

## Grad quartet to lead the Star-Spangled Banner at commencement

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Class of 2017 graduates, from left, Patrick Clark, Austin Adomitis, Dylan Hafer and Luke Halpern will sing the national anthem in four-part harmony during the Tulane Unified Commencement Ceremony on May 20. A quartet has never performed the song at commencement until now. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

Each year graduating seniors vie for the opportunity to sing the national anthem for graduates and their families at the Tulane University Unified Commencement Ceremony. This year a quartet of seniors will perform the anthem at the ceremony for the first time ever.

The singers are Austin Adomitis, Patrick Clark, Dylan Hafer and Luke Halpern, all of whom are graduating from the Newcomb Department of Music within the Tulane School of Liberal Arts. Adomitis, Hafer and Halpern are each graduating with a Bachelor of Fine Arts (BFA) in musical theater. Clark is graduating with two degrees—a BFA in performance and a Bachelor of Science in management.

Assistant professor of music Amy Pfrimmer introduced the idea, and C. Leonard Raybon, chair of the music department, arranged the four-part harmony.

“I knew we had this great quartet of male voices, so I started looking for an arrangement,” said Pfrimmer of how the idea developed.

Raybon, who had previously worked with the students during their years in the music department, jumped at the chance to prepare and rehearse the musical arrangement ahead of the ceremony.

“I wanted to arrange ‘The Star-Spangled Banner’ so that the tune and melody would flow seamlessly from beginning to end without the frills,” said Raybon. “I created a lot of complex harmony around the traditional melody.”

The students agree that he was the perfect person for the job.

“He knows our voices so well and arranged the piece specifically for us,” said Halpern.

The graduates have big post-graduation plans. This fall Clark will enter a master’s degree program in music at NYU Steinhardt. Adomitis will also be moving to New York City to pursue a musical theater career. Hafer plans on actively searching for work in New York as well, after spending some time in St. Louis. After performing with Summer Lyric Theatre and other New Orleans theatre companies, Halpern plans to move to Chicago.

*The 2017 Commencement ceremony will be [streamed live online](#). Follow us on social media at #tulane17.*

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Luke Halpern, Class of 2017