theatre Workshop. *Quills* garnered the 1995 Kesselring Prize for Best New American Play from the National Arts Club and, for Wright, a 1996 Village Voice Obie Award for Outstanding Achievement in Playwriting. In 2000, Wright wrote the screenplay for the film adaptation of *Quills*, which starred Geoffrey Rush. Wright’s play ***I Am My Own Wife*** was produced Off-Broadway by Playwrights Horizons in 2003. It transferred to Broadway where it won the Tony Award for Best Play, as well as the Pulitzer Prize for Drama. In 2006, Wright wrote the book for the stage musical adaptation of ***Grey Gardens***, which opened on Broadway to critical acclaim. He has adapted the Disney film ***The Little Mermaid*** as a Broadway musical, which opened in 2007. In 2009, he was commissioned by the La Jolla Playhouse to adapt and direct *Creditors* by August Strindberg. In another La Jolla commission, he wrote the book for the musical ***Hands on a Hardbody***, with the score by Amanda Green and Trey Anastasio. The musical had a run on Broadway in 2013 after premiering at the La Jolla Playhouse in 2012. He has also written the book for the musical ***War Paint***, with a score by Scott Frankel and Michael Korie, and starring Patti LuPone and Christine Ebersole. For television, Wright worked on four pilots for producer Norman Lear and teleplays for

Hallmark Entertainment and HBO. In film, Wright's credits include screenplays for Fine Line Features, Fox Searchlight, and DreamWorks SKG. He is a member of the Dramatists Guild, where he served as President for many years. In addition to his role as a Hermitage trustee, he also serves on the board of New York Theatre Workshop. He is a recipient of the William L. Bradley Fellowship at Yale University, the Charles MacArthur Fellowship at the Eugene O'Neill Theater Center, an HBO Fellowship in playwriting, and the Alfred Hodder Fellowship at Princeton University. In 2010, he was named a United States Artists Fellow. Mr. Wright lives in New York City with his partner, songwriter David Clement.

HermitageArtistRetreat.org

Facebook / Instagram: [**@HermitageArtistRetreat**](#)