



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 across North America and Europe, 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. Born and raised in Toronto, the Canadian clarinetist now resides in New York.

Virginia has worked under the leadership of luminaries such as Michael Dease, Dick Oatts, and Kirk Lightsey. She has performed and recorded with distinguished artists including Harold Mabern, Ira Coleman, Geoffrey Keezer, Bruce Barth, Joe Magnarelli, Xavier Davis, Eddie Henderson, Jerry Bergonzi, Rodney Whitaker, Quincy Davis, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Derrick Gardner, Neil Swainson, and Terry Clarke. Virginia is a frequent collaborator with Grammy

virginiamacdonald.ca | virginia@virginiamacdonald.ca

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 renowned trumpet player Joe Magnarelli. The two recently recorded an album with frequent collaborator and acclaimed saxophonist Dick Oatts 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, which was nominated for a 2024 Prix Opus for Concert of the Year.

Virginia’s debut album *In Search Of...* was released on May 29th, 2026, on Cellar Music. 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.

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*.

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

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 Princeton University, the San Francisco Conservatory of Music, McGill University, and University of Toronto. She is on faculty at the Jazz Institute at Brevard Music Center.

Virginia is an endorsed artist for [Buffet Crampon](#), [D’Addario Woodwinds](#), and [Rovner Products](#).