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Hermitage Announces New Fall Programs, Featuring Award-Winning Playwrights, Performers, and Musicians

*Newly added Hermitage November and December programs feature playwright and Pulitzer Prize finalist **Talene Monahon**, folk musician and performer **Tommy Lubben**, world renowned opera and musical theater composer **Ricky Ian Gordon** with selections of his work performed by Hermitage Fellow **Thea Lobo** and five **Sarasota Opera** Resident Artists, and contemporary composer, vocalist and multi-instrumentalist **Jen Shyu**.*

October 14, 2026 (Sarasota County, Florida) — **The Hermitage Artist Retreat** today announced three additional fall programs. The newly announced events include Hermitage Fellows **Talene Monahon** and **Tommy Lubben** in an exploration of how history influences their artistic practices – Friday, November 13 at 5:30pm on the Hermitage Beach; celebrated opera composer **Ricky Ian Gordon** sharing his original music and creative process on Friday, November 20 at 5:30pm at Selby Gardens' Historic Spanish Point; and composer, vocalist, and multi-instrumentalist **Jen Shyu** sharing traditional songs alongside original compositions at the Hermitage Englewood Art Center on Friday, December 4 at 5:30pm.

Hermitage Fellows **Talene Monahon** and **Tommy Lubben** are acclaimed artists in their respective fields who regularly look to history to inspire their artistic practice. Monahon, a celebrated playwright and Pulitzer Prize finalist for *Meet the Cartozians*, mined a lengthy 1920s trial transcript to guide the vision of the play, resulting in "the best production I've seen all year" according to *The New York Times*. Her other notable work includes *The Good John Proctor,* inspired by the Salem Witch Trials, and *Jane Anger*, which used a 1589 historical document and Shakespeare as its jumping off point. Tommy Lubben, a classically trained multi-instrumentalist who is one-third of the musical trio The Lubben Brothers, calls himself a "folk revivalist," constructing original arrangements of archetypal American songs throughout history. Last seen at the Hermitage in our culminating program for the 2025 Cross Arts Collaborative and a frequent collaborator with Sarasota's Key Chorale, Lubben returns with his latest exploration into the works of those who came before him. For this Hermitage program, these two distinguished artists will share their artistic practice and discuss how history informs their work with "**Looking Back to Look Forward: An Evening of Theater & Folk Music**," against the backdrop of the historic Hermitage Beach on **Friday, November 13 at 5:30pm**.

Describing Hermitage Fellow **Ricky Ian Gordon**'s work, *The New York Times* wrote, "If the music of Ricky Ian Gordon had to be defined by a single quality, it would be the bursting effervescence in fusing songs that blithely blur the lines between art song and the high-end

Broadway music of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim – it's caviar for a world gorging on pizza." Gordon's songs have been recorded by some of the best singers in the world, including Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, Renée Fleming, Kelli O'Hara, and many more. His works have been performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall, and he has collaborated with Hermitage Fellows **Lynn Nottage** and **Mark Campbell**, among many other notable playwrights and librettists. Gordon is also known for setting the literary work of contemporary poets and writers such as Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, Dorothy Parker, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, to music for his song collections. In this program, Hermitage Fellow **Thea Lobo** and five **Sarasota Opera Resident Artists** will perform selections of this iconic composer's songs, and Gordon will share insight into his artistic practice in the beautiful bayfront setting of Selby Gardens' Historic Spanish Point for "**Words Spoken, Words Sung: An Evening with Ricky Ian Gordon**" on **Friday, November 20 at 5:30pm**. This event is presented in partnership with **Marie Selby Botanical Gardens** and **Sarasota Opera**.

On **Friday, December 4 at 5:30pm**, Hermitage Fellow **Jen Shyu**, called "one of the most creative vocalists in contemporary improvised music" by *The Nation*, returns to the Hermitage for a special look into her singular artistry. *The New York Times* has called her concerts "the most arresting I've seen over the past five years." Shyu's performances encompass dance, vocals, and multiple instruments, including piano, violin, Taiwanese moon lute, and Korean gayageum, and she has performed at world-famous venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Jen Shyu shares traditional songs alongside original compositions, while exploring what it means to be guided by your heritage and history in "**Finding Your Authentic Voice"** at the Hermitage Englewood Art Center.

