



VALENTIN KOVALEV, saxophone



Classical saxophonist Valentin Kovalev is one of the leaders of his generation in developing the musical and technical possibilities of the saxophone. Valentin is the first Russian saxophonist to enter the prestigious Paris Conservatory as an undergraduate, as well as the first Russian saxophonist to be admitted to the graduate program at the University of Michigan, the oldest and most celebrated saxophone program in the United States.

He has received awards from several foundations in France and Russia, including the Mstislav Rostropovich Foundation, the Fondation Marcel Bleustein-Blanchet pour la vocation, Fonds de Tarrazi, Legs Edward Jabes, and la Fondation L'Or du Rhin. Valentin has earned two awards from The President of the Russian Federation as well as won a grant from the mayor of Moscow City.

As a soloist, he has performed with several major international symphony orchestras, such as the New Russia Orchestra, the Orchestra of Galina Vishnevskaya Opera Center, the Tchaikovsky Big Symphony Orchestra, the Belarusian Orchestra of Folk Instruments, and Orchestre de Strasbourg. In 2019, Valentin performed in the live-broadcast concert "Génération France Musique, le live" on France Musique.

Mr. Kovalev has won prizes at many international competitions, including the MTNA Young Artist Woodwind Competition (National Winner 2021), University of Michigan Concerto Competition (2021), The Eugene Bossart Prize Winner (2021), unanimous First Prize in the Online Saxiana International Competition (2021), second prize of the Classic Winds Competition in Tel Aviv, Israel (2020), first prize of the AndorraSaxFest competition (2019), first prize of the Anches simples de Toulouse competition (2019), and Grand-Prix of the EkaterinburgSaxFest in Russia (2018).

Valentin also enjoys performing as an orchestral musician and has had the honour of appearing with several orchestras, including MusicAeterna, with whom he participated in the Diaghilev Festival in Perm, Russia, and the Orchestra of Moscow chamber musical theatre on the Pärnu Opera Days in Estonia.

As the soprano saxophone chair of the saxophone quartet "Triton", he participated in a tour of China, where he performed ten concerts in nine cities in April 2019. Together with the Mstislav Rostropovich Foundation and the Russian Seasons, Mr. Kovalev has participated in annual concert tours since 2016 in Germany, France, Luxembourg, and Belgium.

Valentin began his education in Barnaul, Russia with Viktoria Fedyaj and Alexei Gotsulyak. He completed studies at the College of Gnessins in Moscow with Leonid Drutin, the College of Frederic Chopin in Moscow with Nikita Zimin, and obtained his Bachelor's degree at the Paris Conservatory with Claude Delangle. He is currently pursuing a graduate degree with Timothy McAllister at the University of Michigan. Mr. Kovalev recently became an artist of Henri Selmer Paris, one of the oldest and most prestigious saxophone makers in the world.

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