

MCDERMOTT

THE EUGENE MCDERMOTT AWARD IN THE ARTS AT MIT
MASSACHUSETTS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY
77 MASSACHUSETTS AVENUE, BUILDING 10-183
CAMBRIDGE, MA 02139

Audra McDonald Awarded 2018 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT

Award includes \$100K prize, artist residency, gala and public program at MIT

Cambridge, MA, USA, October 26, 2017 – Massachusetts Institute of Technology (MIT) is pleased to announce that Tony, Grammy and Emmy Award-winning singer and actress Audra McDonald is the recipient of the [2018 Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT](#). The \$100,000 cash prize awarded at a gala in her honor also includes an artist residency, during which McDonald will present a public talk at MIT on April 14, 2018 about her performances in musical theater, film and television. The announcement follows what has been a banner year for the singer and actress: over the summer, she made her debut in London’s West End playing Billie Holiday in *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill*—the role that netted her a record sixth Tony during its 2014 Broadway run—and in the spring she graced silver screens worldwide as Madame Garderobe in Disney’s live action *Beauty and the Beast*. This coming spring, McDonald joins the cast of *The Good Fight* on CBS All Access and embarks on a North American concert tour.



Audra McDonald. Photo by Autumn De Wilde

Audra McDonald’s remarks upon receiving the award:

“Art is not just something beautiful that we experience in a theater or a museum. Art can also be painful or make us feel vulnerable, but in that discomfort it has the power to be illuminating, transformative, and revelatory. As in life, art must relish the joys while also embracing the suffering and struggle—a paradox that epitomizes the human experience. My greatest hope is that art helps us as a society to find common ground, to create dialogue, and to understand each other in new and meaningful ways. I am therefore so humbled and honored to receive the McDermott Award in the Arts and look forward to exploring these topics during my residency at MIT, an institution that embodies innovation, creativity, and, above all, humanity.”

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT celebrates individuals who continue to achieve the highest distinction in their fields and who will produce inspiring work for many years to come. The \$100,000 cash prize represents an investment in the recipient’s future creative work, rather than a prize for a particular project or lifetime of achievement. McDonald will be presented with the award at a gala in her honor on April 14, 2018. Past recipients include David Adjaye, Olafur Eliasson, Robert LePage, Gustavo Dudamel, Bill Viola, Suzan-Lori Parks and Santiago Calatrava, among others.

From MIT Associate Provost with responsibility for the arts and Ford International Professor of History Philip S. Khoury:

“We are delighted to celebrate the phenomenal actress and singer Audra McDonald as we embark on a new era of the performing arts at MIT and soon will inaugurate our first dedicated performing arts space. Our new theater arts building will address the increasing demand by students for theater training and allow the outstanding artists on our faculty to present their work on campus in addition to stages around the world. We look forward to having Ms. McDonald work with our faculty and students during her residency. Her incomparable range across multiple genres of performance will enrich our performing arts community.”

Campus Residency

A distinctive feature of the award is a short residency at MIT, which includes a public presentation of the artist’s work, substantial interaction with students and faculty, and a gala that convenes national and international leaders in the arts. The goal of the residency is to provide the recipient with unparalleled access to the creative energy and cutting-edge research at the Institute and to develop mutually enlightening relationships with MIT students and faculty.

2018 Public Program by Audra McDonald at MIT

McDonald will discuss her career in a public presentation on April 14, 2018. Further information about the public program will be posted in winter 2018 at arts.mit.edu/mcdermott.

2018 Celebrity Series Concert at Boston Symphony Hall

In addition to the McDermott Award residency, McDonald will present a separate concert in Boston as part of the Celebrity Series at Boston Symphony Hall on April 13, 2018. More information is available on the Celebrity Series website: celebrityseries.org/audra.

About the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT

The Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT was established in 1974 by the Council for the Arts at MIT. The award recognizes innovative talents in any arts discipline and offers its recipient a \$100,000 cash prize and a campus residency. The selection process reflects MIT’s commitment to risk taking, problem solving and the idea of connecting creative minds across disciplines. The award honors Eugene McDermott, cofounder of Texas Instruments and long-time friend and benefactor of MIT.

