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THE HERMITAGE
artist retreat



**Tony Award Nominee and Broadway Star
WILL SWENSON
to Perform at 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner
Honoring Visual Artist Charisse Pearlina Weston**

*The Hermitage's annual spring benefit honors visual artist **Charisse Pearlina Weston** as the winner of the 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize. This year's event will feature a special guest performance from Tony Award-nominated Obie Award winner **Will Swenson** and returning Hermitage Fellow **Britton Smith**.*

March 16, 2026 (Sarasota County, Florida) — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** (Andy Sandberg, Artistic Director and CEO) today announced that Tony Award-nominated Broadway star and Obie Award winner **Will Swenson** (*Hair*, *A Beautiful Noise*, *Les Misérables*) will headline the **2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner** on Sunday, April 12th. He will be joined by returning Hermitage Fellow **Britton Smith**, who has appeared in two recent Hermitage programs and will share some of his original music.

Will Swenson is celebrated as one of Broadway's most versatile actors. He is a Tony Award nominee and an Obie Award winner who recently starred as Neil Diamond in the Broadway musical *A Beautiful Noise*. He previously co-starred with Hermitage Fellow Gavin Creel in the hit Broadway revival of *Hair*. Swenson's acclaimed performance as Berger earned him Tony Award and Drama Desk Award nominations. (Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO Andy Sandberg won a Tony Award for his role as a producer of this acclaimed revival.) Swenson's portrayal of Charles Guiteau in the Off-Broadway revival of Stephen Sondheim's *Assassins* earned him nominations for Outer Critics Circle, Lucille Lortel, and Drama League Awards. He won an Obie Award for his role in *Jerry Springer: The Opera*. Swenson's other Broadway and Off-Broadway credits include *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert*, *Les Misérables*, *Waitress*, *Murder Ballad* (written by Hermitage Fellow **Julia Jordan**), *Rock of Ages*, *Pericles*, *Nantucket Sleighride*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Adrift in Macao*, and many more. Swenson's film and television credits include *The Greatest Showman*, *The Kitchen*, *This is Where I Leave You*, *The Chilling*

Adventures of Sabrina, Law & Order (SVU & CI), The Good Wife, Hit and Run, The Bite, First Kill, and Elsbeth.

Returning Hermitage Fellow **Britton Smith** will also be performing at the popular spring gala, sharing some of his original music developed at the Hermitage. He is a 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize finalist, a Broadway veteran, and a Tony Award winner for his work with the Broadway Advocacy Coalition. Smith, the leader of the self-described “funk liberation band” Britton and the Sting, has been called a “force to be reckoned with” and a “tornado of talent and energy” by Broadway World. Hermitage audiences will remember Britton’s memorable performances in the “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” series, including his most recent program: “The Rising Stars of Jazz and Soul.”

“I’ve known Will Swenson for twenty years, and I’m so excited that he’ll be sharing his incredible talents with our Hermitage audiences at this year’s event,” says Hermitage Artistic Director and CEO **Andy Sandberg**. “Will and Britton are both extraordinary performers, and guests at this year’s Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner are in for a real treat – this is going to be a night to remember!”

Past performers at the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner have included Tony and Grammy Award winner **Rachel Bay Jones** (*Dear Evan Hansen, Georgie & Mandy’s First Marriage*), Tony and Emmy Award nominee **Eden Espinosa** (*Wicked, Lempicka, Rent*), Tony Award nominee **Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer** (*Beetlejuice, Spamalot*), and Tony Award-winning Hermitage Fellow **Gavin Creel** (*Hello Dolly, Hair, Walk on Through*).

This year’s event Co-Chairs are Ellen and Richard Sandor. **The Hermitage Greenfield Prize** is presented by the Hermitage Artist Retreat in partnership with the Philadelphia-based **Greenfield Foundation**, with the **Community Foundation of Sarasota County** serving as the lead community sponsor. Media sponsors include *The Herald Tribune* and *SRQ Magazine*. A full list of this year’s sponsors, benefactors, and partners can be found at HermitageArtistRetreat.org/HGPDinner2026.

Tables and sponsorships for the 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner may be purchased by contacting the Hermitage Development Office at (941) 475-2098, Ext. 2. Sponsorship levels for this popular Hermitage benefit range from \$2,000 to \$10,000. *Please note: this event has limited capacity remaining.*

Prior to the Sunday gala dinner, the Hermitage will host a free hour-long community program on **Saturday, April 11th at 5pm** featuring 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize winner **Charisse Pearlina Weston**. Weston will offer her first public Hermitage program in partnership with **The Ringling** at the Museum’s Historic Asolo Theater in Sarasota: **“Repetition, Enfoldment, Concealment” – A Conversation on Art and Practice**. Weston will spend an hour in conversation with 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize juror and art curator **Larry Ossei-Mensah**.

