

Sunday, June 1, 2008, 5pm
Zellerbach Hall

Audra McDonald



with

Dan Lipton *piano*
Mark Vanderpoel *bass*
Gene Lewin *drums*

Personnel subject to change.

Audra McDonald records exclusively for Nonesuch Records, 1290 Avenue of the Americas, New York, New York 10104.

Audra McDonald appears by arrangement with IMG Artists, 152 West 57th Street, 5th Floor, New York, New York 10019.

Cal Performances' 2007–2008 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo Bank.

Earning an unprecedented three Tony Awards before the age of 30 (*Carousel*, *Master Class* and *Ragtime*) and a fourth in 2004 (*A Raisin in the Sun*), singer and actress **Audra McDonald** (*soprano*) is frequently compared to such legendary performers as Judy Garland and Barbra Streisand. But like all great artists, she is a unique force, blending a luscious, classically trained soprano with an incomparable gift for dramatic truth-telling. In addition to her theatrical work she maintains a major career as a concert and recording artist appearing regularly on many of the great stages of the world.

This season, Ms. McDonald returns to the Ravinia Festival for a special concert with Patti LuPone; she also appears in concerts with the New Jersey Symphony, conducted by frequent collaborator Ted Sperling. A concert tour in spring 2008 spans the country from coast to coast.

Beginning in fall 2008, Ms. McDonald can be seen as Dr. Naomi Bennett in the second season of the hit ABC television series *Private Practice*. Earlier in the year, she also appeared on ABC in a made-for-television movie version of *A Raisin in the Sun*, alongside hip-hop mogul Sean “Diddy” Combs, her co-star from the 2004 Broadway revival.

In September 2006, Ms. McDonald released her first solo album in four years—*Build a Bridge*—on Nonesuch Records. Her fourth solo recording for the label, *Build a Bridge* looks beyond her usual repertoire and explores music written by contemporary singer/songwriters, including Elvis Costello, Nellie McKay, John Mayer, Randy Newman, Laura Nyro, Neil Young, Rufus Wainwright, and two songs by her longtime collaborator, musical-theater composer Adam Guettel. She embarked on a U.S. tour, stopping in Chicago, Los Angeles, Boston, Fresno and San Francisco to perform selections from *Build a Bridge*. In New York, she appeared at Jazz at Lincoln Center’s Allen Room as part of the *American Songbook* series in a concert that was broadcast nationwide on PBS’s *Live from Lincoln Center*. These programs also featured her customary offering of Broadway favorites and songs from the contemporary musical-theater repertoire.

The 2006–2007 season also saw the soprano return to the New York Philharmonic for a New Year’s Eve concert (also broadcast live on PBS); a performance with the Philadelphia Orchestra in

a tribute to Sidney Poitier; and duo concerts with Barbara Cook in Washington, D.C., Philadelphia and Orange County, California. Ms. McDonald concluded the season with a highly anticipated return to Broadway, going on to receive a sixth Tony nomination for her performance as Lizzie Curry in the Roundabout Theatre’s revival of *Ito in the Shade*, directed by Lonnie Price.

Ms. McDonald made her Los Angeles Opera debut in February 2007 as Jenny in John Doyle’s production of Kurt Weill’s *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*, conducted by James Conlon. This marked the second operatic engagement of her career; she made a highly praised debut at Houston Grand Opera in March 2006 in a double-bill featuring Poulenc’s famous monodrama, *La Voix Humaine*, coupled with the world premiere of *Send*, a companion piece to the Poulenc written by one of McDonald’s frequent collaborators, Michael John LaChiusa.

Ms. McDonald has sung regularly with all the major American orchestras, including the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Cleveland Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic, the National Symphony, the New York Philharmonic, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony, under many of the world’s greatest conductors, such as John Adams, Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, Leonard Slatkin and Michael Tilson Thomas. In the spring of 2005 she “previewed” a scene from John Adams’s not-yet-premiered opera, *Doctor Atomic*, for the New York Philharmonic, with the composer conducting. Earlier she was the muse behind the *Ellington Suite*, a unique set of arrangements of favorite Duke Ellington tunes created by several of America’s top arrangers and commissioned jointly by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony. Overseas she is a returning guest at the BBC Proms (where she was only the second American in over 100 years to solo on the famed “Last Night of the Proms”), with the London Symphony Orchestra, with the Berlin Philharmonic, and at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris.

The releases of *Way Back to Paradise* (named Adult Record of the Year by *The New York Times*) in 1998, and the best-selling *How Glory Goes* in 2000, launched Ms. McDonald’s solo recording

career. *Happy Songs*, her third disc for Nonesuch, was primarily composed of classics by Harold Arlen, Duke Ellington and the Gershwins. Her other discs include a live concert recording of *Dreamgirls* (featuring Lillias White and Heather Headley) on Nonesuch; the original cast recordings of Ahrens & Flaherty's *Ragtime* and Michael John LaChiusa's *Marie Christine* on RCA Victor; revival cast recordings of *Carousel* on Broadway Angel and *110 in the Shade* on PS Classics; John Adams's *I Was Looking at the Ceiling and Then I Saw the Sky*, conducted by the composer on Nonesuch; *Sweeney Todd: Live at the Philharmonic*, conducted by Andrew Litton; Leonard Bernstein's *Wonderful Town*, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle on EMI; Adam Guettel's *Myths and Hymns* and Ricky Ian Gordon's *Bright Eyed Joy* on Nonesuch; and the original film soundtrack of Tim Robbins's *Cradle Will Rock* on BMG.

