

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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## **Midland Symphony Orchestra's New Conductor Announced**

Public Invited to Meet New Conductor at Special Event

MIDLAND – **Antonia Joy Wilson** has been appointed artistic director/conductor of the Midland Symphony Orchestra (MSO) and director of orchestra studies at Central Michigan University (CMU). The public will have an opportunity to meet Ms. Wilson at a special MSO event on **Thursday, May 1, 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.** at Midland Center for the Arts, 1801 W. St. Andrews Rd., Midland. Admission is free. Refreshments will be served and Ms. Wilson will also unveil the new MSO 2008-09 season line-up and subscription packages.

Midland Symphony Orchestra's artistic director and conductor since 1997, Carlton Woods had retired at the close of the 2006-07 season. A specially formed search committee, comprised of representatives from both MSO and Central Michigan University (CMU), conducted an extensive international search for his replacement. After an overwhelming response from applicants, the pool was narrowed down to four highly talented finalists: Antonia Joy Wilson, Richard Hughey, Darryl One and Sandra Dackow. Each finalist went through an interview process at CMU and also conducted a separate subscription concert with the Symphony. Season subscribers and MSO audience members were invited to participate in the final selection process by submitting their comments and suggestions after attending a concert.

"We were extremely pleased with the level of participation from our audiences," said Kimberly Dimond, managing director of the Midland Symphony Orchestra. "Their input is highly valued and was an important factor in the committee's final decision."

Some of the audience comments about Ms. Wilson include:

- "Ms. Wilson brings a wealth of experience and enthusiasm. Breaking the gender barrier in conducting by hiring her could demonstrate to the industry the value of a feminine touch."
- "She showed such joy in the music and the orchestra that it was a delight to watch her and hear the result of positive direction."
- "...a great combination of professionalism in conducting, and warmth in interpersonal connections."

### **Antonia Joy Wilson**

As First Prize Winner of the International Conducting Competition in Mexico, Antonia Joy Wilson is a professional conductor of international acclaim. Antonia was invited to perform for Maestro Claudio Abbado after she made her professional conducting debut with the Colorado Symphony Orchestra at the age of twenty-one. Then, at age twenty-three, Maestro Leonard Slatkin appointed her as Exxon Affiliate Artists Conducting Assistant with the Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra. She conducted sixty concerts annually and edited their weekly concert recordings for National Public Radio.

Gifted as both a symphonic and choral conductor, Ms. Wilson is Founder, Artistic Director & Conductor of Mostly Mahler Orchestra and Chorus in California and of *Le Festivale* Orchestra and Chorus in Colorado. She is also Principal Guest Conductor with San Francisco Sinfonietta. Recently, she was Principal Resident Guest Conductor with the Bulgarian National Radio Symphony Orchestra. Dr. Wilson's tenure there included recordings, concerts, and tours throughout Europe, including Austria, Belgium, Spain, Portugal, Serbia, Macedonia, and Turkey among others.

Antonia recently conducted the Buenos Aires Philharmonic Orchestra at the world famous Teatro Colón. She also guest conducted Bogotá Philharmonic Orchestra in Columbia. She was awarded two European prizes which garnered her three guest appearances in the Czech Republic. Dr. Wilson is a regular guest conductor with the Romanian National Radio Symphony Orchestra, Chamber Orchestra, and Academic Choir. She has also guest conducted orchestras in Russia, Hungary, Poland, India, and China.

Ms. Wilson was the Artistic/Music Director of the Imperial Symphony Orchestra in Florida. Antonia was also the Music Director and Conductor with the Jefferson Symphony Orchestra in Colorado for five years. Together, they produced a surround-sound compact disc featuring Respighi's *Pines of Rome*. Dr. Wilson has also been the Music Director and Conductor of orchestras in New Jersey, Maryland, Tennessee, and California.

Born in England of American parents, Antonia began studying the violin at age nine. She received a Bachelor of Music degree in Violin Performance from Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver. Antonia worked with Maestro Daniel Lewis during her Master of Music degree in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Southern California. Following her graduate conducting studies at Yale School of Music, Antonia completed a Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Orchestral Conducting at the University of Colorado in Boulder. Since her debut as the youngest woman to conduct a major American orchestra, Ms. Wilson has gone on to an extensive national and international musical career in North and South America, Europe, Africa, and Asia.

The Midland Symphony Orchestra (MSO) offers a six-concert season featuring renowned guest artists. Providing mid-Michigan with continuous symphonic music since 1936, the MSO also sponsors educational opportunities through its touring ensembles in the schools, Community Orchestra, chamber concerts, Tunes for Tots, a summer outdoor event, prelude lectures, scholarships, music appreciation programs and guest artist master classes and residencies.

Midland Center for the Arts, Inc. is a non-profit, tax-exempt corporation formed under the laws of the State of Michigan incorporating six groups: Alden B. Dow Museum of Science and Art, MATRIX:MIDLAND, Midland County Historical Society, Midland Symphony Orchestra, Music Society and Theatre Guild. Activities at Midland Center for the Arts are supported in part by the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs, a partner agency of the National Endowment for the Arts. For the latest Center news, visit our web site at [www.mcfta.org](http://www.mcfta.org).

Contact:  
Kristen Wuerfel  
Marketing and Media Relations Manager  
(989) 631-5930 x 1274  
wuerfel@mcfta.org

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