On **Monday, April 13th at 7pm**, the Hermitage will present the first public presentation of the new play commission from 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize winner **Deepa Purohit** at Asolo Rep's Koski Center. Purohit's newly commissioned theatrical piece, ***Mxx: The Dignity Project***, is an immersive play, installation, discussion circle, and "happening,"

Recipients of the Hermitage Greenfield Prize include **Charisse Pearlina Weston**, visual art (2026); **Rucyl Mills**, composer and sound artist (2025); **Deepa Purohit**, playwright (2024); **Sandy Rodriguez**, visual artist (2023); **Rennie Harris**, dancer/choreographer (2023); **Angélica Negrón**, composer (2022); **Aleshea Harris**, playwright (2021); **Helga Davis**, composer / performer (2019); **Martyna Majok**, playwright (2018); **David Burnett**, photojournalist (2017); **Coco Fusco**, interdisciplinary artist (2016); **Bobby Previte**, composer / drummer (2015); **Nilo Cruz**, playwright (2014); **Trenton Doyle Hancock**, visual artist (2013); **Vijay Iyer**, composer/pianist (2012); **John Guare**, playwright (2011); **Sanford Biggers**, visual artist (2010); **Craig Lucas**, playwright (2009); and **Eve Beglarian**, composer (2009).

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.

For more information about the Hermitage or to learn more about the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner, visit: **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**.



THE HERMITAGE
GREENFIELD PRIZE

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.

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.

The Hermitage Greenfield Prize

The Hermitage Greenfield Prize (HGP) is a transformative partnership between the Hermitage Artist Retreat and the Greenfield Foundation. Rotating between the fields of music, theater, and visual art, this prestigious national prize seeks to “bring into the world works of art that will have a significant impact on the broad as well as the artistic culture of our society.” The Hermitage Greenfield Prize is awarded annually and includes a Hermitage Fellowship, as well as a \$35,000 commission for a new and original piece of work to be created within a two-year time frame. A residency at the Hermitage Artist Retreat on Manasota Key in Englewood, Florida, ensures time and space in which to do the work.

FULL HERMITAGE GREENFIELD PRIZE WEEKEND PROGRAM DETAILS

- **“Repetition, Enfoldment, Concealment” – A Conversation on Art and Practice with 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner Charisse Pearlina Weston, Saturday, April 11, 2026 @ 5pm:** Winner of the 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize in Visual Art, **Charisse Pearlina Weston** is a conceptual artist and writer whose work contends with the dynamic interplay of violence and intimacy through repetition, enfoldment, and concealment. Drawn to its fragility and danger, Weston has worked with glass as her primary material for much of her career. Her recent solo exhibit, “mis/mé- (squeeze)” was a *New York Times* Critic’s Pick, the review’s headline exclaiming “Surveillance Never Looked So Good” and noting that “in Weston’s best work, the folds and bends in her industrial ingredients seem to be concealing or safeguarding information, holding things back as they beguile.” Weston will spend this hour in conversation with 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize juror **Larry Ossei-Mensah**, independent curator and founder of ARTNOIR. Together, they will discuss the intricacies of Weston’s practice, offer their perspectives on the arts as a reflection of social impact, and discuss how her Hermitage Greenfield Prize commission extends that work

into new pathways. *Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and The Ringling. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **The Ringling's Historic Asolo Theater, 5401 Bay Shore Rd., Sarasota, FL 34243.***

