

Press Quotes

“MacDonald has met with a great deal of aesthetic success, even if he's still looking for that elusive audience. But that, too, will come in time. His kind of talent, energy, and determination won't be denied.” - Alex Varty, Georgia Straight

“With its hints of Balinese music and sea chanteys, *Gradus* was also a great way to set listeners up for what followed, especially the late Martin Bartlett's *Nautical Almanac* and MacDonald's set-closing *Thaumaturgy*. Sounding like a Middle Eastern- inflected soundtrack for a Sinbad story, the former was a fine vehicle for the bandleader's almost flutelike tone on the alto sax. *Thaumaturgy* was more of a band showcase with the quartet hitting a near-orchestral density of sound. I'm looking forward to hearing this group under better circumstances, but I left impressed by its musicality, its strong sense of ensemble playing, and, most of all, its grace under pressure.” - Alex Varty, Georgia Straight

“The [Turning Point] ensemble had to be sharp right off the bat, for the complex rhythms and dynamic contrasts of Colin MacDonald's *Skillful Means* could easily have derailed a less skilled band. Difficult to play but easy to listen to, MacDonald's piece was a pattern-music hornpipe with a distinctly nautical air; in fact, its final movement displayed an almost piratical dash and flair that was very much in keeping with the composer's flowing locks and waxed moustache.” - Alex Varty, Georgia Straight

“But it was the last composition of the evening, Macdonald's *The 5-Chambered Heart* that was the high point of the evening for me. It had a 5/4 beat that was much too complex for me to figure out. It was a miracle that the orchestra could keep up with each other after I was told how little time they had to rehearse.” - Alex Waterhouse-Hayward, blog

“MacDonald made his soprano sax sound like a flute, on the lower register and his baritone saxophone, played on the higher register, like a bassoon and sometimes even as an oboe.... MacDonald's sound with both his saxophones was spectacular. My idea of the sound, the terrible harsh sound of the soprano saxophone, was obliterated in one 50 minute afternoon.... MacDonald's concert (and I must say I did discern smiles in Christina Hutten and Stefan Hintersteiner's faces) is ample proof the innovation, expertise, wonder, virtuoso performance are alive in our city and if we would only know how to look for these events we would be most pleasantly surprised...” - Alex Waterhouse-Hayward, blog

“For me, the real highlight of the concert was the premier of Colin's new work, *Folie à Deux*, a piece loosely based on the renaissance melody, *La Folia*. His style as a composer is very much in the tradition of minimalist and post-minimalist composers such as Nyman, Adams, and Glass, but Colin builds effectively on this tradition adding a welcome measure of melodicism, emotional expansiveness, and a more rapid development and transformation of repeated material. The middle section of the work featured the timbral revelation of pizzicato cello, harpsichord and slap-tongued soprano saxophone. I have heard and played a lot of music, but this was a completely new and delicious treat for my ears. The texture and dance-like rhythms evoked the spirit of the baroque, but with completely fresh accents of odd meters and jazz-like harmonies. As someone who has worked a lot on music that attempts to blend traditions, I can testify that a true fusion of this sort is not easily achieved. Once again Colin's meticulous musicianship and virtuosity as a player and composer made this potentially difficult mixture sound absolutely effortless and natural.” - Jared Burrows, A Musician's Musings