



Advance Program Notes

Audra McDonald

Broadway Old and New

Friday, May 1, 2015, 7:30 PM

These Advance Program Notes are provided online for our patrons who like to read about performances ahead of time. Printed programs will be provided to patrons at the performances. Programs are subject to change.

Audra McDonald *Broadway Old and New*

Andy Einhorn, music director and piano

*Gene Lewin, drums
Mark Vanderpoel, bass*

Program to be announced from the stage

Biographies



AUDRA MCDONALD, *singer and actress*

Audra McDonald is unparalleled in the breadth and versatility of her artistry, as both a singer and an actress. With a record six Tony Awards, two Grammy Awards, and a long list of other accolades to her name, she is among today's most highly regarded performers. Blessed with a luminous soprano and an incomparable gift for dramatic truth telling, she is equally at home on Broadway and opera stages as she is in roles on film and television. In addition to her theatrical work, she maintains a major career as a concert and recording artist, regularly appearing on the great stages of the world.

Born into a musical family, McDonald grew up in Fresno, California, and received her classical vocal training at the Juilliard School. A year after graduating, she won her first Tony Award for Best Performance by a Featured Actress in a Musical for *Carousel* at Lincoln Center Theater. She received two additional Tony Awards in the featured actress category over the next four years for her performances in the Broadway premieres of Terrence McNally's *Master Class* (1996) and his musical *Ragtime* (1998), earning her an unprecedented three Tony Awards before the age of 30.

In 2004 she won her fourth Tony, starring alongside Sean "Diddy" Combs in *A Raisin in the Sun*, and in 2012 she won her fifth—and her first in the leading actress category—for her role in The Gershwins' *Porgy and Bess*. In 2014 she made Broadway history and became the Tony Awards' most decorated performer when she won her sixth award for her portrayal of Billie Holiday in *Lady Day at Emerson's Bar & Grill*. In addition to setting the record for most competitive wins by an actor, she also became the first person to receive awards in all four acting categories. McDonald's other theatre credits include *The Secret Garden* (1993), *Marie Christine* (1999), *Henry IV* (2004), *110 in the Shade* (2007), and her Public Theater Shakespeare in the Park debut in *Twelfth Night* alongside Anne Hathaway and Raúl Esparza (2009).

McDonald made her opera debut in 2006 at Houston Grand Opera, where she starred in a double bill: Poulenc's monodrama *La voix humaine* and the world premiere of its companion piece, *Send*, written by one of McDonald's frequent collaborators, Michael John LaChiusa. She made her Los Angeles Opera debut in 2007 starring alongside Patti LuPone in John Doyle's production of Kurt Weill's *Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*. The resulting recording won McDonald two Grammy Awards for Best Opera Recording and Best Classical Album.

On the concert stage, McDonald has premiered music by Pulitzer Prize-winning composer John Adams and sung with virtually every major American orchestra—including the Boston Symphony, Chicago Symphony, Cleveland Orchestra, Los Angeles Philharmonic, National Symphony, New York Philharmonic, Philadelphia Orchestra, and San Francisco Symphony—and under such conductors as Sir Simon Rattle, Esa-Pekka Salonen, and Leonard Slatkin. She made her Carnegie Hall debut in 1998 with the San Francisco Symphony under the baton of Michael Tilson Thomas in a season-opening concert that was broadcast live on PBS. Internationally, she returns to the BBC Proms in London (where she was only the second American in more than 100 years invited to appear as a guest soloist at the Last Night of the Proms) and at the Théâtre du Châtelet in Paris, as well as to the London Symphony Orchestra and Berlin Philharmonic.

Biographies, continued

It was the Peabody Award-winning CBS program *Having Our Say: The Delany Sisters' First 100 Years* that first introduced McDonald to television audiences as a dramatic actress. She went on to co-star with Kathy Bates and Victor Garber in the lauded 1999 Disney/ABC television remake of *Annie*, and in 2000 she had a recurring role on NBC's hit series *Law and Order: Special Victims Unit*. After receiving her first Emmy nomination for her performance in the HBO film version of the Pulitzer Prize-winning play *Wit*, directed by Mike Nichols and starring Emma Thompson, McDonald returned to network television in 2003 in the political drama *Mister Sterling*, produced by Emmy Award-winner Lawrence O'Donnell Jr. (*The West Wing*) and starring Josh Brolin. In early 2006 she joined the cast of the WB's *The Bedford Diaries*, and over the next season she had a recurring role on NBC's television series *Kidnapped*. In 2008 she reprised her Tony-winning role in *A Raisin in the Sun* in a made-for-television movie adaptation, earning her a second Emmy Award nomination. From 2007 to 2011, she played Dr. Naomi Bennett on the hit ABC medical drama, *Private Practice*. In 2013, her critically acclaimed performance as the Mother Abbess in NBC's live telecast of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *The Sound of Music* opposite Carrie Underwood as Maria was watched by an estimated 18.5 million people across America. McDonald has performed on numerous Tony Awards telecasts; in 2013, she closed the show by performing a rap with Neil Patrick Harris.