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

Additional fall Hermitage programs have recently been announced, including **Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens:** "**New Music Under the Old Oak**," on **Friday, October 16 at 5:30pm**. This program at Selby Gardens (Downtown) features Hermitage Fellows **Madeline Benson** & **Chris Peters**, who collaborated as arrangers, orchestrators, and performers on late Hermitage Fellow **Gavin Creel**'s original musical *Walk on Through*, alongside acclaimed guitarist and past winner of the Hermitage Prize in Composition at the Aspen Music Festival **Matīss Čudars**. Then on **Thursday, October 29 at 5:30pm,** the Hermitage returns to the Hermitage Beach with a rhythmic program, "**We Got the Beat: Poetry & Percussion**," featuring drummer and producer **Sarah Galdes** and poet and Pulitzer Prize finalist **Robyn Schiff**. The inaugural **Hermitage Book Club** will feature author **Emily Nemens'** novel *Clutch* on **Monday, November 2 at 5:30pm** at the Hermitage Englewood Art Center. The **2026 Hermitage Artful Lobster** will be held on **Saturday, November 7th at 11:30am** on the Hermitage's historic campus; this annual fall fundraiser supporting the Hermitage's world-renowned artist residency program is quickly approaching capacity. For sponsorship

opportunities, contact the Development Department at Development@HermitageArtistRetreat.org.

*Additional Hermitage December programs will be announced soon. 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 home 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.

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

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 20 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 State of Florida through the Division of Arts and Culture; the National Endowment for the Arts; the Welles Murphey Fund at Gulf Coast Community Foundation; Charles & Margery Barancik Foundation; and the Community Foundation of Sarasota County.

Newly Announced Hermitage Programs:

- **"Looking Back to Look Forward: An Evening of Theater & Folk Music," featuring Hermitage Fellows Talene Monahon and Tommy Lubben, *Friday, November 13, 5:30pm:*** Hermitage Fellows **Talene Monahon** and **Tommy Lubben** are acclaimed artists in their respective fields who regularly look to history to inspire their artistic practice. Monahon, a celebrated playwright and Pulitzer Prize finalist for *Meet the Cartozians*, mined a lengthy 1920s trial transcript to guide the vision of the play, resulting in "the best production I've seen all year" according to *The New York Times*. Her other notable work includes *The Good John Proctor,* inspired by the Salem Witch Trials, and *Jane Anger*, which used a 1589 historical document and Shakespeare as its jumping off point. Lubben, a classically trained multi-instrumentalist who is one-third of the musical trio The Lubben Brothers, calls himself a "folk revivalist," constructing original arrangements of archetypal American songs throughout history for his "American Storytellers" series with Sarasota's Key Chorale. Last seen at the Hermitage in December 2025 at our culminating program for the 2025 Cross Arts Collaborative, Lubben returns with his latest exploration into the works of those who came before him. For this Hermitage program, these two artists will share their artistic practice and discuss how history informs their work, on the backdrop of the historic Hermitage Beach. *Talene Monahon's Hermitage Residency is generously sponsored by The Terrence McNally Foundation. Tommy Lubben's Hermitage Residency is generously sponsored by Gerald & Sondra Biller.* ***Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org*** *($5/person registration fee).* Estimated running time: 60-70 minutes; ***Hermitage Beach, 6660 Manasota Key Road, Englewood, FL 34223***
- **"Words Spoken, Words Sung: An Evening with Ricky Ian Gordon," *Friday, November 20, 5:30pm:*** Describing Hermitage Fellow **Ricky Ian Gordon**'s work, *The New York Times* wrote, "If the music of Ricky Ian Gordon had to be defined by a single quality, it would be the bursting effervescence in fusing songs that blithely blur the lines between art song and the high-end Broadway music of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim… it's caviar for a world gorging on pizza." Gordon's songs have been recorded by some of the best singers in the world, including Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, Renée Fleming, Kelli O'Hara, and many more. His works have been performed at the Metropolitan Opera, Lincoln Center, and Carnegie Hall, and he has collaborated with Hermitage Fellows **Lynn Nottage** and **Mark Campbell**, among many other notable playwrights and librettists. Gordon is also known for setting the literary work of contemporary poets and writers such as Langston Hughes, Emily Dickinson, Dorothy Parker, and Edna St. Vincent Millay, to music for his song collections. In this program, Hermitage Fellow **Thea Lobo** and five **Sarasota Opera Resident Artists** will perform selections of this iconic composer's songs, and Gordon will share insight into his artistic practice in the beautiful bayfront setting of Selby Gardens' Historic Spanish Point. *Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and Sarasota Opera. Ricky Ian Gordon's Hermitage Residency is generously sponsored by Steve & Dale Adler.* ***Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org*** *($5/person registration fee).* Estimated running time: 60-70 minutes; ***Selby Gardens' Historic Spanish Point, 401 North Tamiami Trail, Osprey, FL 34229***
- **"Finding Your Authentic Voice," *Friday, December 4, 5:30pm:*** Hermitage Fellow **Jen Shyu**, called "one of the most creative vocalists in contemporary improvised music" by *The Nation*, returns to the Hermitage for a special look into her singular artistry. *The New York Times* has called her concerts "the most arresting I've seen over the past five years." Shyu's performances encompass dance, vocals, and multiple instruments, including piano, violin, Taiwanese moon lute, and Korean gayageum, and she has performed at world-famous venues such as Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, and the Metropolitan Museum of Art. Join us at the Hermitage Englewood Art Center as Jen Shyu offers an inside look into her process of finding her authentic voice and shares traditional songs and original compositions. ***Registration is required at HermitageArtistRetreat.org*** *($5/person registration fee).* Estimated running time: 60-70 minutes; ***Hermitage Englewood Art Center, 350 South McCall Road, Englewood, FL 34223.***