- **GALA DINNER! – 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner, Sunday, April 12, 6pm:** The 2025 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner recognizes this year's recipient, visual artist **Charisse Pearlina Weston**. This 18th year of the Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner will feature live performances from Tony Award-nominated Broadway star **Will Swenson** and Hermitage Fellow **Britton Smith**. *Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation. Lead Community Sponsor: The Community Foundation of Sarasota County. **Michael's On East (1212 South East Ave., Sarasota, FL 34239). For information on tables and sponsorships** (\$2,000 to \$10,000), visit **HermitageArtistRetreat.org**, or call (941) 475-2098, Ext. 2.*
- **"Mxx: The Dignity Project," a World Premiere Play Commission from 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner Deepa Purohit, Monday, April 13 @ 7pm:** The culminating work of her 2024 **Hermitage Greenfield Prize** commission, **Deepa Purohit** shares the first public presentation of her new play, **Mxx: The Dignity Project**. An immersive play, installation, discussion circle, and "happening," **Mxx** centers the collected experiences of inter-generational women from the South Asian diaspora in America who engage or disrupt the diasporic rituals and expectations placed on their bodies as they navigate the "machinery" of the medical/elder care/end-of-life system. How do women live, age, and die with dignity in a culture where the entire medical system is built on this key tenet: to prolong life? This presentation features a cast of four South Asian women: Hermitage Fellow **Nandita Shenoy**, and actors **Sara Haider, Indika Senanayake, and Rita Wolf**. *Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and Asolo Repertory Theatre. **Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org** (\$5/person registration fee). **Asolo Repertory Theatre's Koski Center Coville Rehearsal Hall, 1009 Tallevast Rd., Sarasota, FL 34243.***

ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:

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***

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**
Leslie Rodriguez Kritzer's Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by **Charlotte Perret***

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***

HERMITAGE GREENFIELD PRIZE EVENT! Saturday, April 11 @ 5pm, “Repetition, Enfoldment, Concealment” – A Conversation on Art and Practice with 2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner Charisse Pearlina Weston and Larry Ossei-Menseh, at The Ringling’s Historic Asolo Theater (Sarasota)
Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and The Ringling

HGP GALA DINNER! Sunday, April 12 @ 6pm, “2026 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Dinner,” honoring visual artist **Charisse Pearlina Weston**. This is the Hermitage’s annual spring gala, and sponsorship packages range from \$2,000 to \$10,000. Featured performers include Tony Award-nominated Broadway star **Will Swenson** and Hermitage Fellow **Britton Smith**.
Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation
Lead Community Sponsor: Community Foundation of Sarasota County

HGP WORLD PREMIERE! Monday, April 13 @ 7pm, “Mxx: The Dignity Project – Deepa Purohit’s Hermitage Greenfield Prize Premiere,” featuring 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize Winner **Deepa Purohit** at Asolo Repertory Theatre’s Koski Center (Sarasota). *Presented in partnership with the Greenfield Foundation, the Community Foundation of Sarasota County, and Asolo Repertory Theatre.*

BIOS:

Will Swenson

Known as one of Broadway’s most versatile actors, **Will Swenson** is a Tony Award nominee and an Obie Award winner. Favorite Broadway and Off-Broadway credits include: *A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Musical*, *Hair* (Tony Award and Drama Desk Award nominations; also London’s West End), *Priscilla: Queen of the Desert* (Drama League Award nomination), *Les Misérables*, *Waitress*, *Assassins* (Outer Critics, Lucille Lortel, and Drama League Award nominations), *Jerry Springer: The Opera* (Obie Award), *Murder Ballad*, *Rock of Ages*, *Pericles*, *Nantucket Sleighride*, *Little Miss Sunshine*, *Adrift in Macao*, and many more. Favorite Film and TV: *The Greatest Showman*, *The Kitchen*, *This is Where I Leave You*, *The Chilling Adventures of Sabrina*, *Law & Order* (SVU & CSI), *The Good Wife*, *Hit and Run*, *The Bite*, *First Kill*, and *Elsbeth*.

Britton Smith

Britton Smith, a Hermitage alumnus and a 2024 Hermitage Greenfield Prize finalist, is a Tony Award-winning artist-activist, musician, and founder of Britton & The Sting, an alternative soul band fueling the NYC music scene. Their waves of funk, gospel, rock, and testimony collide with mesmerizing melodies that carry their journey-driven music deep into the soul. Their anthem “Let’s Get Drunk and Go to Church” has been listened to in over 44 countries and was featured on *Paper Magazine*’s “Bops Only: 10 Songs You Need to Start Your Weekend Right.” They were also a 2020 NPR Tiny Desk Submission Top Pick. Britton & The Sting has sold out performances at The Apollo, Gramercy Theatre, Williamsburg Music Hall, Rockwood Music Hall, Nublu, Joe’s Pub, and beyond. Recently, they were the support act on Sammy Rae & The Friends world tour, and have been featured in *Vanity Fair*, *Vogue*, *Fault Magazine*, and *The New Yorker*. Britton is also the creator of *Mama*, a theatrical concert and revival experience that premiered at Little Island and is now in partnership with the U.S. Water Alliance. @BrittonSmithWorld

HermitageArtistRetreat.org

Facebook / Instagram: **@HermitageArtistRetreat**