A familiar face on PBS, McDonald has headlined telecasts, including an American Songbook season-opening concert, a presentation of Sondheim's *Passion*, a Rodgers and Hammerstein tribute concert titled *Something Wonderful*, and five galas with the New York Philharmonic: a New Year's Eve performance in 2006; a concert celebrating Sondheim's 80th birthday; Carnegie Hall's 120th anniversary concert; *One Singular Sensation! Celebrating Marvin Hamlisch*; and, most recently, *Sweeney Todd*. She was also featured in the PBS television special *A Broadway Celebration: In Performance at the White House*, singing at the request of President Barack Obama and First Lady Michelle Obama. McDonald has appeared three times on the Kennedy Center Honors; been profiled by *60 Minutes*, *Today*, *PBS NewsHour*, and *CBS Sunday Morning*; been a guest on the *Late Show with David Letterman*, the *Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon*, *Late Night with Jimmy Fallon*, the *Colbert Report*, *Charlie Rose*, *CBS This Morning*, *NewsNation with Tamron Hall*, *PoliticsNation with Al Sharpton*, *Iron Chef America*, the *Megan Mullally Show*, the *Rosie O'Donnell Show*, the *Tavis Smiley Show*, and the *Wendy Williams Show*; and has guest co-hosted on *The View* with Barbara Walters. In 2012, McDonald was named the new official host of the PBS series *Live From Lincoln Center*, which earned her a third Emmy nomination.

McDonald's film career began with her role in *Seven Servants* in 1996, and her list of credits has since grown to include *The Object of My Affection* (1998); *Cradle Will Rock* (1999); *It Runs in the Family* (2003); *The Best Thief in the World* (2004); and *She Got Problems* (2009), a mockumentary movie musical written, starring, and directed by her sister, Alison McDonald. Most recently, Audra McDonald appeared in the 2012 release *Rampart*, starring Woody Harrelson.

As an exclusive Nonesuch recording artist, McDonald released her most recent album, *Go Back Home*, in 2013, marking her first solo disc in seven years. She has released four previous solo albums on the label, interpreting songs from the classic (Gershwin, Arlen, and Bernstein) to the contemporary (Michael John LaChiusa, Adam Guettel, and Ricky Ian Gordon). *The New York Times* dubbed her first Nonesuch album, 1998's *Way Back to Paradise*, as Adult Record of the Year. Following the best-selling *How Glory Goes* in 2000 and *Happy Songs* in 2002, she released the 2006 album *Build a Bridge*, which saw the singer stretch her repertoire to include songs by the likes of Randy Newman, Elvis Costello and Burt Bacharach, Rufus Wainwright, and Nellie McKay. Her ensemble recordings include the acclaimed EMI version of Bernstein's *Wonderful Town* conducted by Sir Simon Rattle, the New York Philharmonic release of Sondheim's *Sweeney Todd*, and *Dreamgirls* in concert, as well as the first recording of Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Allegro* and Broadway cast albums of *Carousel*, *Ragtime*, *Marie Christine*, *110 in the Shade*, and *The Gershwins' Porgy and Bess*. She is also featured on a number of audiovisual recordings available on DVD and Blu-ray, including *Sondheim! The Birthday Concert*; *Christmas with the Mormon Tabernacle Choir and Orchestra at Temple Square*; *Weill – Rise and Fall of the City of Mahagonny*; *Bernstein – Wonderful Town*; *Audra McDonald: Live at the Donmar, London*; and *My Favorite Broadway: The Leading Ladies*.

Biographies, continued

McDonald's other accolades include five Drama Desk Awards, five Outer Critics Circle Awards, four NAACP Image Awards nominations, an Ovation Award, a Theatre World Award, and the Drama League's 2000 Distinguished Achievement in Musical Theatre and 2012 Distinguished Performance Award. In 2013 she was named Musical America's Musician of the Year and joined the esteemed company of previous winners such as Leonard Bernstein, Leontyne Price, Beverly Sills, and Yo-Yo Ma. Besides her six Tony wins, she has received nominations for her performances in *Marie Christine* and *110 in the Shade*.

In addition to her professional obligations, McDonald is an ardent proponent of marriage equality. She sits on the advisory board of the advocacy organization Broadway Impact and has been featured in campaigns for Freedom to Marry, NOH8, and PFLAG NYC. In 2012, she and her now husband, actor Will Swenson, received PFLAG National's Straight for Equality Award. A dog lover, she has two canine companions, Butler and Georgia, adopted from Eleventh Hour Rescue, a volunteer-based, non-profit organization that saves dogs from death row. In 2014, she joined the Covenant House International Board of Directors, which oversees programs for homeless youth in 27 cities in six countries across the United States, Canada, and Latin America.

Of all her many roles, her favorites are the ones performed offstage: wife to her husband and mother to her daughter, Zoe Madeline.

