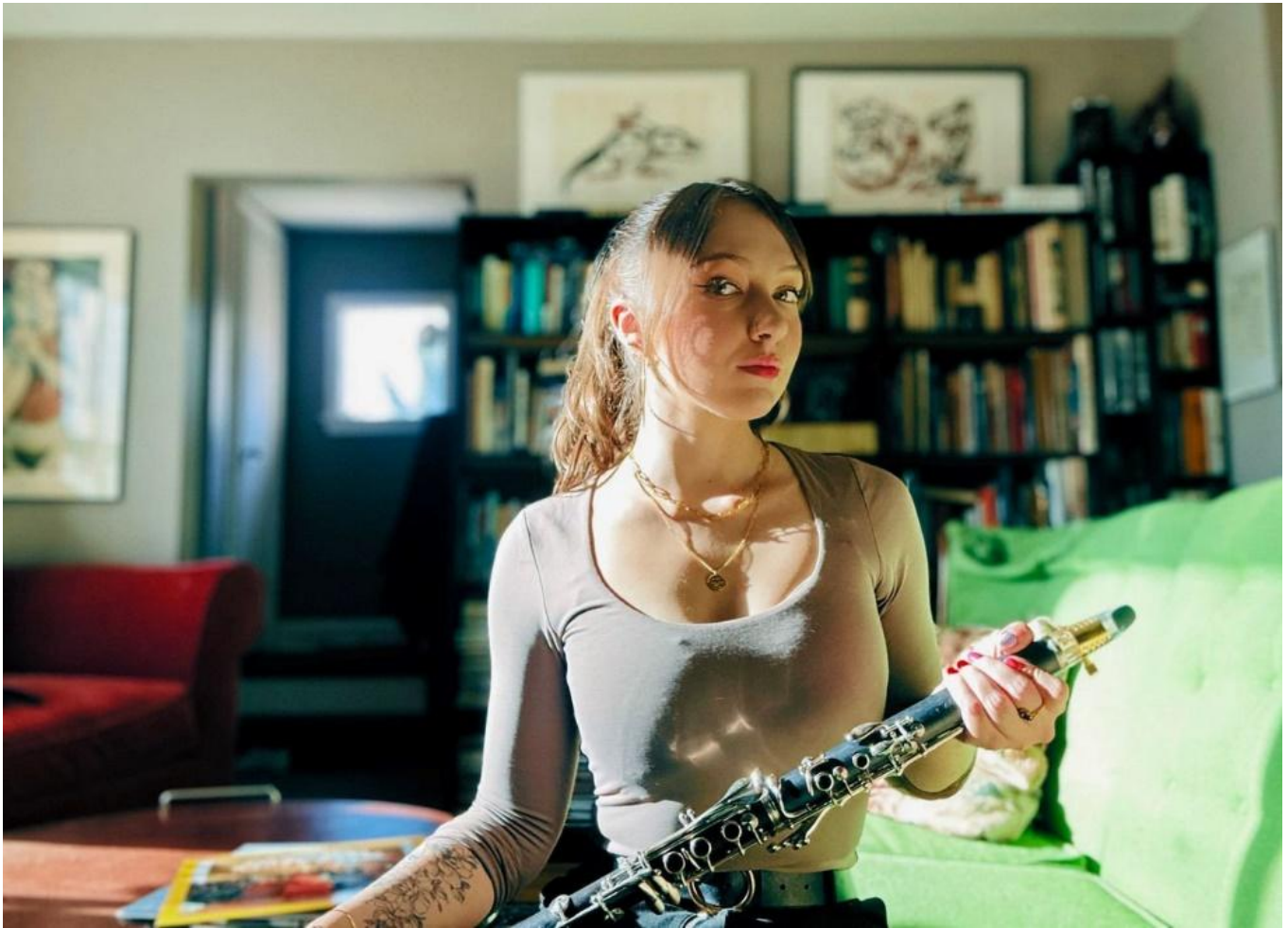




VIRGINIA MACDONALD

Clarinetist, Composer, and Educator

Juno Award-winning clarinetist Virginia MacDonald has established herself as a leading voice of her generation. Known for her lyrical and dynamic approach to the clarinet, she has been described by legendary clarinetist Doreen Ketchens as playing “like a scholar, very refined with plenty of soul.” As an in-demand bandleader, sidewoman, and composer, she maintains a busy international performance schedule, regularly appearing at renowned venues such as Birdland, Smalls, Ronnie Scott’s, Le Duc des Lombards, and Dizzy’s. Her festival appearances span the globe, with performances at the Detroit, Rochester, Torino, Montreal, and Toronto Jazz Festivals, among others.

