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**The Hermitage Announces New Programs at Benderson Park and Selby Gardens with Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-Winning Playwright and Composer MICHAEL R. JACKSON, Broadway and Television Actor ADAM CHANLER-BERAT, and Returning Hermitage Composer JULIAN HORNIK**

*In these newly added Hermitage spring programs, Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright, composer, and returning Hermitage Fellow **Michael R. Jackson** takes the stage at **Hermitage Sunsets @ Benderson Park** to offer insight into his latest work, while acclaimed Broadway and television veteran **Adam Chanler-Berat** joins forces with Hermitage-McNally Fellow **Julian Hornik** to share original songs in the latest installment of **Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens**.*

March 31, 2026 (Sarasota County, Florida) — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** today announced two new Hermitage programs featuring Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright and composer **Michael R. Jackson** (*A Strange Loop*, *White Girl in Danger*, *Teeth*), celebrated Broadway and television actor **Adam Chanler-Berat** (*Next to Normal*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, HBO's *Gossip Girl*), and returning Hermitage Fellow and composer **Julian Hornik**, a recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant who recently collaborated with Academy Award-winning Hermitage Fellow **Mark Sonnenblick**. Hornik's residency is made possible through the **McNally Fellowship at the Hermitage**, supported by the Terrence McNally Foundation.

On **Thursday, April 30 at 6:30pm**, the Hermitage will present **Hermitage Sunsets @ Benderson Park: "Making Songs and Making Sense,"** featuring returning Hermitage Fellow, Pulitzer Prize winner, and Tony Award-winning playwright and composer **Michael R. Jackson**. Jackson exploded into the public consciousness with the premiere of his celebrated musical *A Strange Loop*, which transferred to Broadway after an acclaimed run at Playwrights Horizons, earning Jackson a Pulitzer Prize for Drama, a Tony Award for Best Musical, a Tony Award for Best Book of a Musical, and a total of eleven Tony Award nominations for the production. Registering to be in the audience for this special Hermitage program might just offer a 'sneak peek' into what is next for this celebrated theater writer. In 2022, Jackson was named as one

of *Time Magazine*'s "100 Most Influential People." A returning Hermitage Fellow, Jackson has previously shared selections from *A Strange Loop* and his original musical *White Girl in Danger* with Hermitage audiences after developing the latter during his time at the Hermitage. This time, Jackson will offer insight into his latest work and his creative process.

Then on **Wednesday, May 6<sup>th</sup> at 6:30pm**, the Hermitage will present **Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: "The New Generation of Musical Theater,"** featuring two powerhouse writers and performers. **Adam Chanler-Berat**, a celebrated Broadway and television actor as well as a playwright, is known for originating leading roles in *Next to Normal*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, and *Amélie*, as well as appearing as Jordan Glassberg on HBO's *Gossip Girl*. Returning Hermitage Fellow **Julian Hornik** has developed work with Academy Award-winning Hermitage Fellow **Mark Sonnenblick** and is a recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant from the American Theatre Wing. These two extraordinary talents are frequent collaborators and rising stars in the New York musical theater world. They are now here at the Hermitage developing a new musical together. Join us for the latest "Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens" program as we hear these celebrated artists talk about their creative process and share original songs.

Julian Hornik's Hermitage residency is made possible through the **McNally Fellowship at the Hermitage**, generously sponsored by the **Terrence McNally Foundation**, a nonprofit organization committed to supporting bold new voices in the American theater by providing support to early-career playwrights and the institutions that support them. The McNally Foundation's mission to champion new playwrights aligns with the mission of the Hermitage Artist Retreat: to inspire and foster the most influential and consequential art and artists of our time. Created by legendary playwright/librettist **Terrence McNally** and supported through the ongoing royalties of his work, the Foundation is also committed to supporting LGBTQ+ causes, as McNally did throughout his life. Following Terrence's passing, **Tom Kirdahy** stated that the Foundation would continue the legendary playwright's "singular legacy of mentorship and activism." Kirdahy, a Tony and Olivier Award-winning Broadway producer and the late Terrence McNally's husband, is the president of Tom Kirdahy Productions and a principal trustee of the McNally Foundation. He is currently represented in New York as the lead producer of the Tony Award-winning musical *Hadestown*, *Just in Time*, *Ragtime*, and the hit Off-Broadway revival of *Little Shop of Horrors*.

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**.

**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](http://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.*

## **Newly Announced Hermitage Programs:**

- **Hermitage Sunsets @ Benderson Park: “Making Songs and Making Sense,” featuring Hermitage Fellow Michael R. Jackson, Thursday, April 30, 6:30pm:** Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning playwright, composer, and Hermitage Fellow **Michael R. Jackson** exploded into the public consciousness with the premiere of his celebrated musical *A Strange Loop*, which transferred to Broadway after an acclaimed run at Playwrights Horizons. *The New York Times* described Jackson’s work as “so unexpected, contrarian, and maximalist that I spend a lot of time between them wondering what he’ll do next” – so if you’re in the audience at this Hermitage program, you might just get a ‘sneak peek’ of what that will be! A returning Hermitage Fellow, Jackson has previously shared selections from *A Strange Loop* and his musical *White Girl in Danger* with Hermitage audiences. This time, Jackson will offer insight into his latest work and his creative process. *Presented in partnership with Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org* (\$5/person registration fee). **Nathan Benderson Park, 5851 Nathan Benderson Circle, Sarasota, FL 34235**
- **Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: “The New Generation of Musical Theater,” featuring Hermitage Fellows Adam Chanler-Berat and Julian Hornik, Wednesday, May 6, 6:30pm:** Adam Chanler-Berat, a celebrated Broadway and television actor as well as a playwright, is known for originating leading roles in *Next to Normal*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, and *Amélie*, as well as appearing as Jordan Glassberg on HBO’s *Gossip Girl*. Returning Hermitage Fellow **Julian Hornik** has developed work with Hermitage Fellow **Mark Sonnenblick** and is a recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant from the American Theatre Wing. These two extraordinary talents are frequent collaborators and rising stars in the New York musical theater world. They are now here at the Hermitage developing a new musical together. Join us for the final “Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens” program of the season as we hear these celebrated artists talk about their creative process and share original songs. *Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens. Julian Hornik’s Hermitage residency is made possible through the McNally Fellowship at the Hermitage, sponsored by the Terrence McNally Foundation. Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org* (\$5/person registration fee). **Selby Gardens, 1534 Mound Street, Sarasota, FL 34236**