ALL ANNOUNCED HERMITAGE PROGRAMS:

Friday, October 16 @ 5:30pm, Hermitage Sunsets @ Selby Gardens: "New Music Under the Old Oak," featuring Hermitage Fellows **Madeline Benson** & **Chris Peters** and **Matīss Čudars,** at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens (Downtown Sarasota)
Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens
Madeline Benson's Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by Carol White Bold & Larry Bold
Chris Peters' Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by Pauline Wamsler & David Sales
Matīss Čudars' Hermitage Residence generously sponsored by Bea Holt

Thursday, October 29 @ 5:30pm, "We Got the Beat: Poetry & Percussion," featuring Hermitage Fellows **Sarah Galdes** and **Robyn Schiff** on the Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key)
Robin Schiff's Hermitage Residence generously sponsored by Ellen & Richard Sandor
Sarah Galdes' Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by Veronica Brady & Keith Monda

Monday, November 2 @ 5:30pm, The Hermitage Book Club: Emily Nemens' 2026 novel *Clutch*, at the Hermitage Englewood Art Center (Englewood)
Emily Nemens is the 2026 Norris-Berry Fellow at the Hermitage

HERMITAGE FALL BENEFIT! – Saturday, November 7 @ 11:30am, "The 2026 Hermitage Artful Lobster" at the Historic Hermitage Campus (Manasota Key)

Friday, November 13 @ 5:30pm, "Looking Back to Look Forward: An Evening of Theater & Music," featuring Hermitage Fellows **Talene Monahon** and **Tommy Lubben,** on the Hermitage Beach (Manasota Key)
Talene Monahon's Hermitage Residency generously sponsored by The Terrence McNally Foundation
Tommy Lubben's Hermitage Residence generously sponsored by Gerald & Sondra Biller

Friday, November 20 @ 5:30pm, "Words Spoken, Words Sung: An Evening with Ricky Ian Gordon," featuring Hermitage Fellow **Ricky Ian Gordon** at Selby Gardens' Historic Spanish Point (Osprey) */ Presented in partnership with Marie Selby Botanical Gardens and Sarasota Opera*
Ricky Ian Gordon's Hermitage Residence generously sponsored by Steve & Dale Adler

Friday, December 4 @ 5:30pm, "Finding Your Authentic Voice," featuring Hermitage Fellow **Jen Shyu** at the Hermitage Englewood Art Center (Englewood)

ARTIST BIOS

Talene Monahon

Talene Monahon is a **2026 Hermitage Major Theater Award finalist** and the **2026 McNally Fellow at the Hermitage Artist Retreat**. A Brooklyn-based playwright of Armenian descent, Monahon was recognized as a finalist for the Pulitzer Prize in Drama for her original play *Meet the Cartozians*. Off-Broadway: *Meet the Cartozians* (Second Stage, *New York Times* Critic's Pick, *Vulture*'s "Top 10 Best Plays of 2025," *TheaterMania*'s "Top 5 Plays of 2025"); *The Good John Proctor* (Bedlam; *The New Yorker*'s "Top 10 Best Plays of 2023"); *Jane Anger* (New Ohio; 2022 Off-Broadway Alliance Best New Play nomination); and *How to Load a Musket* (Less than Rent; *TheaterMania*'s "The 10 Best Theater Productions of 2020"). Regional and international productions include Trinity Rep, Shakespeare Theater of D.C., the Warehouse Theater, Detroit Shakespeare, and London's Jermyn Street Theatre. She teaches Playwriting at the Sewanee Writers' Conference. Recent plays: *Eat Me* (South Coast Rep, 2026) and *Wonder! A Woman Keeps a Secret* (Northern Stage, 2026). B.A. Dartmouth College.