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ANDY EINHORN, *music director and piano*

Andy Einhorn boasts Broadway credits for Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella* (original Broadway cast recording); *Evita* (original Broadway cast recording); *Brief Encounter*; *The Light in the Piazza*; and *Sondheim on Sondheim* (original Broadway cast recording), for which he was Grammy Award-nominated. He most recently served as the music director and conductor for the Broadway production of Woody Allen's *Bullets Over Broadway* (original Broadway cast recording).

His tour work includes *Sweeney Todd*, *The Light in the Piazza*, *Mamma Mia!*, and *The Lion King*. Einhorn has worked at Goodspeed Opera House, Signature Theatre, Oregon Shakespeare Festival, and PaperMill Playhouse. He was principal vocal coach and pianist for Houston Grand Opera's *An Evening with Audra McDonald*, a double-bill of Poulenc's *La voix humaine*, and LaChiusa's *Send*.

Einhorn has served as music director and pianist for McDonald since fall of 2011, performing with her at many venues, including the Philadelphia Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Los Angeles Opera, Avery Fisher Hall, and Carnegie Hall. Highlights of his 2014–15 season engagements with McDonald include concerts at Walt Disney Concert Hall, Carnegie Hall, and Teatro Real in Madrid. He has also music directed for Barbara Cook at Feinstein's and Toronto's Royal Conservatory of Music.

Other cast albums include *Stage Door Canteen* and McDonald's newest release, *Go Back Home*. He served as the music director for HBO's Peabody Award-winning documentary *Six by Sondheim* and as music supervisor for Great Performances Peabody Award-winning special *Broadway Musicals: A Jewish Legacy* on PBS.

Andy Einhorn is an honors graduate of Rice University.

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Biographies, continued



GENE LEWIN, *drums*

Gene Lewin appears on 34 CDs, with several more soon to be released. His eclectic discography ranges from the modern jazz of Fundementia to the electric-violin pop of GrooveLily. Several straight-ahead jazz projects and singer-songwriter efforts round out the list.

Lewin drums, sings, and composes for GrooveLily, a trio that has been together for 16 years and has toured extensively in the U.S. and Canada. While they have morphed through many different musical scenes (and hair styles), they are now focused on creating hybrid musical theatre: performances that feel both like concert and story.

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, guitarists Ben Monder and Steve Cardenas, jazz legend tenor saxophonist George Coleman, bassist/vocalist Jay Leonhart, and many others.

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



MARK VANDERPOEL, *bass*

Mark Vanderpoel is a native of San Diego. He holds a bachelor's degree from the University of California, San Diego, where he studied with Bertram Turetzky, and a master's degree from the California Institute of the Arts.

Vanderpoel is a former member of the San Diego Symphony and various other chamber groups from the area, in addition to ensembles based in the Baja California region of Mexico. His extensive theatre credits include *Legally Blonde*, Rodgers and Hammerstein's *Cinderella*, *See What I Wanna See*, *Guys and Dolls*, the PBS special *A Broadway Celebration on In Performance at the White House*, *Jane Eyre*, *Bullets Over Broadway*, and many others.

Vanderpoel's stage and sideman credits include Audra McDonald, Kristin Chenoweth, Kelli O'Hara, Nancy Sinatra, Victoria Clark, Shirley Jones, Cliff Richard, Deborah Voigt, Sandra Bernhard, Clay Aiken, Taylor Hicks, David Johansen, Sigur Rós, Jeff Beck, and Andrea Bocelli. Passions include surfing and using his Vitamix.

Engagement Activities

Friday, May 1, 2015, 6:30 PM

Play in the Lobby: Musical Theatre

Grand Lobby

Before *Broadway Old and New*, students from the School of Performing Arts perform selections from the musical theatre canon. Participating students include Lindsay Baker, Briley Conder, Nora Cotter, Kenzy Forman, MaryKate Goff, Maria Jernigan, Tina Mascaro, Daijreous Poole, and Jessica Vance. Music faculty member Rick Masters will accompany on the piano.

SPECIAL THANKS:

Tracy Cowden, Susanna Rinehart, Rick Masters, Cara Rawlings, and Brian Thorsett

In the Galleries

ICAT: Open (at the) Source

Ruth C. Horton Gallery

Continues through Sunday, May 17, 2015

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM/Saturday-Sunday, 10 AM-4 PM

ICAT: Open (at the) Source enables visitors to explore and experience the research and innovation that is happening within the Institute for Creativity, Arts, and Technology (ICAT). Visitors become more than just viewers, but partners in exploration with the students, faculty, and staff of ICAT and its creative community.

School of Visual Arts Senior Show 2015

Miles C. Horton Jr. Gallery

Continues through Sunday, May 17, 2015

Hours: Tuesday-Friday, 10 AM-6 PM/Saturday-Sunday, 10 AM-4 PM

In this capstone exhibition for graduating seniors, emerging artists at Virginia Tech's School of Visual Arts, in the College of Architecture and Urban Studies, display a broad range of art and design practices. Incorporating new and established technologies in material and virtual realms, the exhibition demonstrates the School of Visual Arts' commitment to excellence and innovation in the practice, study, and teaching of arts.