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## **ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:**

**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*

**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 Rep’s Koski Center (Sarasota).

*Presented in partnership with the **Greenfield Foundation**, the **Community Foundation of Sarasota County**, and **Asolo Repertory Theatre***

**Thursday, April 30 @ 6:30pm, Hermitage Sunsets @ Benderson Park: “Making Songs and Making Sense,”** featuring Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-Winning Hermitage Fellow **Michael R. Jackson**, at Nathan Benderson Park (Sarasota/Bradenton)

*Presented in partnership with **Nathan Benderson Park Conservancy***

**Wednesday, May 6 @ 6:30pm, Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: “The New Generation of Musical Theater,”** featuring Hermitage Fellows **Adam Chanler-Berat** and **Julian Hornik**, at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota)

*Presented in partnership with **Marie Selby Botanical Gardens***

*Julian Hornik’s Hermitage residency is generously sponsored by **The Terrence McNally Foundation***

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## BIOS

### **Michael R. Jackson**

Returning Hermitage Fellow **Michael R. Jackson** was named as one of *Time Magazine’s* “100 Most Influential People” of 2022. His Pulitzer Prize and Tony Award-winning musical *A Strange Loop* received 11 Tony Award nominations and was called “a full-on laparoscopy of the heart, soul, and loins” as well as a “gutsy, jubilantly anguished musical with infectious melodies” by *The New York Times*. In addition to *A Strange Loop*, Jackson also wrote book, music, and lyrics for *White Girl in Danger*, the book and lyrics for *Teeth*, and the libretto for the opera *Complications In Sue*, which had its world premiere at Opera Philadelphia in 2026. Awards and associations include: a New Professional Theatre Festival Award, a Jonathan Larson Grant, a Lincoln Center Emerging Artist Award, an ASCAP Foundation Harold Adamson Award, a Whiting Award, the Helen Merrill Award for Playwriting, an Outer Critics Circle Award, a Drama Desk Award, an Obie Award, a Fred Ebb Award, a Windham-Campbell Prize, a Dramatist Guild Fellowship, and a Hermitage Fellowship. Jackson is an alum of Page 73’s Interstate 73 Writers Group.

### **Adam Chanler-Berat**

Hermitage Fellow **Adam Chanler-Berat** has originated roles on Broadway in *Next to Normal*, *Peter and the Starcatcher*, and *Amélie*, as well as starring in the Broadway revival of Shaw’s *Saint Joan*. Off-Broadway credits include *Mother Russia*, *The Jonathan Larson Project*, *I Can Get it for You Wholesale*, *Assassins*, *Fortress of Solitude* (Lucille Lortel Award nom.), *Rent*, *Fly by Night*, *How to Load a Musket*, *Nantucket Sleigh Ride*, *Zorba*, and *Titanic*. Regional credits include *A New Brain* (Barrington Stage), *Sunday in the Park with George* (Huntington), and *The Year to Come* (La Jolla Playhouse). He starred alongside Vince Vaughn in the Dreamworks film *Delivery Man* and has appeared on television in HBO Max’s *Gossip Girl*, *Veep*, *Elementary*, *The Good Wife*, *Doubt*, *The Code*, *NCIS: Nola*, and *Soundtrack*. As a writer, Adam’s work has been developed by Berkeley Rep, Barrington Stage Company, the Civilians, New York Stage and Film, Rhinebeck Writers Retreat, Ars Nova, Classic Stage Company, and MCC. Adam also appeared in the premiere workshop presentation of Madeleine George’s *The Sore Loser*, the first commission made possible by the Hermitage Major Theater Award.

## Julian Hornik

Returning Hermitage Fellow **Julian Hornik** is a composer and lyricist based in Brooklyn. Shows include *Assisted* with **Adam Chanler-Berat** (developed with MCC, The Civilians, Berkeley Rep, and Rhinebeck Writer's Retreat); *Weekend* with Academy Award-winning Hermitage Fellow **Mark Sonnenblick** and Khiyon Hursey; *The Painter and the Thief* with Ngozi Anyanwu (New York Stage and Film); *Deathbed Edition* (Ars Nova); and *@QueerZ*, a song-cycle commissioned by the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus. He is a songwriter for the animated musical series *Helluva Boss* (soundtrack available on Atlantic Records). Julian is a recipient of the Jonathan Larson Grant from the American Theatre Wing, The Lucille & Jack Yellen Award and The Sammy Cahn Award from the ASCAP Foundation, and the Bryan Gallace Fellowship from SPACE on Ryder Farm. An alum of the Joe's Pub Working Group and Yale's Shen Curriculum for Musical Theater, he is currently under commission from The Civilians, No Guarantees, and Tom Kirdahy Productions.

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

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