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**SUPERSTAR SOPRANO AUDRA MCDONALD**  
**RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES**  
**SUNDAY, JUNE 1 AT 5:00 PM AT ZELLERBACH HALL**

**BERKELEY, April 15, 2008**—Singer, storyteller and actress **Audra McDonald**, whose “blazing emotional fire, vocal beauty and total commitment” (*Chicago Sun-Times*) have captivated classical and contemporary worlds alike, returns to Cal Performances on **Sunday, June 1 at 5:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall**. A classically-trained soprano with an incomparable gift for dramatic truth-telling, McDonald has enjoyed a rich career that has exploded since her 1994 Broadway debut as Carrie Pipperidge in *Carousel*, for which she won the first of four Tony Awards. She has broken boundaries as a singer of a variety of genres and as an actor on stage, television and film. Creating an intimate setting of songs and personal anecdotes, McDonald will be accompanied by a jazz trio in a program from her latest solo album, the critically lauded *Build a Bridge*, plus selections from her repertoire ranging from pop to standards and songs composed specifically for her.

**AUDRA MCDONALD**

One of the most ground-breaking singers of her generation, **Audra McDonald** is frequently compared to legendary performers such as Barbra Streisand and Judy Garland. Born in Germany and raised in California, McDonald received her classical vocal training at Juilliard. After graduating, McDonald found a welcome place on the musical and theatrical stage, winning three Tony awards by the age of twenty-eight. She has performed regularly with the major American orchestras, including the New York Philharmonic, the Boston Symphony, the Chicago Symphony, the Philadelphia Orchestra and the San Francisco Symphony, to name just a few. She was the muse behind the *Ellington Suite*, a unique set of arrangements of favorite Duke Ellington tunes commissioned jointly by the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the San Francisco Symphony. McDonald continues to be a fixture both on the solo stage as well as the musical-theater stage, most recently starring in the musical *110 in the Shade* (2007) and Stephen Sondheim’s *Anyone Can Whistle* (2005), opposite Patti Lupone. McDonald made her opera

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debut in 2006 at the Houston Grand Opera 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. Since then she has also made her Los Angeles Opera debut in Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*.

As an actress, McDonald has successfully explored the stage, television and film. The darling of the Broadway stage, both musical and theatrical, McDonald won her second and fourth Tonys in dramatic roles: as Sharon Graham in *Master Class* (1995) and Ruth in *A Raisin in the Sun* (2004), respectively. She recently reprised her role of Ruth in a made-for-television adaptation of *Raisin*, alongside her Broadway costar, rapper Sean "Diddy" Combs. Additionally, McDonald garnered an Emmy Award nomination for her role in HBO's Mike Nichols-directed adaptation of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play, *Wit*, and currently stars as Dr. Naomi Bennett on ABC's hit primetime drama *Private Practice*.

McDonald's latest solo album, *Build a Bridge*, illustrates her love of all forms of music. Selections from some of her favorite Broadway writers, Adam Guettel and Michael John LaChiusa, are juxtaposed with works by contemporary composers Ricky Ian Gordon and Joe Raposo (of *Sesame Street* fame), as well as a slew of pop and rock songs written by touchstones of popular music such as Elvis Costello, Neil Young, Laura Nyro, Burt Bacharach, Randy Newman, John Mayer and Rufus Wainright. McDonald performed selections from the album for the televised *Live from Lincoln Center* on PBS. *Build a Bridge* has been hailed as "flawlessly organized... McDonald lives very much in the present to create her own traditions, and her easy identification with the material vibrates in every note she sings" (*New York Magazine*).

### TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Audra McDonald**, soprano, on **Sunday, June 1, 2008** at **5:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall** are priced at \$36, \$48, and \$68. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens, other students and UC Alumni

Association members receive a \$5 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988 or visit the Cal Performances web site at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org).

For select performances, Cal Performances offers UCB student, faculty and staff, senior and community rush tickets. Rush tickets are announced two hours prior to a performance and are available in person only at the Ticket Office beginning one hour before the performance; quantities may be limited. Rush ticket sales are limited to one ticket per person; all sales are cash only. Rush ticket prices are \$10.00 for UCB students; \$15.00 for UCB faculty and staff (UCB ID required) and seniors age 65 or older; and \$20 for all other community members. Information is available at (510) 642-9988, press 2 for the rush hotline, two hours prior to a performance only.

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Cal Performances 2007/08 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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**CALENDAR EDITORS PLEASE NOTE:**

**CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS**

**Sunday, June 1 at 5:00 p.m.**

**Zellerbach Hall, UC Berkeley Campus  
Bancroft Way at Telegraph Ave., Berkeley**

*Special Event*

**Audra McDonald**, soprano

**Program:** Superstar soprano Audra McDonald performs a program from her latest solo album, the critically lauded *Build a Bridge*, plus selections from her repertoire ranging from pop to standards and songs composed specifically for her.

**Tickets: \$36.00, \$48.00, \$68.00**, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at [www.calperformances.org](http://www.calperformances.org); and at the door.

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– Cal Performances –