

Media Release

For Immediate Release

Calgary Philharmonic Announces Principal Guest Conductor

Renowned Conductor Karen Kamensek joins the Calgary Philharmonic in New Role

Calgary AB (September 2, 2025) — The Calgary Philharmonic is pleased to announce that highly-acclaimed, Grammy-award winning conductor **Karen Kamensek** has joined the Calgary Phil this season in the newly-created role of **Principal Guest Conductor**. In addition to leading the Orchestra for a few concerts each season, Kamensek will work behind the scenes with the Calgary Phil in an artistic advisory capacity.

In the upcoming 2025/2026 Season, Kamensek conducts the Classics series opener, **Gil Shaham Plays Beethoven**, on September 12 and 13 at the Jack Singer Concert Hall, as well as **Verdi's Requiem** on March 20, 2026, also at the Jack.

"I am so excited to be appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic, and to continue nurturing the positive and inspiring musical connection the Orchestra and I have felt since we first met a few years ago," says Kamensek. "It will be lovely to explore some more repertoire together, to be a part of the whole forward-looking Calgary Phil artistic team, and also to be in Calgary a bit more to get to know the public/audiences and this beautiful city and region better."

Kamensek, of course, is no stranger to Calgary Phil audiences. She made her debut with the Orchestra for 2022's Karen Gomyo: Virtuoso Violin concert and returned for the 2023/2024 Season to lead Brilliant Bassoon.

"We're delighted that Karen Kamensek is joining us this season in a newly created artistic leadership role," says Marc Stevens, Calgary Philharmonic President + CEO. "You may have experienced her fantastic performances here in previous seasons, and we were driven to build on this powerful bond with her. This is an ideal time to have someone with Karen's experience join us in this role as the organization works through a transitional period while we search for a new Music Director."

"Karen is a thoughtful and sensitive musician whose warm rapport with the Calgary Phil has been evident since her debut here," adds Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra Concertmaster Diana Cohen. "She leads with energy, openness, and a spirit of partnership. With her imaginative programming and commitment to presenting a rich and varied repertoire, she has already brought fresh artistic perspectives to the ensemble. We are delighted to welcome her and look forward with great enthusiasm to the music we will create together."

About Karen Kamensek

Grammy Award-winning conductor Karen Kamensek's expansive artistry coupled with her deep commitment for championing composers of the 20th and 21st centuries is reflected in her work in both the opera house and on the concert stage. Frequently in demand as a guest conductor with many of today's most prominent opera companies, Kamensek's recent opera highlights include her performances at the Royal Opera House Covent Garden in Giacomo Puccini's *Tosca*; the English National Opera in Philip Glass' *Akhnaten* and *Satyagraha*; the

Welsh National Opera in Jake Heggie's *Dead Man Walking* and Leonard Bernstein's *Candide*; the Metropolitan Opera in Glass' *Akhnaten*, Giuseppe Verdi's *Rigoletto*, and Jake Heggie's *Moby Dick*; the Houston Grand Opera in Giacomo Puccini's *La bohème*, and the San Francisco Opera in Poul Ruders' *The Handmaid's Tale*, among others. Kamensek's recent symphonic work has brought her to the podiums of such orchestras as the London Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Seattle Symphony, Sydney Symphony, Deutsches Symphonie-Orchester Berlin, Oslo Philharmonic, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic, Orquestra Filarmónica de Gran Canaria, Orchestra Sinfonica di Milano, and the Orchestre Chambre de Paris, among others. Kamensek served as the Music Director of the Staatsoper Hannover from 2011 to 2016. She has also served as 1st Kapellmeister at the Volksoper Wien (2000–2002), Music Director of the Theater Freiburg (2003–2006), and Associate Music Director at the Staatsoper Hamburg (2008–2011). Kamensek joins the Calgary Philharmonic this season in the role of Principal Guest Conductor.

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About the Calgary Philharmonic

For seven decades, the Calgary Philharmonic has been bringing communities together through the power of music. A pillar of the Calgary arts scene and one of Canada's most celebrated live music ensembles, the Calgary Phil presents more than 60 concerts a season across a wide range of programming — epic classics, thrilling collaborations, rockin' pops, family fun, and much more. The Calgary Phil also engages thousands of children each season through innovative and accessible Education and Outreach initiatives. In addition to 66 full-time orchestra musicians, the Calgary Phil is one of two major symphony orchestras in Canada that has its own chorus of over 140 volunteer singers. In a typical season, the Calgary Phil welcomes over 100,000 visitors, connecting audiences to live music experiences and serving the city of Calgary by fostering creativity and belonging. Your Phil. Your Music.