

STEVEN BANKS, saxophone

Recognized for his “glowing mahogany tone” (Seen and Heard International) and “breathtaking” (Classical Voice of North Carolina) performances, Steven Banks is establishing himself as an important young artist on the saxophone, which is rarely heard as a solo concert instrument.

Steven Banks is the first saxophonist to earn a place on the Young Concert Artists roster in its 60-year history, capturing First Prize at the 2019 Young Concert Artists International Auditions. This season, he will make his New York debut at Merkin Concert Hall.

Mr. Banks has performed as a concerto soloist with the Durham Symphony and the North Carolina Symphony, and he regularly gives recitals at universities and on music series across the United States. Invitations to perform this season include the Oregon Mozart Players, Washington Performing Arts, Chamber Orchestra of the Triangle, Artist Series Concerts of Sarasota, Mary Baldwin University, Buffalo Chamber Music Society, Port Washington Library, and Tannery Pond.

In addition to solo work, Mr. Banks has an ongoing relationship with The Cleveland Orchestra, appearing with the ensemble under conductors including Franz Welser-Most, Jahja Ling, Matthias Pintscher, Alain Altinoglu, and Roderick Cox. He appears on a Naxos recording as baritone saxophonist of the award-winning Kenari Quartet, and as a jazz performer has played alongside musicians affiliated with the Jazz at Lincoln Center Orchestra, Buddy Rich Big Band, and Vanguard Jazz Orchestra.

Mr. Banks is an advocate for diversity and inclusion in music education, performance, and newly commissioned works in the classical realm. He gave a talk at the TEDxNorthwesternU 2017 conference with ideas about how to create change in institutionalized prejudices against women and people of color, and has written and given guest lectures on the history of black classical composers. As Assistant Professor of Saxophone at Ithaca College, he makes a concerted effort to ensure that all music students feel supported in their everyday studies.

Steven Banks has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Saxophone Performance with a minor in Jazz Studies from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music, and Master of Music degree from the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music. His primary saxophone teachers have been Taimur Sullivan, Otis Murphy, Jr., and Galvin Crisp.

Mr. Banks is an endorsing artist for Conn-Selmer instruments, D’Addario Woodwinds, IffreQue Sound Solutions, and Key Leaves.

NOTE: When editing, please do not delete references to Young Concert Artists, nor special prizes.
Please do not use previously dated biographies.

10/2020