**Karl Hirzer**

**Associate Conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic**

**General Management**

The gifted young Canadian conductor Karl Hirzer can’t remember a time when he didn’t want to be a musician. Karl grew up in New Westminster, BC, in a household filled with music. His parents had Glenn Gould and Louis Armstrong on the CD player; he and his mother sang along with Irish folk songs on the radio (and he’d let her know if she hit a wrong note).

He was “composing” at the family’s upright piano at age four. Formal piano lessons began at six. At twelve he started playing guitar in heavy metal bands and dreamed of becoming a rock star, while simultaneously perfecting Chopin Études and Beethoven Sonatas. He earned his ARCT at seventeen.

Today he’s associate conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic and has led orchestras from Vancouver to Halifax, from the Gstaad Festival to educational programs in Warsaw. Karl was a prodigious pianist and studied to become a soloist at the University of Victoria before getting his master’s at McGill University in Montreal.

He got his first taste of conducting an orchestra during his undergrad and basked in the wondrous experience of sharing his musical ideas with a big band of musicians and an audience, through simple gestures. Imagine - hundreds of people in the concert hall, each having a unique experience of a shared moment, something communal and intimate at the same time, forging a personal relationship with a composer who may be long dead - or sitting in the front row.

He believes music plays an essential role in our lives. It touches us viscerally, even though we can’t really explain why or how. Karl is especially committed to exploring music by living composers and believes that modern music defines what the classical idiom is today. He’s also heavily invested in bringing music to young audiences, helping them discover a sound world that’s completely captivating.

He continues to perform as an instrumentalist and also composes his own music, blending genres while mixing acoustic and electronic instruments. Head’s up - his first album of original material will be released in spring of 2023.

Karl Hirzer is represented by Weller Artists Manegement world wide.