Tommy Lubben

Hermitage Fellow **Tommy Lubben** is a founding member of The Lubben Brothers, a Nashville-based folk band intending to carry on the legacy of Woody Guthrie and other American folksingers by telling America's story and inspiring community through their music. In the Fall of 2026, Tommy wrote *Folk Revivalists: Stories from the Most Famous Band You've Never Heard Of*, a book memorializing some of the brothers' most formative experiences on the road, paired with vignettes from America's folk singing

history that shaped the brothers' artistic vision. With their classical background, the brothers often take on commission work, and this has led to Tommy's deeply fulfilling collaborative work with the Key Chorale. Over the last several years, Tommy has constructed original arrangements and transcriptions for the Chorale and The Lubben Brothers to perform together, all under the "American Storytellers" umbrella. Together, the chorale and the brothers hope to take archetypal songs from America's past — from African American spirituals to the music of Crosby, Stills, and Nash — and reintroduce them to South Florida, to Nashville, and beyond. Tommy performs on fiddle, accordion, mandolin, piano, upright bass, and is an official Hohner harmonica artist. Lubben is the recipient of a 2025 Hermitage Cross Arts Collaborative Fellowship.

Ricky Ian Gordon

Hermitage Fellow **Ricky Ian Gordon** is a New York-based composer and writer whose works have been performed at Lincoln Center, Carnegie Hall, and all over the USA and Europe. He is known primarily for his vocal works, operas, songs and musicals, is widely recorded and published, and has won many awards. Recently, within the span of just one week, he premiered two new operas in New York City, *The Garden of the Finzi Continis*, with librettist Michael Korie, for New York City Opera and the Yiddish Folksbiene, and *Intimate Apparel*, with librettist and Hermitage Fellow **Lynn Nottage**, for the Metropolitan Opera and the Lincoln Center Theater. About his work, *The New York Times* had this to say: "If the music of Ricky Ian Gordon had to be defined by a single quality, it would be the bursting effervescence infusing songs that blithely blur the lines between art song and the high-end Broadway music of Leonard Bernstein and Stephen Sondheim. It's caviar for a world gorging on pizza!" Other works include the operas *The Grapes of Wrath*, *27*, *This House*, *A Coffin in Egypt*, *Morning Star*, *Ellen West*, *The House Without a Christmas Tree*, *Orpheus and Euridice*, and *Green Sneakers*. His memoir, *Seeing Through: A Chronicle of Sex, Drugs and Opera*, was recently published by Farrar, Straus & Giroux.

Jen Shyu

Returning Hermitage Fellow **Jen Shyu** is a vocalist, composer, multi-instrumentalist, dancer, Guggenheim Fellow, Rome Prize Fellow, USA Fellow, and Doris Duke Artist. Born in Peoria, Illinois, to Taiwanese and East Timorese immigrants, she's performed her music at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center, Metropolitan Museum of Art, National Theater of Korea, and is a Stanford graduate and Fulbright scholar speaking 11 languages. Her current instruments include piano, violin, Taiwanese moon lute, Chinese er hu, Japanese biwa, and Korean gayageum. She's performed with Sumi Tonooka, Nicole Mitchell, Val Jeanty, Ikue Mori, Terri Lyne Carrington, Kris Davis, Anthony Braxton (his operas), Wadada Leo Smith, Francis Wong, Jon Jang, Hermitage Fellow **Vijay Iyer**, Tyshawn Sorey, Kenny Barron, Reggie Workman, and Bill Frisell. She's studied traditional music and dance in Cuba, Taiwan, Brazil, China, Korea, East Timor, Indonesia, and Japan, conducting extensive research culminating in three solo stage productions: *Solo Rites: Seven Breaths* (2014), directed by renowned Indonesian filmmaker Garin Nugroho; *Nine Doors* (2017) and *Zero Grasses: Ritual for the Losses* (2019), both directed by Alexandru Mihail. She's produced eight albums and two singles as leader, making many best-of lists (*The New York Times*, *The Nation*, *NPR*, and more). Shyu is Co-Founder/President/CEO with Sara Serpa of Mutual Mentorship for Musicians (M^3).