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**PROGRAM UPDATE FOR MARCH 19:  
Tony Award Nominee Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer  
Joins Olivier Award Nominee Beth Steel**

*Anna Deavere Smith is no longer available to attend her scheduled Hermitage residency due to a professional conflict. However, we are thrilled to share that Tony Award-nominated Broadway star **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** will step in as she returns to share original work, joining the previously announced Olivier Award nominee **Beth Steel**.*

February 11, 2026 (Sarasota County, Florida) — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** today announced a change to the recently announced March 19<sup>th</sup> program on the Hermitage Beach. Due to a professional conflict, Anna Deavere Smith is no longer able to attend her scheduled Hermitage residency. Tony Award nominee **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** will step in as she returns to the Hermitage to share original work, joining the previously announced Olivier Award nominee and Hermitage Major Theater Award finalist **Beth Steel**. This sunset program will take place on **Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm**. Kritzer is a celebrated Broadway star best known for her Tony Award-nominated performance as ‘Lady of the Lake’ in *Spamalot* and Delia in *Beetlejuice*. Steel is the UK-based author of the acclaimed West End play *Till the Stars Come Down*, a transfer from the National Theatre. These two distinct talents will offer their unique perspectives and share excerpts of their original work in this sunset program on the Hermitage Beach.

**Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** is an actor, comedian, writer, and returning Hermitage Fellow. She received a 2024 Tony Award nomination for her showstopping turn as ‘Lady of the Lake’ in the Broadway revival of *Spamalot*. Kritzer previously starred on Broadway as Delia in *Beetlejuice*, for which she received Drama Desk, Drama League, and Chita Rivera Award nominations. Her additional Broadway credits include *Something Rotten!*, *Elf*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, *Legally Blonde*, *A Catered Affair* and *Hairspray*. Kritzer can be heard on several original casting recordings including “Marvelous Mrs. Maisel” (as legendary comedian 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 20<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Concert at

the Van Wezel Hall, on the Hermitage Beach sharing her original writing, at the 2023 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner, and the 2024 Hermitage Artful Lobster.

Hermitage Major Theater Award finalist **Beth Steel**'s most recent play, *Till the Stars Come Down*, had a sold out run at the National Theatre before transferring to the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London's West End in 2025. The play was nominated for Best New Play at the 2024 Olivier Awards and has been nominated for Best Play for the 2025 Standard Theatre Awards. Her other plays include *The House of Shades*, which premiered at the Almeida Theatre and was a Susan Smith Blackburn finalist; the Evening Standard Award-winning *Wonderland* which was also a Susan Smith Blackburn finalist; and *Ditch*, a John Whiting Award finalist.

On **Thursday, March 19<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm**, the Hermitage will present "**Dramatizing the Contemporary World**," featuring these two powerhouse theater artists. Together, Kritzer and Steel will provide a sneak peek into their creative process and share excerpts of their original work on the Hermitage Beach.

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. Running time for most Hermitage programs is **60-70 minutes** with no intermission. Due to capacity limitations, **registration is required** at **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.

Additional Hermitage programs for the spring will be announced soon.

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

**See below for complete program details and artist bios.**

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, music concerts, interactive experiences, open studios, school programs, teacher workshops, and more, serving thousands in our regional community each year.

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## **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 18 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](https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org).**

### **The Hermitage is supported by:**

*Hermitage programs are supported, in part, by 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.*

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### **Newly Announced Hermitage Program:**

- **“Dramatizing the Contemporary World,” featuring Hermitage Fellows Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer and Beth Steel, Thursday, March 19, 6:30pm:** Returning Hermitage Fellow **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** is a Tony Award-nominated Broadway performer known for her star turns as ‘Lady of the Lake’ in the Broadway revival of *Spamalot* and Delia in *Beetlejuice*. She is also a brilliant storyteller, and back at the Hermitage as a writer. Olivier Award nominee **Beth Steel** is a UK-based playwright and Hermitage Major Theater Award finalist whose plays explore contemporary issues through the lives of working-class characters. Her latest play, *Till the Stars Come Down*, was recently nominated for an Olivier Award for Best Play, and is currently nominated for the Standard Theatre Award for Best Play. Kritzer and Steel will offer Hermitage audiences a sneak peek into their latest theatrical works and stories in development as they share original work on the Hermitage Beach. *Beth Steel was a finalist for the 2024 Hermitage Major Theater Award, made possible with generous support from Flora Major and the Kutya Major Foundation. Registration is required at [HermitageArtistRetreat.org](https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org) (\$5/person registration fee). Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Rd. Englewood, FL 34223*
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## ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:

