

## Natalie MacMaster rocks the house

by Shane Parreco  
Contributor

On Thursday February 8<sup>th</sup> at approximately 7:35pm, The Paul Porter Center for Performing Arts held its largest crowd of the season. This show was probably the most anticipated event at the Porter Center in years. The advance tickets sales sold out the entire venue weeks before the day of the show. There were no seats left in the entire Concert Hall.

### Semi-Formal and Black History Month activities upcoming

by Zack Harding  
Arts & Life Editor

Need something to do in the upcoming few days? Why not check out some of the following events.

The Valentines Semi-formal is going to be held Friday the 16<sup>th</sup> from 10. p.m. to 1 .a.m. in the Scott Commons area of the Porter Center. Come on out and bring a special someone to dance the night away. They will be serving up cakes, hot chocolate, and hor'dourves, and music is going to be provided by a DJ. They ask that attire include no t-shirts, just to look nice, so come out and help share the love.

Also upcoming is the "Real Deal Game Show" on Tuesday the 20<sup>th</sup>, to be held from 9-10:30 in the Dunham Auditorium. The "Real Deal Game Show" is going to focus on Black History Month, where questions can be answered for up to \$400 in prizes. Cash prizes and free t-shirts will also be available.

When Natalie MacMaster took the stage, the audience lit up like a spotlight. The applause and cheers were deafening. After playing a few tunes, MacMaster began her banter with the crowd that would continue for the rest of the evening. She introduced herself as "we" and promptly showed off her growing belly – she is expecting her second child in a few months. The mood of the show was light and even bordered on comedic. Her clever sense of humor and excited energy kept the audience captivated for the entire show. "Seems like there have been fewer walkouts tonight than ever," said the Porter Center's Technical Director David Tate. Steve MacQueen, the Porter Center's managing Director, even commented about the crowd's docile behavior, "indeed, there have been far more positive comments about this show than negative – and for *this* crowd, that is saying a lot."

More specifically, the show was a fiddle showcase for MacMaster

in the genre of traditional Celtic and Irish music. She had with her a supporting band consisting of drums, bass, piano, acoustic guitar, and a bagpiper/flute player. MacMaster made it clear that she was happy to have her band of supporting artists by showcasing each of them individually. The guitar player took several solos throughout the night, and even played and sang an original tune he wrote. The bagpiper started the second half of the show with an awe-inspiring solo that exhibited his prowess and technical mastery of his instrument. Even the piano player was given a spotlight moment where she played a traditional song from her heritage. MacMaster performed several duets with her accompanying musicians as well – including a tap (she is a proficient tap dancer) and drums duet, and a piano and fiddle duet.

Overall, the show was a huge success. The crowd gave several massive standing ovations, the



Natalie MacMaster [www.nataliemacmaster.com](http://www.nataliemacmaster.com)

band played several encores, and not a single word of distaste was expressed about the show. It even made a Celtic music appreciator out of me – and for those of you who know my musical taste, *that* is saying a lot.

## 2007 Grammys and music greats out of touch

by David Ulloa  
Staff Writer

Watching the Grammy Awards on Sunday was like observing a wrongful execution. The people who should have won the awards were the executed and the executioners were the lame, mainstream, and the mentally obtuse board of people who granted the awards. My biggest quarrel is with the best rock album category, which the always-funky fresh Red Hot Chile Peppers won. Out of all of the other nominees, I guess the Red Hot Chile Peppers came up with the best album because they created something new and great... I think not. "Stadium Arcadium" is

by far the most redundant, half cocked, and poppy album they've ever put out. Redundant because of the theme of most of their songs, which are so very similar to the themes in songs on "By the Way" and "Californication," their previous two records. I mean who wants to hear about resentful drug addiction and the connection between geographical placement and personal stature? The songs on the latest record have no new creative sound, which makes songs like "Stadium Arcadium", and "Otherside" sound painfully the same. Comparing their previous two records to their Grammy award winning record is like comparing two Nickelback songs.

Nickelback songs are basically structured to deliver pop hits and classic choruses that you can never forget because they bring on the same sound and the same message. The argument here is that the Chile Peppers did not deliver an honest record. They sold themselves out to make money and used the album as a tool to cope with the fact that maybe they can't "pump it up" a notch or two anymore. And I bet if they did create a far more experimental and honest record, the Grammy board whom which I think are all tuned to a mainstream ear and don't give a crap about real records, would of not even ripped the plastic of it.