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## 150 Profiles: Katherine Carleton

By Katherine Carleton

*As we mark the 150th anniversary of confederation, The Philanthropist is profiling Canadians from across the non-profit sector and putting a face to 150 individuals who work or volunteer in Canada's social sector.*

**Name:** Katherine Carleton

**Current role in the sector:** Executive Director of Orchestras Canada/Orchestres Canada, the national association for Canadian orchestras

**Years working and/or volunteering in the non-profit sector:** 33 years.



**What was your first job in the sector or a defining moment?**

My first job after university was in the Publicity Department of the Royal Conservatory of Music in

Toronto, where I typed concert programs (badly) on an IBM Selectric, had ongoing disputes with the foot pedal of a Dictaphone, and managed the faculty concert series. The net impact? I am a big proponent of better technology, and I deeply enjoy working with and on behalf of musicians.

**Describe your desk/workspace.**

My desk is, and has always been, chaos. I justify this by reminding people that I can always find what I'm looking for. My office furniture reflects my style: I'm restless, and I'm convinced that there is no such thing as a single perfect working posture, so I have a standing desk, a sitting desk, a regular desk chair, a kneeling chair, and a Morris chair, as well as a yoga mat. My proudest office ornaments are two works of art presented to me by the musicians of orchestras that I've worked for: a piece called *Opening Night* by Kingston violinist and artist Joan Sutherland (presented to me by the musicians of the Kingston Symphony), and a glorious photograph of a spring forest by Nova Scotia photographer Stephen Patterson (a gift from the musicians of Symphony Nova Scotia).

**What are you reading or following that has expanded your understanding of the non-profit sector?**

Philip Hart's *Orpheus in the New World* was my door-opener. Published in 1973, it's a series of case studies about the remarkable people who helped establish and develop symphony orchestras in the United States. I read it when I was working on my master's at McGill, and it was a useful corrective to my search for the ideal organizational structure for a symphony orchestra. Again and again, Hart quietly makes the point that exceptional people create the conditions for success – something I find both inspiring and terrifying.

**What do you think our sector needs to be thinking about?**

I like to think about the inter-generational transfer of wealth and knowledge from an institutional perspective: we built a lot of not for profit institutions in the 20th century, and we're putting a lot of effort into dragging them into the 21st. Can they adapt? Can they share what they have and know with the growing number of movement-based social change efforts? What can all participants on the "social good" spectrum – from institutions to pop-ups, and all points in between – learn from one another? How can we manifest the generosity that characterizes our sector as we collectively consider our future? That's what I'd like to know more about!

*Do you know someone we should profile as part of this series? Email us at [philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com](mailto:philanthropistprofiles@gmail.com)*