CBS's Peabody Award-winning *Having Our Say: The Delaney Sisters' First 100 Years* introduced Ms. McDonald to television audiences as a dramatic actress. She went on to co-star with Victor Garber and Kathy Bates in the critically lauded ABC/Disney production of *Annie*. Following her Emmy Award-nominated performance in *Wit*, the HBO film of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play directed by Mike Nichols and starring Emma Thompson, Ms. McDonald returned to network television in the political drama *Mister Sterling*, produced by Emmy-winner Lawrence O'Donnell, Jr. (*The West Wing*), and starring Josh Brolin. In 2006–2007, she had a recurring role on NBC's television series *Kidnapped*. She has also been profiled by *60 Minutes* and *Today*, was a frequent guest on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*, and was a guest co-host of *The View* with Barbara Walters.

Born into a musical family, Audra McDonald grew up in Fresno, California. She received her classical vocal training at The Juilliard School.

A musical chameleon whose work bridges pop music, film scoring and theatrical projects, **Dan Lipton** (*piano*) has performed on three Grammy Award-nominated albums, including John Lithgow's album for children, *The Sunny Side of the Street* (Razor & Tie), featuring Madeleine Peyroux and Maude Maggart. Other recent recording credits include Lauren Kennedy's *Here*

and *Now* (PS Classics), which features one song by Mr. Lipton and his playing on several more. He plays electric piano and toy keyboard on *Can I Keep This Pen?* (Ipecac) by feminist hip-hop trio Northern State. His piano is featured on the soundtrack to Tom Stoppard's epic trilogy, *The Coast of Utopia* (Ghostlight), as it was heard nightly throughout the play's production at Lincoln Center Theater. He also appeared onstage at the piano in part three, *Salvage*—making his Broadway stage debut after years of performing in orchestra pits (*Dirty Rotten Scoundrels*, *The Full Monty*).

Mr. Lipton has been Audra McDonald's associate music director since 2000. He has performed with Ms. McDonald in concert halls and with symphonies across the country, including appearances at Carnegie Hall and the White House. Mr. Lipton has arranged music and led bands for Kelli O'Hara, Jason Danieley, Sherie René Scott, Brian d'Arcy James, Celia Keenan-Bolger, B. D. Wong and Decca/Universal recording artists The Three Graces. He is music director and a creator of the comedy variety show *Don't Quit Your Night Job* (Joe's Pub, HA!, Zipper). With David Rossmer, he has written the original musicals *Notes to MariAnne*, *JOE!* and *The Blonde Streak*. For their *MariAnne* lyrics, Lipton and Rossmer received the Georgia Bogardus Holof Award at the O'Neill Theater Center.

Mr. Lipton holds a degree in music composition from Northwestern University. He has scored off-Broadway plays and award-winning short films. His eclectic songwriting has earned four ASCAP Plus Awards for Popular Music.

Mark Vanderpoel (*bass*) is a native of San Diego, California, and is a former member of the San Diego Symphony, in addition to various orchestras and chamber groups in the Baja California area of Mexico. He attended UC San Diego, where he studied under the direction of Bertram Turetzky. After UCSD, Mr. Vanderpoel attended the University of Southern California and later received a master's degree from the California Institute of the Arts, where he studied with Charlie Haden and Darek "Oles" Oleszkiewicz. Now living in New York City, he works extensively on and off Broadway. Credits include *Jane Eyre*, *Amour*, *See What I Wanna See* and many others. He has also been performing on

the rock 'n' roll circuit with Sandra Bernhard and the Rebellious Jezebels.

Mr. Vanderpoel's other performing credits include the American Symphony Orchestra, James Taylor, Cyndi Lauper, Nancy Sinatra, Sir Cliff Richard, Audra McDonald, Rob Evans and the Moody Blues' World Festival Orchestra.

Gene Lewin (*drums*) appears on 31 CDs, with several more soon to be released. His eclectic discography ranges from the modern jazz of Fundementia (a group he co-led with saxophonist and composer Andy Parsons) to the electric-violin pop of GrooveLily. Several straight-ahead jazz projects and singer-songwriter efforts round out the list.

His most active project is GrooveLily, a rock band that features electric violin, keyboards and drums. GrooveLily tours extensively and features Mr. Lewin as composer and singer as well. Their acclaimed concert musical, *Striking 12* (directed by Ted Sperling and written by bandmates Brendan Milburn and Valerie Vigoda, along with Tony Award-winner Rachel Sheinkin), has opened the

band's eyes to the world of theater, which suits them very well. They collaborated with director Tina Landau on a production of *A Midsummer Night's Dream* for which they composed and performed all of the music, and also acted as three of the "rude mechanicals" in the play. GrooveLily plans to continue writing and performing hybrid concert/musical theater pieces, including the upcoming *Sleeping Beauty Wakes* and the autobiographical *Wheelhouse*.

Mr. Lewin is also active in New York City's jazz scene, performing and recording with many well-respected singers and instrumentalists. He has appeared on CDs with bassists John Patitucci and Scott Colley, guitarist Ben Monder, tenor saxophonist George Coleman, bassist/vocalist Jay Leonhart and many others.

Originally an engineering major at Princeton University, Mr. Lewin soon changed paths and returned to school to receive a master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music in 1991. He sends his love to his wife, Suzanne, and 14-month-old son, Elias.