



Karl Hugo's Story

Karl Hugo is a prolific pianist, singer and composer whose works are aired in over 100 countries throughout the world on prestigious networks such as **ABC, BBC One, CBC, Disney Channel, Disney Channel Asia, Fox Japan, Indosiar, MediaCorp Channels 5 & 8, Telemundo, TF1, Zee Café India** and on many airlines.

Karl began playing and composing on the piano as a child, creating his first concerto when he was barely a teenager. During this period, he won several prizes and awards including a 1st prize in the **Canadian Federation of Music Teachers' Associations Music Writing Competition** and completed music commissions for **Les Grands Ballets Canadiens** and **ICI Radio-Canada Télé (CBC)**. He studied piano with the great piano teacher **Lucille Brassard**, composition with **André Prévost** and orchestration with **Alan Belkin**. Karl completed his musical education with classical singing, violin, bassoon and orchestral conducting under renowned *maestro* **Alexander Brott**.

In 1992, Karl realised that he no longer wanted to restrict himself to classical music and released a popular piano album entitled *Momentum*. He then met **Ice Capades** star **Julie Brault** with whom he filmed *Broadway*, an ambitious video combining piano and figure skating. For the occasion, **Kawai** loaned him its famous **Crystal Grand**, the beginning of a sponsorship that would last for many years.

Inspired by Karl's passion for figure skating and his grandiose musical style, Olympic champions **Isabelle Brasseur & Lloyd Eisler** asked him to compose and perform original music live for their television production ***Dreams on Ice***, an annual fundraising event broadcast on more than forty television stations for many years. This unique experience afforded Karl the pleasure of watching great figure skaters the likes of **Ekaterina Gordeeva, Nancy Kerrigan, Scott Hamilton, Brian Orser, Yuka Sato, Elvis Stojiko** and **Kristi Yamaguchi** grow and develop to the sound of his music.

After coming to the attention of **IMG** in New York, Karl was invited to play his compositions at professional ice skating shows such as ***Champions on Ice*** and ***Skate the Dream***, always accompanied by his transparent **Kawai** piano. He also wrote music for ice dancers such as **Isabelle & Paul Duchesnay, Isabelle Delobel & Olivier Schoenfelder** and **Marie-France Dubreuil & Patrice Lauzon**. Members of the new generation of figure skaters who have called on Karl's talent include **Miki Ando, Anna Cappellini & Luca Lanotte, Patrick Chan, Hong Chen et Yan Zhao, Meagan Duhamel & Eric Radford, Gracie Gold, Yuzuru Hanyu, Gabriella Papadakis & Guillaume Cizeron, Cathy Reed & Chris Reed, Joannie Rochette, Synchron Canada, Tessa Virtue & Scott Moir, Kaitlyn Weaver & Andrew Poje** and **Yuna Kim**.

In 1999, Karl released a second album on the **BMG** label which spent a month at the top of the **Billboard Talent Net charts**, an online extension of the famous **Billboard Magazine**. This success gave him the opportunity to perform in such renowned venues as the **Bellagio** in Las Vegas, the **Bell Centre** in Montreal and the **Halifax Metro Centre**, to name just a few. That same year, the skies over Montreal were lit up to the sound of Karl Hugo's music at the **15th Benson & Hedges International fireworks competition**, a rare and colourful event which was subsequently repeated several times in Geneva, Switzerland.

In 2005, Karl became a musical composer and performer for world famous ***Just for Laughs Gags*** and ***Just Kidding***, its recent spinoff co-produced by **Disney**. To date he has created hundreds of pieces of music featuring various instruments from whistling, in the viral video ***The Strongest Girl in the World Prank*** (9 million views

on YouTube), to the piano as in *The Funniest Japanese Girls Prank* with close to 12 million views.

His love of musicals led Karl to contribute his talents as an arranger, orchestrator, musical director and live musician to numerous official Canadian productions of works such as *Fiddler on the Roof*, *La Cage aux Folles*, *My Fair Lady*, *Nine* and *The Sound of Music*. Building on this experience, in 2008 he created and produced his own musical, *Noémia*, for which he wrote the book and the music.

Karl returned to his solo career in 2015. He founded the **Karl Hugo Music** record label, christened his recording studio **Studio Chimay**, created a complete website **karlhugomusic.com** and finally, launched *Blue Sparkles*, an instrumental album on which he performs 12 of his own compositions on the piano. With close to 17,000 fans on Facebook (French and English pages), Karl's efforts were rewarded, and he began to think about a sequel.

Karl Hugo just launched a new instrumental album entitled *Red Sparkles*, on which he interprets 12 original pieces on the piano with passion and sensitivity. In the same vein as *Blue Sparkles*, this new opus transports listeners to a world of heightened emotions between flights of romantic music and the catchy melodies of instrumental pop. Karl is accompanied by a classical orchestra, enhanced by the presence of an electric bass, drum kit and vocals on certain songs.

Karl Hugo is currently working on *Red 'n' Blue Sparkles*, a concert where he will perform songs from his albums *Red Sparkles* and *Blue Sparkles* as well as improvisations and imaginatively reworked covers.

Born in Montreal, Canada to a Belgian immigrant father and a Franco-German mother, Karl Hugo, or Karl-Hugo Van de Kerckhove, holds dual Canadian and Belgian citizenship. He is involved in many charity organizations including **The Children's Wish Foundation** and **Sun Youth**. Karl is an honorary member of the **Fondation Vincent-d'Indy** and has received grants from the **Ministry of Culture and Communications** and the **National Film Board of Canada**.