About the Council for the Arts at MIT

The Council for the Arts at MIT is a volunteer group of alumni and friends who support the arts at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Since its founding in 1972 by MIT President Jerome B. Wiesner, the Council for the Arts at MIT has bestowed the award upon 36 individuals who work in the performing, visual and media arts, as well as authors, art historians and patrons of the arts. Appointed by the President of MIT to three-year terms, Council members continuously fulfill their mission “to foster the arts at MIT and to act as a catalyst for the development of a broadly based, highly participatory program in the arts.”

Past Recipients

2015: David Adjaye, architect

2013: Olafur Eliasson, visual artist

2011: Robert LePage, performance and media artist

2010: Gustavo Dudamel, conductor

2009: Bill Viola, visual artist
 2006: Suzan-Lori Parks, playwright/novelist
 2005: Santiago Calatrava, architect/engineer
 2004: Libby Larsen, composer
 2003: Vinie Burrows, activist/actress/writer
 2001: Isaac Julien, filmmaker
 2000: CORE Ensemble, musicians
 1999: Diller + Scofidio, architects
 1998: Junot Díaz, author
 1997: Toni Dove, video artist
 1996: Kenny Leon, theater director
 1995: Jeff Wall, photographer
 1994: Tan Dun, composer
 1993: Thomas Hanrahan & Victoria Meyers, architects
 1992: Richard Preston, author
 1991: Rebecca Purdum, artist
 1990: Agnes Denes, artist
 1989: Ida Ely Rubin, art historian
 1988: Yulla Lipchitz, photographer
 1986: Richard Leacock, filmmaker
 1985: Harold Eugene “Doc” Edgerton, photographer
 1984: I.M. Pei, architect
 1983: Albert R. Gurney Jr., playwright
 1982: Roy Lamson, arts administrator
 1981: Henry Moore, sculptor
 1980: Luis A. Ferré, arts patron
 1979: Jerome B. Wiesner, President Emeritus, MIT, arts patron
 1978: Catherine N. Stratton, Founder, Council for the Arts at MIT, arts patron
 1977: James R. Killian Jr., President Emeritus, MIT
 1976: Paul Tishman, Founder, Council for the Arts at MIT, arts patron
 1975: Klaus Liepmann, conductor, founder of the music program at MIT
 1974: György Kepes, artist, founder of the Center for Advanced Visual Studies at MIT (CAVS)

About Audra McDonald

Audra McDonald is unparalleled in the breadth and versatility of her artistry as both a singer and an actress. The winner of a record-breaking six Tony Awards, two Grammy Awards and an Emmy Award, she received a 2015 National Medal of Arts from President Barack Obama and was also named one of *Time* magazine’s 100 most influential people that year. Her Tony-winning performances include *Carousel*, *Master Class*, *Ragtime*, *A Raisin in the Sun*, *The Gershwins’ Porgy and Bess* and *Lady Day at Emerson’s Bar & Grill* – which served as the vehicle for her 2017 debut in London’s West End. On television, McDonald is known for her roles in NBC’s *The Sound of Music Live!* and ABC’s *Private Practice*, and she won an Emmy as the official host of PBS’s *Live From Lincoln Center*. In 2018, she joins the cast of *The Good Fight* on CBS All Access and embarks on a North American concert tour. Recent film credits include *Ricki and the Flash*, Disney’s live-action *Beauty and the Beast* and movie-musical *Hello Again*. The Juilliard-trained vocalist also maintains a major career as a concert artist. Of all her many roles, her favorites are the ones performed offstage: passionate advocate for equal rights and homeless youth, wife to actor Will Swenson and mother.

www.audramcdonald.com

www.twitter.com/AudraEqualityMc
www.facebook.com/audramcdonald
www.instagram.com/audramcdonald

For more information on the Eugene McDermott Award in the Arts at MIT, please visit
<http://arts.mit.edu/mcdermott/>.

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