

## COMPOSER BIO

**Earl MacDonald** is a composer and pianist whose work engages contemporary social realities through rigorously structured, tradition-aware composition. His recent projects address climate change, migration, and systemic injustice through extended forms that emphasize restraint, formal clarity, and ethical attention. Rather than offering commentary, his music creates spaces for sustained listening and reflection.

MacDonald's current project, *Songs for a Shifting World*, reimagines art song as a living, contemporary form. Drawing on classical vocal tradition while remaining attentive to the present moment, the work confronts ecological crisis, human displacement, and fragile resilience through carefully shaped musical architecture. The project reflects an interest in art song not as historical artifact, but as an evolving medium capable of bearing ethical weight.

A two-time JUNO nominee, MacDonald is the recipient of a national composition award sponsored by the U.S. Air Force Band and the composer of the title work for a Grammy-nominated recording. He has released seven recordings spanning chamber works and large ensemble compositions. His music has been recognized for its balance of expressive economy and structural integrity, including the Connecticut Office of the Arts' Artistic Excellence Award.

Rooted in early classical study through The Royal Conservatory of Music and strengthened by rigorous theoretical and aural training at McGill and Rutgers universities, MacDonald's compositional voice reflects both structural discipline and contemporary expressive concerns. His work has also been shaped by deep engagement with the jazz tradition, including his tenure as musical director, pianist, and arranger for the Maynard Ferguson Big Bop Nouveau Band—an experience that continues to inform his approach to time, structure, and collective expression across broader compositional forms.

Professor of Music at the University of Connecticut, MacDonald emphasizes artistic integrity, deep listening, and global literacy across both his teaching and creative practice.