

Following three successful seasons (1996-1999) as Acting Principal Trumpet of the National Arts Centre Orchestra, Karen Donnelly was unanimously appointed Principal Trumpet in October 1999, and continues to enjoy each year with this wonderful ensemble.

A native of Regina, Saskatchewan, Karen picked up a trumpet for the first time in her elementary school band program and she was hooked. Years later, her natural talent for the instrument and passion for the collaborative orchestral environment propelled her into a Bachelor of Arts in Music program at the University of Regina.

After completing her bachelor's degree, Ms. Donnelly received a major bursary from the Saskatchewan Arts Board to continue at McGill University where she completed a Master of Music in 1991. Freelancing in Montreal, she quickly became one of the most sought-after trumpet players in the area, performing with a plethora of major ensembles including the Montreal Symphony Orchestra Les Violons du Roi and the Toronto Symphony Orchestra.

Karen held the position of Principal Trumpet with Orchestra London (Canada) from 1994-1996, and performed with many ensembles in southwestern Ontario during her time there.

Ms. Donnelly has been featured on several occasions as soloist with the NAC Orchestra. The NAC commissioned Gary Kulesha, NAC Award Composer, to write a piece especially for Karen, *The Boughs of Music*, which she performed in 2005 on the NAC Orchestra's Alberta-Saskatchewan Tour.

Since she burst on the Ottawa scene in 1996, Ms. Donnelly has kept a stimulating schedule outside the walls of the National Arts Centre as well. From concerts and interviews for CBC (French and English), to performances with the Ottawa Chamber Music Festival, Rideau Lakes Brass Quintet, and the large ensemble, Capital BrassWorks, Karen's enthusiasm and professionalism are boundless and in high demand. In 2008, Capital Brass Works released its third album, "*Gabriel's Sister*" featuring Ms. Donnelly as soloist.

Karen has been featured with professional orchestras, community amateur orchestras, and many local school bands.

Ms. Donnelly joined the teaching staff at the University of Ottawa in 2002, and since 2009, Karen has been assisting with the Leadingnote “Orchkidstra” program. Rooted in the innovative methods of renowned youth orchestra system ‘El Systema,’ Orkidstra works with inner city Ottawa students, giving lessons and instruments to more than 300 children from over 42 cultural backgrounds.

Thanks to the generosity of the Canada Council for the Arts, Karen was able to embark on professional development project during part of the 2006-2007 season, and she studied with Philip Smith, retired Principal Trumpet of the New York Philharmonic. While influenced by so many great musicians, Karen has been very fortunate to study with James Thompson, Robert Earley, Barbara Butler, Michael Sachs, and the late Mr. Arnold Jacob and Vincent Chicowicz. And of course her first trumpet teacher Dr. Ed Lewis who helped keep the trumpet in her hands.