

Natalie MacMaster

Award winning Cape Breton musician, Natalie MacMaster, began her fiddling career at 16 releasing her debut album *Four on the Floor*. Her musical venture now spans over three decades, completing 11 albums, performing thousands of shows and collaborating with a multitude of world renowned artists.

The most recent album by MacMaster, *Cape Breton Girl*, has been self-described as a “straight-ahead, traditional record.” The album is filled with an invigorating collection of toe-tapping jigs, reels, and strathspeys that embodies her most cherished values, her family and home, tradition, and faith.

Natalie’s family and work-life have been intertwined since marrying fellow fiddler Donnell Leahy in 2002. Her values are equally as important in her life as music. She believes incorporating family into her performances and music is the perfect way to maintain a healthy work-life balance. MacMaster and Leahy now have five beautiful children, the newest addition being born August of 2012. She maintains her devotion to family by having their children join her and her husband on tour. Natalie admits that becoming a mother has reinvigorated her love for the stage by giving her a chance to transform from Natalie The Mom into Natalie MacMaster The Entertainer.

Over MacMaster’s three decades of performing her audience is still left clapping, hollering and screaming for more as she and her band wow them with stylistic diversity without losing the traditional Cape Breton groove. The applause only increases with excitement when she incorporates step dancing into her performance. Although her stage presence is reason enough to see one of her shows, it’s the elegance with the bow, the intricate technique with the fiddle, and the embrace of the Cape Breton tradition that floors her admirers at over 100 shows a year.

The dedicated work ethic Natalie has shown throughout her career has garnered her well deserved recognition throughout the industry. In turn, this has amounted to multiple gold albums, awards from all across North America, as well as an honorary doctorate from St. Thomas University and honorary degrees from Niagara University, NY, and Trent University. She has also received the Arts & Letters Award from the Canadian Association of New York, the honour of being a member of the Order of Canada, and - most recently - receiving an honorary Doctor of Divinity degree from the Atlantic school of Theology.

MacMaster’s sought-after talents are in demand by her musical peers, all from a range of genres. She has collaborated with countless artists, including a recording with Yo-yo Ma, which won a Grammy. In turn, Natalie has enlisted the expertise of many world renowned artists to contribute to her own projects throughout the years.

More recently, Natalie’s talents have expanded to include co-writing and publishing the picturesque 161-page coffee table book *Natalie MacMaster’s Cape Breton Aire* with Pulitzer Prize-winning wordsmith Eileen McNamara and featuring Boston-based Eric Roth’s breathtaking photography.

With her Cape Breton roots, dedication to her craft, and love for her family, Natalie is a musical force with a long and successful career in music, who will, without a doubt, continue to warm the hearts of fans for years to come.