

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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A LEGEND IN THE MAKING RETURNS TO CAL PERFORMANCES
AUDRA McDONALD
FRIDAY, MAY 27 AT 8:00 P.M. IN ZELLERBACH HALL

BERKELEY, April 18, 2005—*The New York Times* has compared her to a young Barbra Streisand and *USA Today* has likened her to a young Judy Garland. Four-time Tony Award winner **Audra McDonald** returns to **Cal Performances** on **Friday, May 27 at 8:00 p.m.** in **Zellerbach Hall**, to once again delight Bay Area devotees with the astonishing vocal powers and electrifying stage presence that have earned her such comparisons and won the adoration of millions of fans worldwide. The classically trained soprano “doesn’t just bridge the operatic and Broadway style,” says the *San Francisco Chronicle*, “she floats back and forth on a cloud...to create an elegant, earthy sound all her own.”

Ms. McDonald—who continually adds to her vast repertoire of familiar standards, selections from musicals old and new, and original pieces by up-and-coming composers—will announce her Friday evening program from the stage. Accompanying Ms. McDonald will be her quartet, made up of **Dan Lipton** (music director and piano), **Mary Ann McSweeney** (bass), **Kevin Kuhn** (guitar), and **Gene Lewin** (drums).

By the time she was 28 years old, Ms. McDonald had made Broadway history as the only person under the age of 30 to win three Tony Awards (*Carousel*, 1994; *Master Class*, 1996; and *Ragtime*, 1998). In 2004, she added yet a fourth for her role in *Raisin in the Sun*. She also garnered a Best Actress Tony nomination in 2000 for *Marie Christine*, a musical retelling of the Medea myth, created for her by Michael John LaChiusa. She has also distinguished herself as a concert performer, recording artist and dramatic actress, and has added an Emmy nomination to her expanding list of awards and recognitions.

Last season, in addition to ongoing concert performances with her own band, Ms. McDonald made her non-singing stage debut in New York, as Lady Percy in an all-star Lincoln Center Theater production of *Henry IV* with Kevin Kline in the title role. She made her Paris

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debut in a concert of Broadway songs at the famed Théâtre du Châtelet, and was the guest soloist with the Philadelphia Orchestra for their traditional Anniversary Gala, conducted by Sir Simon Rattle. She also returned to the New York Philharmonic for concerts conducted by John Adams, singing his orchestrated version of songs by Charles Ives, and a new piece from his upcoming opera *Dr. Atomic*. The performance was repeated in London at the Proms, as a collaboration of Ms. McDonald, Mr. Adams and the BBC Symphony Orchestra. A highlight of the season was the premiere of a new song cycle, *The Seven Deadly Sins*, a one-woman work commissioned for her by Carnegie Hall, written by seven of Ms. McDonald's favorite contemporary composers, which closed the first season of the new Zankel Hall.

The current season opened with Ms. McDonald taking on the role of Dot for a semi-staged version of Sondheim's *Sunday in the Park with George*, directed by Lonny Price for Chicago's Ravinia Festival. She also resumes an active concert schedule that includes a solo production at the Frederick P. Rose Hall, the new home of Jazz at Lincoln Center.

An exclusive Nonesuch recording artist, Ms. McDonald released her third solo album, *Happy Songs*, in September, 2002, featuring songs with a big band sound written by Harold Arlen, Duke Ellington, Irving Berlin, and others. *Happy Songs*, celebrating the birth of her daughter, follows the best-selling release *How Glory Goes* (2000), and her debut recording *Way Back to Paradise*—named 1998's Adult Record of the Year by *The New York Times*. Ms. McDonald can also be heard on the original soundtrack of Tim Robbins' film *Cradle Will Rock* as well as on a number of musical soundtracks, including *Carousel*, *Ragtime*, *Dreamgirls* (featuring Lillias White and Heather Headley), *Sweeney Todd: Live at the Philharmonic*, and as the title character in *Marie Christine*. Additionally, Ms. McDonald has contributed her voice to collaborative CDs in homage to music greats like George Gershwin (*The 100th Birthday Celebration*) and Leonard Bernstein (*Leonard Bernstein's New York*).

CBS' 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 ABC/Disney production of *Annie*. For Showtime, Ms. McDonald appeared with James Garner in an adaptation of Jim Lehrer's *The Last Debate*.

She has guest-starred on NBC's *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit* and *Homicide*. A familiar face on PBS, Ms. McDonald's collaborative appearances include *A Richard Rogers Celebration* with Keith Lockhart and Boston Pops; *A Capitol Fourth*; *My Favorite Broadway: The Leading Ladies*; *Leonard Bernstein's New York*; and *Some Enchanted Evening—A Salute to Oscar Hammerstein*. She has been profiled by *60 Minutes* and *The Today Show*, and has been a frequent guest on *The Rosie O'Donnell Show*.

Following her Emmy-nominated performance in *Wit*, the HBO film of Margaret Edson's 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 Award-winner Lawrence O'Donnell, Jr. (*The West Wing*).

TICKET INFORMATION

Tickets for **Audra McDonald** on **Friday, May 27** at **8:00 p.m.** in Zellerbach Hall are priced at **\$32.00**, **\$46.00**, and **\$68.00**. Tickets are available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door. Half-price tickets are available for purchase by UC Berkeley students. UC faculty and staff, senior citizens and other students receive a \$2 discount, and UC Alumni Association members receive a \$3 discount (Special Events excluded). For more information, call Cal Performances at (510) 642-9988, or visit the Cal Performances web site at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu.

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Cal Performances' 2004/2005 season is sponsored by Wells Fargo.

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CALENDAR EDITORS, PLEASE NOTE:

CAL PERFORMANCES PRESENTS

Friday, May 27 at 8:00 p.m.

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

Special Event

Audra McDonald

Dan Lipton, music director and piano

Mary Ann McSweeney, bass

Kevin Kuhn, guitar

Gene Lewin, drums

Program:

Four-time Tony award winner Audra McDonald, acclaimed for her unique and powerful soprano and vibrant stage presence, will perform a program of standards and new compositions.

Tickets: \$32.00, \$46.00, and \$68.00, available through the Cal Performances Ticket Office at Zellerbach Hall; at (510) 642-9988 to charge by phone; at www.calperfs.berkeley.edu; and at the door.