



VIRGINIA MACDONALD - JAZZ CLARINETIST

Juno Award-winning clarinetist Virginia MacDonald has established herself as a rising star of her generation. Known for her lyrical and soulful clarinet playing, Virginia has been described as a “powerful new voice in the Canadian scene” by Juno Award-winning bassist Mike Downes. As a highly in-demand bandleader, sidewoman, and composer, Virginia keeps a regular performance schedule across Canada, the United States, and Europe. Virginia has performed at jazz festivals globally including performances at Detroit Jazz Festival, Festival de Jazz Primavera, Rochester Jazz Festival, Toronto Jazz Festival, and Montreal Jazz Festival, to name a few. Virginia has had the pleasure of performing abroad extensively in India, Germany, Austria, Belgium, the Netherlands, Spain, France, Italy, and the UK, and has performed at historic and prestigious venues including Koerner Hall, Ronnie Scott’s, Birdland, Bimhuis, Dizzy’s Club, Le Duc Des Lombards, Jazzclub Unterfahrt, and Smalls.

In 2020, Virginia was selected as the first-prize winner of the International Clarinetist Corona Competition; judges included Anat Cohen, Victor Goines, Ken Peplowski, and Doreen Ketchens. Virginia was recently chosen as one of three finalists for the Toronto Art Foundation's 2024 Breakthrough Jazz Artist Award. Some of Virginia's other accolades include being selected as a Stingray Rising Star Award recipient in 2019 and being selected as one of three finalists for the Toronto Arts Foundation's Emerging Jazz Artist Award in 2021. In 2023, Virginia was selected to headline the International Clarinet Association's 50th anniversary celebration at ClarinetFest in Denver, Colorado.

Virginia has recorded and performed with esteemed artists including Michael Dease, Ira Coleman, Dick Oatts, Harold Mabern, Geoffrey Keezer, Joe Magnarelli, Derrick Gardner, Bruce Barth, Rodney Whitaker, Xavier Davis, Quincy Davis, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Bill Cunliffe, Randy Napoleon, Jon Gordon, Kirk MacDonald, Pat Labarbera, Neil Swainson, and Terry Clarke. Virginia is a member of the Canadian Jazz Collective, a seven-piece ensemble comprised of award-winning and established Canadian jazz musicians. Virginia was featured on the Canadian Jazz Collective's debut album "Septology", which was nominated for a Juno Award for Jazz Album of the Year in 2024.

Virginia was featured on Caity Gyorgy's 2022 Juno Award-winning album "Now Pronouncing" and her 2023 Juno Award-winning follow-up "Featuring". Virginia has been a recent and frequent collaborator of Grammy Award-winning trombonist Michael Dease, and appeared on his 2023 album "The Other Shoe: The Music of Gregg Hill" and his 2024 release "Found in Space: The Music of Gregg Hill". Virginia's composition "Up High, Down Low" was featured on Michael Dease's 2023 release "Swing Low". Virginia has been featured on several Juno Award-nominated albums, and has appeared on twenty-plus albums as a sidewoman.

In addition to her busy performance schedule, Virginia is an in-demand educator and has led classes and workshops as a visiting artist at universities and post-secondary music programs internationally. She has given masterclasses at Laval University, Université de Sherbrooke, McGill University, University of Manitoba, St. FX University, University of Toronto, VSO School of Music, the Global Music Institute, and the True School of Music.

“Clarinetist Virginia MacDonald, a standout for her eloquent, boundlessly creative solos” - **Hannah Edgar**, *Downbeat* review of *Sanah Kadoura “Duality”*

“Clarinetist Virginia MacDonald is a particular standout” - **James Hale**, *Downbeat* review of *Michael Dease “The Other Shoe: Music of Gregg Hill”*

“...Clarinet; an interesting substitution in lieu of an alto sax or trombone, but one that paid off nicely and gave the ensemble a distinctive sound. This role fell to...Virginia MacDonald. Her playing was exemplary, with technical infallibility and never the slightest hint of a split or a squeak combined with a full focused sound and a dexterity reminiscent of Eddie Daniels. Her improvised lines were equally engaging, putting one in mind of what a young Branford Marsalis was pushing in the '80s. It is refreshing to hear the clarinet making its mark so effectively in a contemporary jazz setting.” - **Charles Rees**, *London Jazz News* review of *Canadian Jazz Collective performance at Ronnie Scott's*

“[Virginia] is one of the only people I've heard get that completely soulful essence that you get on the saxophone; she gets it on the clarinet. She's got her own voice.” *Grammy-Award winning trombonist Michael Dease, London Jazz News interview*

“Virginia MacDonald is one of the new, upcoming jazz musicians that is hitting the music scene today. Her playing and improvising skills are top-notch, and from the composing that I have heard from her, she is headed to break new ground in this genre of music.” *Juno Award-winning bassist and composer Shelly Berger*

“[Virginia's] tone is beautiful...She plays like a scholar, very refined with plenty of soul.” *Revered New Orleans-based clarinetist Doreen Ketchens*

Virginia is an endorsed artist for
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Official Website

<https://virginiamacdonald.ca>

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