Virginia has performed and recorded with distinguished artists including Kirk Lightsey, Michael Dease, Joe Magnarelli, Dick Oatts, Ira Coleman, Geoffrey Keezer, Bruce Barth, Harold Mabern, Eddie Henderson, Neil Swainson, and Terry Clarke. She is a frequent collaborator with Grammy Award-winning trombonist Michael Dease, appearing on three of his albums to date, and performing regularly as a member of his groups. Her composition “Up High, Down Low” is featured on his 2023 release *Swing Low*.

Virginia co-leads a quintet with trumpet player Joe Magnarelli. She has also enjoyed working with his longtime collaborator, saxophonist Dick Oatts, as a member of his quintet. The three musicians recently recorded an album at the legendary Rudy Van Gelder Studio, slated for release in 2026. Virginia is also the co-leader of a quintet with Baltimore bass clarinetist Todd Marcus, which highlights their rare soprano and bass clarinet frontline. Both groups perform frequently across Canada, the U.S., and Europe.

In 2020, Virginia won the International Clarinetist Corona Competition, judged by Anat Cohen, Victor Goines, Ken Peplowski, and Doreen Ketchens, among other leading clarinetists. Other recent accolades include headlining the International Clarinet Association's 50th anniversary celebration at ClarinetFest 2023 in Denver and being featured as a guest artist with the Orchestre National de Jazz de Montréal for the premiere of *Starbirth*, a suite written for her by resident composer Jean-Nicolas Trottier.

Alongside her other projects, Virginia enjoys working with her father, renowned Canadian jazz saxophonist Kirk MacDonald. She appears on several of Kirk's albums, notably including his 2018 release *Generations* which features the esteemed pianist, Harold Mabern. The two have toured together extensively, including multiple European tours and a tour of India in 2020.

Virginia is a member of the Canadian Jazz Collective, a seven-piece ensemble comprised of award-winning Canadian jazz musicians. She appears on the Collective's debut album *Septology*, which was nominated for the 2024 Juno Award for Jazz Album of the Year, and their subsequent 2024 release, *Live at Le Vauban*.

Virginia has performed on over twenty albums as a sidewoman, including Caity Gyorgy's Juno Award-winning albums *Now Pronouncing* (2022) and *Featuring* (2023), as well as several Juno-nominated recordings.

Virginia's debut album is scheduled for release in 2026 on Cellar Live. Comprised of original compositions for quartet, the project features luminaries Geoffrey Keezer on piano and Ira Coleman on bass, alongside two preeminent voices of the next generation, drummer Curtis Nowosad, and featured vocalist Laura Anglade.

In addition to her active performance career, Virginia is a highly sought-after educator. She has been a visiting artist at numerous post-secondary institutions around the world, including the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, McGill University, University of Toronto, Laval University, Université de Sherbrooke, St. FX University, University of Manitoba, VSO School of Music, the Global Music Institute, and the True School of Music. She is on faculty at the Jazz Institute at Brevard Music Center.

‘Clarinetist Virginia MacDonald, a standout for her eloquent, boundlessly creative solos.’

Hannah Edgar, *Downbeat*

‘[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*

‘[Virginia’s] playing is exemplary, with technical infallibility, a full focused sound, and dexterity reminiscent of Eddie Daniels. Her improvised lines are 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*

Virginia is an endorsed artist for

[Buffet Crampon](#), [D’Addario Woodwinds](#), and [Rovner Products](#),

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[Facebook](#) | [Instagram](#) | [Youtube](#)

Official Website

<https://virginiamacdonald.ca>

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