

Natalie MacMaster: Cape Breton Girl

She's a member of the Order of Canada, a Juno award winner, and the majority of her 11 albums have reached gold status (50,000 records sold), and received an honorary doctorate from St. Thomas University and honorary degrees from Niagara University, NY, and Trent University.

Natalie MacMaster is best known as a virtuoso fiddler, thrilling audiences around the world – including those at Carnegie Hall and Massey Hall -- with her invigorating prowess while serving as a music ambassador to her beloved traditional Cape Breton sound.

Married to fellow fiddler Donnell Leahy of Leahy, the mother of four performs an average of 100 dates a year, co-hosts the annual Leahy Music Camp with her husband and his band in Lakefield, Ontario, has appeared multiple times on the CBC, *Canada A.M.* and Garrison Keillor's *A Prairie Home Companion*; and warmed TV viewers with guest spots on Christmas specials like *Rita MacNeil's Christmas* and *Holiday Festival On Ice* with Olympic ice skaters Jamie Sale, David Pelletier, Kurt Browning and world champion Jeffrey Buttle.

MacMaster's talents have also been in-demand by her peers, contributing to albums by Ma, The Chieftains; children's entertainer Raffi; banjo prodigy Béla Fleck; fellow fiddling marvel Alison Krauss, with whom Natalie played a duet on Krauss's *A Hundred Miles Or More: A Collection*; Dobro specialist Jerry Douglas, singer Hayley Westenra; former Doobie Brother and classic R&B interpreter Michael McDonald and, most recently, Thomas Dolby's new album *Map Of The Floating City*.

In turn, such stellar talents as Grammy-winning fiddlers Krauss and Mark O'Connor, "Jesus, Take The Wheel" songwriter Gordie Sampson, Nuevo Flamenco guitarist Jesse Cook, members of The Rankin Family, Edgar Meyer and Alison Brown are just some who have contributed to Natalie's own projects through the years.

Most recently, she has added "author" to her impressive list of accomplishments, 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.

Recently awarded the prestigious Arts & Letters Award from the Canadian Association of New York, Natalie's latest album, *Cape Breton Girl*, described by the artist as a "straight-ahead, traditional record," was released in November 2011.