



Contact: Camille Spaccavento
530.754.5422

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For immediate release:

Award-Winning Fiddler Natalie MacMaster Returns to Mondavi Center

September 22, 2008; Davis, California—The leading international standard-bearer for Cape Breton fiddling, **Natalie MacMaster** is a singing, step-dancing fireball on stage. The award-winning violinist, an audience favorite who brought down the house with local performances in 2002, 2003, and 2005, will return with her unique fusion of traditional fiddle tunes, Celtic music, bluegrass, and more to the **Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis**.

The event will begin at 8 pm on October 16 in Mondavi Center's Jackson Hall on the UC Davis campus. Tickets are available from the Mondavi Center Ticket Office at 530.754.ARTS (2787) or online at MondaviArts.org. The event is presented as part of Mondavi Center's **World Stage** events

Widely considered Nova Scotia's fiddling gift to the world, MacMaster is renowned for her energetic performances of the folk music of Cape Breton, a region steeped in Celtic musical tradition. The niece of Canadian fiddle sensation **Buddy MacMaster**, she has played the violin since the age of nine, and has seen her career progress rapidly from local dance halls to the world's leading stages, with a performance style that *Entertainment Weekly* described as being as "pure and bracing as North Atlantic sea spray." While often incorporating contemporary elements—such as rock guitar or jazz arrangements—MacMaster's fiddle playing remains firmly rooted in her native Cape Breton tradition, and celebrates the traditions roots as dance music.

An expressive and active performer on the concert stage, MacMaster fiddles and step-dances with unstoppable, foot-tapping energy. "MacMaster dances as exuberantly as she plays," *The Washington Post* has written, adding "she was a curly-haired ball of perpetual motion on up-tempo songs, bouncing about on her toes as if she had just returned from her fifth Starbucks run of the day. A combustible virtuoso, she sawed away on her fiddle while tap-dancing and then executing a flawless moonwalk."

Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts, UC Davis

In addition to a 2001 Grammy nomination, MacMaster has earned numerous accolades, including the East Coast Music Award's coveted entertainer of the year award in 2002, nine East Coast Music Awards, two Juno Awards—the Canadian equivalent of a Grammy—for best instrumental album, four consecutive fiddler of the year awards (1997-2000), and the Canadian Country Music Awards honor for vocal/instrumental collaboration of the year, which she received for her performance with **Alison Krauss** on "Get Me Through December" in 2000. MacMaster has opened for **Carlos Santana** and performed alongside **La Bottine Souriante**, **Joan Osborne**, as well as with Celtic legends, **The Chieftains**, at a New York concert honoring **Luciano Pavarotti**.

While MacMaster's recordings have established her as a keeper of Scottish-Canadian tradition, she's also been praised as a contemporary innovator. "A bona fide world star," the *Boston Globe* called MacMaster, while another review by the *Los Angeles Times* applauded her "star quality performance with major potential to cross over into the larger pop music market." She has released 10 CDs, from 1993's *Fit as a Fiddle* to the most recent *Yours Truly*. Recorded in Halifax, Kingston, Toronto, and Calgary, the CD is co-produced with husband **Donnell Leahy**. It features a mix of traditional and contemporary numbers as well as several originals, including a rendition of "Danny Boy" sung by the **Doobie Brothers' Michael McDonald** and "Farewell To Peter," which MacMaster wrote to pay her respects to her friend, the late Canadian newsman, **Peter Jennings**.

For her upcoming Mondavi Center performance, MacMaster will be joined by **Mac Morin** (piano), **Matt MacIsaac** (pipes), **J.D. Blair** (percussion), and **Nathaniel Smith** (cello).

"Natalie MacMaster is not only a virtuoso fiddler but an engaging live performer whose high-spirited concerts have made her a Mondavi Center audience favorite," said **Don Roth**, the Mondavi Center's executive director.

What: **Natalie MacMaster**
When: Thursday, October 16 • 8 pm
Where: Jackson Hall
Robert and Margrit Mondavi Center for the Performing Arts
University of California, Davis
Admission: \$45/\$35/\$25 Adults • \$22.50/\$17.50/\$12.50 Students & Children
Tickets/Info: 530.754.ARTS (2787)
866.754.ARTS (toll-free)
<http://www.MondaviArts.org>
530.754.5402 [TDD]

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