

May the <i>Forte</i> Be With You

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Led by C. Leonard Raybon, assistant professor of music and director of choirs at Tulane, 60 students, faculty members and alumni will perform at the New Orleans Arena tonight (Oct. 27) as part of the nationally touring "*Star Wars: In Concert*" show.



C. Leonard Raybon, assistant professor of music and director of choirs at Tulane, rehearses the men's chorus. He rounded up a 60-person choir to perform with the national tour of the "*Star Wars: In Concert*" show in New Orleans. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

In addition to 49 participants from Tulane, Raybon recruited 11 singers from the University of New Orleans for the show that has been billed as "a multimedia retelling of the *Star Wars* Trilogy." The concert features highlights of all six films in the *Star Wars* franchise projected on a giant LED-HD screen, laser lights and fog

effects, and themes from the films played by an 80-piece orchestra.

Stage veteran Anthony Daniels, best known for playing C-3PO in the *Star Wars* movies, currently is touring the country narrating "*Star Wars: In Concert*" in the lavish production presenting John Williams' score that has been compared to operas by Richard Wagner.

It's a *Star Wars* geek's dream, says Raybon, who had no trouble recruiting students and former students. But when he saw the complexity of the score, Raybon says he was a bit concerned. To further challenge the choir, they will be singing lyrics written in ancient Sanskrit.

"For the most part, these are young singers and the score is hefty, sinister and epic, like *Carmina Burana*," Raybon says. "After our first rehearsal, I was overjoyed at how they sounded □ it was amazing and exhilarating."

The choir will be singing two movements in the first act. The singers have rehearsed only twice with Raybon in the choral room at Tulane. The performance will be the group's first time singing with the orchestra.

In addition to generating funds for the choral program at Tulane, the volunteer choir will be paid in experience □ and getting to see the second half of the show from the audience.