

# Earl MacDonald

Pianist - Composer - Arranger - Conductor - Educator

[www.earlmacdonald.com](http://www.earlmacdonald.com)

The pursuit of excellence in his musical knowledge and craft is a crucial facet of Earl MacDonald's persona. His unwavering diligence and seemingly inexhaustible commitment to the jazz art form are apparent in his performing, composing and teaching.

MacDonald recently released his fifth album as a bandleader – “Open Borders.” For this project, the award-winning composer assembled a *lean and mean* 10-piece band which delivered an engaging set of “*stylishly orchestrated pieces*,” (Filipe Freitas, JazzTrail.net) blending “*smart, economical writing with fabulous blowing*.” (Marc Myers, JazzWax)

Earl MacDonald's preceding two CDs each received JUNO nominations for jazz album of the year. For his chamber jazz explorations on “Mirror of the Mind,” MacDonald was described as “*a magical, musical alchemist of hip hybrids*” (Owen McNally, Hartford Courant). Similarly, his large ensemble project, “Re:Visions” was touted as having “*gone beyond where most big bands go, establishing Earl MacDonald as a major force in the world of jazz composition*” (Dan Bilawsky, AllAboutJazz.com). From this album, Earl's composition, “Bad Dream” was selected as the winner in the jazz song category of the Tenth Annual Independent Music Awards.

MacDonald was the musical director, pianist, and arranger for the Maynard Ferguson Big Bop Nouveau Band from 1998 to 2000. He was responsible for programming and rehearsing this world-renowned ensemble. In 2002, MacDonald won the Sammy Nestico Award, for outstanding big band arranging. He was selected as a finalist for 2007 Charlie Parker Jazz Composition Award during his affiliation with the BMI Jazz Composer's Workshop in New York City. Twice he appeared as a finalist for the ArteZ Composition Contest in the Netherlands.

Now Professor of Music and Director of Jazz Studies at the University of Connecticut, the Winnipeg native earned a bachelor of music degree in jazz performance at McGill University and a master of music degree at Rutgers, where he apprenticed with Kenny Barron. MacDonald is an active clinician, guest conductor and teacher at summer camps, in addition to his teaching at the University of Connecticut. The UConn Chapter of the AAUP honored MacDonald with its 2006 Excellence Award for Teaching Innovation and 2003 Teaching Promise awards. He received the 2013 School of Fine Arts Outstanding Faculty Award.

MacDonald's piece, “Wanton Spirit” was the title track for Kenny Barron's 1994 Grammy-nominated CD. More recently, his compositions for 17-piece jazz orchestra have been performed by the Airmen of Note, the Westchester Jazz Orchestra, the Millennium Jazz Orchestra, and university-based jazz ensembles from the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, the University of North Texas, Rutgers, McGill, Rowan University, Lawrence University, Grant MacEwan University, Amherst College, the University of Manitoba and the University of Louisville, among others.

For his work as musical director and composer-in-residence of the Hartford Jazz Society's “New Directions Ensemble,” MacDonald earned the votes of Hartford Advocate readers and won the distinction “*best jazz group in Hartford*.”

Visit Earl's web site, [www.earlmacdonald.com](http://www.earlmacdonald.com), where you can read reviews, hear and purchase music, take a free online lesson, peruse Earl's blog, and learn more about his performances, teaching, and latest projects.