

Peter Stafford Wilson was Gerhardt Zimmermann's first personnel appointment at the Canton Symphony Orchestra in 1980. During his decade long tenure as staff conductor, Wilson led the Canton Symphony in educational events, pops and outreach activities, and appeared on the subscription series. He led the Canton Youth Symphony, commissioning composer Joseph Schwantner and creating a residency program with pianist Lorin Hollander.

Speaking of his time with Gerhardt, Wilson offered, "Gerhardt had never had an assistant and I had never been one! So, we made it up as we went along. Far more than a collegial relationship, ours was a true friendship, and it was the most fun imaginable. He humbled me often by asking advice on artistic matters, and I relied on his guidance as my career began to take shape. He recommended me for his position with the Saint Louis Symphony and honored me with a guest conducting opportunity with the North Carolina Symphony. I learned volumes about the craft of conducting just by observing him and he often empowered me to lead some amazing works in rehearsal when his schedule wouldn't allow a full week in Canton. He taught me to champion the music of our time and introduced me to several prominent American composers. Gerhardt was an expert at accompaniment and schooled me on that fine art. 'One does everything to accommodate the artist and then on Monday morning, decides whether to ever engage the artist again!' He inspired me to stay well-grounded and instilled in me a thorough but concise style of rehearsing. Fundamental principals about the servant/leader-based music director gleaned from Gerhardt resound with me to this day."

After leaving Canton, Wilson enjoyed a long-time stint with the Columbus Symphony as Associate Conductor. Appearing regularly on all of the Orchestra's subscription series, Wilson also lead the Columbus Symphony Youth Orchestra, enjoying several European and Asian tours as well as two acclaimed concerts at Carnegie Hall. Wilson also conducted the Cincinnati Symphony in a celebrated series of regional tours and maintained a long-time relationship with the Cleveland Orchestra. He currently serves as Music Director of the Springfield (Ohio) Symphony and the Westerville Symphony.

Wilson pursues a regular commitment to the theater, having just concluded a 10-year relationship with the Tulsa Ballet as their principal conductor. His recent conducting invitations have come from the Philadelphia Ballet, the Oregon Ballet Theater, Dayton Contemporary Dance Company, the Orlando Ballet, and the Oklahoma City Ballet, where he appears later this season.