

Audra McDonald live in concert in Boca — and on TV

Even audiences who didn't see her in the revival of "Porgy and Bess" on Broadway and didn't know she has five Tonys and two Grammys, know Audra McDonald from TV.

Versatile comes to mind, and there's not many actresses who can play the lead in the Gershwin musical and a lawyer on "Private Practice." She'll even tackle the formidable Alicia in court in Sunday's episode of "The Good Wife."

So what made McDonald decide to perform in Boca Raton as the finale for this year's Festival of the Arts Boca on March 16?

"I miss concerting," she said in an interview before she pops in the day before for tech rehearsals and to warm up with her own trio in the tented Mizner Park Amphitheater.

Her last performance on Broadway was back in September. So, before she releases her fifth album in May and goes on tour to support it, McDonald will sing "songs I love to sing, mainly American musical theater and songs that haven't been produced yet," she said. "It's quite eclectic."

"Porgy and Bess" fans shouldn't expect her to sing arias from that score. "It's very difficult to do in concert, except 'Summer-



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time,'" she said.

She describes her diverse performing career as following her instincts and "taking advantage of opportunities."

"Private Practice" made her more comfortable in front of a camera, she said.

McDonald has worked with Festival of the Arts' musical director Constantine Kitsopoulos over the years. In fact, he couldn't think more highly of her, and their first meeting was more dramatic than an episode of "Smash."

"Audra and I met in 1992 when I was music director of the national tour of the 'Secret Garden,'" he said in an interview. "We were rehearsing the tour in New York City, and one of the gals in the show became ill and we had to replace her. Audra was still a student."

He walked in one morning and "there was Audra and it was my job to teach her the music," he said. "We were on the road together for 16 months."

There are other Kitsopoulos connections. "She went to Julliard with my sister, Maria, a cellist in the New York Philharmonic for 17 years."

The maestro stayed in touch with McDonald loosely, and as fate would have it, his wife, who plays oboe, got a call to perform in "Porgy and Bess" on Broadway. "We went backstage and saw Audra and she was wonderful in the show, and three weeks later I got a

call to see if I was available to conduct the Broadway production and I started working with Audra again after 20 years," he said. "She got a Tony for best actress in a musical and the show won best revival."

"I thought she'd be a perfect fit for the festival and audiences in South Florida needed to see her, so we scooped up that opportunity," he added. "Besides being a wonderful artist, she's a great person and a joy to work with. She's a great, great musician besides having a gorgeous voice."

CONCERTS

Coheed & Cambria, 8 p.m., March 8. Fillmore. \$40.

Pop, Rock & Doo Wopp Live!, with host Cousin Brucie, Sonny Turner, Charlie Thomas' Drifters, Danny & the Juniors, The Chiffons, The Passions, 8 p.m., March 8. FAU, 777 Glades Rd., Boca Raton. 800-564-9539. \$39-\$75.

Rib Round Up Country Music Festival, with Rodney Atkins, Josh Turner, Kip Moore, Chris Cagle, Lauren Alaina, Florida Georgia Line, John Pardi, Greg Bates, Justin Moore. Noon, March 9 at Cruzan Amphitheatre, 601-7 Sansbury's Way, West Palm Beach. Ticketmaster \$40, \$46.50.

Salsa Music Awards, 8 p.m., March 9. BankUnited Center. \$61.40-\$164.15.

Australian Bee Gees, 8 p.m., March 9. Seminole Casino Coconut Creek. \$23.20-\$45.90.

Andre Rieu, 8 p.m., March 9. BB&T Center. \$60-\$157.

Richard Arjona, 8:30 p.m., March 9. AA Arena. \$36.80-\$154.15.

Roger McGuinn, 7:30 p.m., March 11. Maltz Jupiter Theatre. \$35.

Tenacious D, 8:30 p.m., March 12. Fillmore. \$80.25.

Matchbox Twenty, 8 p.m., March 13. Hard Rock Live. \$63.50-\$164.50.

Pat Cooper, 8 p.m., March 14. Coral Springs Center. 954-344-5990. \$37.50-\$50.

Lady Gaga, 7:30 p.m., March 15 at BB&T Center. 7:30 p.m., March 16 at AA Arena. \$68.10-\$200.10.

Awolnation, 7:30 p.m., March 15. Revolution Live. 954-727-0950 or Ticketmaster. \$22, \$33.25.

Jazz in the Gardens. New Edition, Charlie Wilson, Najee, Ne-Yo, Monica, 4 p.m., March 16. Mary, Mary; Earth, Wind & Fire; Rachell Ferrell, 4 p.m., March 17. Sun Life Stadium. \$58.60-\$229.20.

David Bisbal, 8 p.m., March 17. Fillmore. \$59.50-\$81.25.

Deftones, 8 p.m., March 19. Fillmore. \$33, \$45.

Leonard Cohen, 8 p.m., March 20. Miami. Ticketmaster. \$39.35-\$272.10.

The Amazing Kreskin, March 22. PBSC Eisey, 11051 Campus Dr., Palm Beach Gardens. 561-207-5900. \$25-\$55.

Gabriel Iglesias, 8 p.m., March 22. Hard Rock Live. \$43.50-\$58.50.

The Temptations & Four Tops, 8 p.m., March 22. Kravis Dreyfoos. \$25-\$133.

Alicia Keys, 8 p.m., March 23. AA Arena. Ticketmaster. \$73.70-\$117.15.

Jim Henson Company's Pajanimals Live!, 4:30 p.m., March 24. Fillmore. \$41.50, \$46.50.

Romeo Santos, 8 p.m., March 27. Hard Rock Live. \$89.50-\$164.50.

Eric Clapton, 8 p.m., March 29-30. Hard Rock Live. \$115.50-\$315.50.

Maroon 5, 8 p.m., March 29. BB&T Center. \$41.75-\$93.75.

Taylor Dayne/Expose/Tiffany, 8 p.m., March 30. Magic City Casino. 305-460-6579. \$20+.

Diana Krall, 8 p.m., April 2. Arsht Knight. \$55-\$125.

Chicago, 8 p.m., April 4. Hard Rock Live. \$54, \$105.50.

The Addams Family, April 9-21. Broward Au Rene. \$51.55-\$1,041.49.

John Legend, rescheduled to 8 p.m., April 10. Hard Rock Live. Original tickets will be honored or refunds available at point of purchase. \$45-\$95.50.

Taylor Swift, 7 p.m., April 10. AA Arena. \$46.55-\$104.35.

Rihanna, 7:30 p.m.,

April 20. BB&T Center. \$50.50-\$139.

Chris Botti, 8 p.m., April 21. Kravis Dreyfoos. \$25-\$122.75.

Alice in Chains, 8:30 p.m., April 25. Fillmore. \$79.75.

Experience the Beatles with Rain, 8 p.m., April 28. Fillmore. \$44.50, \$69.

Alejandro Sanz, 8 p.m., May 9. AA Arena. \$56.25-\$136.55.

Celtic Woman, 2 & 8 p.m., May 11. Kravis Dreyfoos. \$25-\$133.

Fleetwood Mac, 8 p.m., June 8. BB&T Center. \$93.75-\$166.50.

One Direction, 7:30 p.m., June 13 at BB&T Center. \$41.50-\$103.75. 7:30 p.m., June 14 at AA Arena. \$43.10-\$106.05.



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