Oakland University Guest Artist Recital
Steven Banks, saxophone
I-Chen Yeh, piano

Saturday, September 18, 2021 at 8 p.m.
Varner Recital Hall

Program

Sonata
Paul Creston
(1906-1985)

I. With Vigor
II. With Tranquility
III. With Gaeity

Sonata in C#
Fernande Decruck
(1896-1954)

I. Très modéré, expressif
II. Noël
III. Fileuse
IV. Nocturne et Rondel

Come As You Are
Steven Banks

I. Lift My Eyes (My Lord, What A Morning
II. Times of the Storm (Wade in the Water)
III. Strength of My Life (His Eye is On the Sparrow)
IV. Lift My Hands (I Still Have Joy)

Prof. Banks’ residency at Oakland University is generously supported by the Judd Family Endowed Fund
Steven Banks, saxophone
Recognized for his “glowing mahogany tone” (Seen and Heard International) and “breathtaking” (Classical Voice of NC) performances, American classical saxophonist Steven Banks “is at the forefront of musicians of his generation in his display of the highest level of both artistry and pedagogy.” (Taimur Sullivan, Professor of Saxophone, Northwestern University)

Steven Banks is the first saxophonist to earn a place on the Young Concert Artists roster in its 59-year history, capturing First Prize at the 2019 Young Concert Artists International Auditions as well as the special Korean Concert Society Prize (for support of his Kennedy Center debut), Buffalo Chamber Music Society Prize, Saint Vincent College Concert Series Prize, Sinfonia Gulf Coast Prize, Tannery Pond Concerts Prize, Usedom Music Festival Prize, and Washington Performing Arts Prize.

Mr. Banks has an ongoing relationship with The Cleveland Orchestra, having performed with the legendary ensemble in Severance Hall, Carnegie Hall, and at the Blossom Music Center. He has worked with notable conductors including Franz Welser-Most, Jahja Ling, Matthias Pintscher, Alain Altinoglu, Roderick Cox, among others. This season, Mr. Banks is particularly excited to travel to Abu Dhabi with the orchestra to perform a production of Sergei Prokofiev’s Romeo and Juliet, Op. 64, with the American Ballet Theatre.

Banks is the baritone saxophonist of the award-winning Kenari Quartet. The Kenari Quartet has found a home performing on many of the premiere chamber music series in the United States. Recent engagements include appearances at Chamber Music Northwest, the Grand Teton Music Festival, and Chamber Music Tulsa, among others. For many chamber music institutions, the Kenari Quartet has been proud to serve as the first saxophone quartet to be presented. The group has earned top prizes at 7 national and international chamber music competitions. Their debut album, French Saxophone Quartets, was released in December 2016 under the Naxos Records label. Kenari is represented by Jean Schreiber Management.

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. Since the talk, Banks has written an article for WQXR and given guest lectures on the history of black classical composers. Banks serves as a member of the first Committee on the Status of Women for the North American Saxophone Alliance, and is proud to have been selected as a member of the jury for the first Female Saxophonist Competition.

Banks serves proudly as Assistant Professor of Saxophone at Ithaca College. He previously served on faculty at the Baldwin Wallace Conservatory. He has a Master of Music degree from the Northwestern University Bienen School of Music in Saxophone Performance and a Bachelor of Arts degree in Saxophone Performance with a minor in Jazz Studies from the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. His primary saxophone teachers have been Taimur Sullivan, Otis Murphy, Jr., and Galvin Crisp.

Banks is an endorsing artist for Conn-Selmer instruments, D’Addario Woodwinds, lefreQue Sound Solutions, and Key Leaves.
I-Chen Yeh, piano
A native of Kaohsiung, Taiwan, award-winning pianist I-Chen Yeh enjoys an international career as a solo and collaborative performer. Among her significant accomplishments include competition prizes throughout Taiwan, Japan, and the United States. A performer devoted to contemporary music, Yeh’s solo and collaborative performances strive to highlight a new and exciting repertory. Her passion for new music has led to collaborations with notable composers such as Pulitzer Prize winners Steven Stucky and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich. In addition she has commissioned and premiered works for solo piano and other chamber music by David Rakowski, Marc Mellits, Greg Sandow, Andres Carrizo, Timothy Stulman, David Gillingham, Andrea Reinkemeyer, Anthony Donofrio, and Jeff Weston.

Yeh has appeared at many world renowned music festivals, including the Aspen Music Festival, the Bowdoin Music Festival, Bowling Green State University’s New Music and Art Festivals, Eastern Music Festival, the Internationale Wiener Musik Seminar, Threshold Electroacoustic Festival, and the Ball State University New Music Festival. Recent concert appearances include performances at (le) poisson rouge (NYC), the Interlochen Center for the Arts, the Yamaha Performing Artist Center (Taipei, Taiwan), the Taiwan National Concert Hall, and many Universities and Conservatories throughout the United States.

Yeh holds degrees from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (BM), the Eastman School of Music (MM), and Bowling Green State University (DMA). Her primary teachers include Laura Melton, Angela Cheng, and Thomas Schumacher. She has also performed in master-classes led by internationally renowned pianists such as Stephen Hough, Nelita True, Robert Levin, John Perry, and James Giles. Yeh is an active member of Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), where she served as coordinator of the Ohio junior and senior division piano competitions. In addition, she is a member of several professional chamber music ensembles, including the Heisler/Yeh Duo with saxophonist, Jeffrey Heisler, the Primary Colors Trio (saxophone, piano, and percussion), and an exciting new piano duo with pianist Jiung Yoon. Currently, Dr. Yeh serves on the faculty of Oakland University (MI) as Instructor of Applied Piano and Coordinator of Instrumental Collaborative Piano.