**Friday, February 13 @ 5pm, “A Decade of Density / A Lifetime of Story: An Evening of Flute and Literature,”** featuring Hermitage Fellows **Claire Chase** and **Kirstin Valdez Quade**, on the Hermitage Great Lawn (Manasota Key)

*Claire Chase’s Hermitage residency generously sponsored by **Ellen Berman & Roy Cohen***

*Kirstin Valdez Quade’s Hermitage residency generously sponsored by **Terry Brackett***

**Thursday, February 19 @ 5:30pm, Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: “The Highs and Lows of Going Solo,”** featuring Hermitage Fellows **Morgan Bassichis** and **Doug Wright**, at Selby Gardens’ Historic Spanish Point (Osprey)

*Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens*

**Thursday, February 26 @ 5:30pm, “Speak the Word and Lift Every Voice,”** featuring Hermitage Fellows **Jessica Care Moore** and **James Jackson, Jr.**, on the Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key)

**Thursday, March 5 @ 7pm, “Crosby Alumni Music Initiative: Flute Through the Ages,”** featuring Hermitage Fellow **Emi Ferguson**, at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Sarasota)

*Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens*

*Emi Ferguson’s concert and Hermitage residency are made possible through the Ruby E. Crosby Alumni Music Series at the Hermitage*

**Monday, March 16 @ 6pm, “Joe & Lauren Make Cool Music at MPAC,”** featuring Hermitage Fellows **Joe Iconis** and **Lauren Marcus**, at the Manatee Performing Arts Center (Bradenton)

*Presented in partnership with Manatee Performing Arts Center*

**NEWLY UPDATED – Thursday, March 19 @ 6:30pm, “Dramatizing the Contemporary World,”** featuring Hermitage Fellows **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** and **Beth Steel**, on the Hermitage Beach (Englewood)

*Beth Steel was a finalist for the 2024 Hermitage Major Theater Award, made possible with generous support from Flora Major and the Kutya Major Foundation*

**Friday, March 20 @ 6:30pm, “Joe & Lauren: Making Music in Boca Grande,”** featuring Hermitage Fellows **Joe Iconis** and **Lauren Marcus**, at the Gasparilla Island Lighthouse – Range Light (Boca Grande)

*Presented in partnership with Barrier Island Parks Society (BIPS)*

*This program on Boca Grande is generously sponsored by **Alice & David Court***

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## ARTIST BIOS

### **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer**

**Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** is an actor, comedian, writer, and returning Hermitage Fellow. She received a 2024 Tony Award nomination for her showstopping turn as ‘Lady of the Lake’ in the Broadway revival of *Spamalot*. Kritzer previously starred on Broadway as Delia in *Beetlejuice*, for which she received Drama Desk, Drama League, and Chita Rivera Award nominations. Additional Broadway credits: *Something Rotten!*, *Elf*, *Sondheim on Sondheim*, *Legally Blonde*, *A Catered Affair* (Drama Desk nom.), and *Hairspray*. Off-Broadway: *The Robber Bridegroom* (Lucille Lortel and Drama League Awards), *Gigantic* (Lortel nom.), *ROOMS: A Rock Romance* (Outer Critics Circle nom.), and others. She can be heard on several original casting 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 20<sup>th</sup>

Anniversary Concert (Van Wezel Hall), on the Hermitage Beach sharing her original writing, at the 2023 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner, and the 2024 Hermitage Artful Lobster. @LeslieKritzer

### **Beth Steel**

Hermitage Fellow **Beth Steel**'s most recent play, *Till the Stars Come Down*, had a sold out run at the National Theatre before transferring to the Theatre Royal Haymarket in London's West End in 2025. The play was nominated for Best New Play at the 2024 Olivier Awards, and has been nominated for Best Play for the 2025 Standard Theatre Awards. Her other plays include *The House of Shades*, which premiered at the Almeida Theatre and was a Susan Smith Blackburn finalist; the Evening Standard Award-winning *Wonderland*, also a Susan Smith Blackburn finalist; and *Ditch*, a John Whiting Award finalist. Beth Steel was a finalist in 2024 for the **Hermitage Major Theater Award**.

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[HermitageArtistRetreat.org](https://HermitageArtistRetreat.org)

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