

The show goes on

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B. Michael Howard's association with Summer Lyric Theatre began in 1968 when he played the part of Buffalo Bill Cody in *Annie Get Your Gun*. Thousands of Tulane students have had the opportunity to perform on the Summer Lyric stage with professional actors and orchestra, and many of them have gone on to Broadway careers. (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

The 2014 season of [Summer Lyric Theatre](#) at Tulane University will long be remembered, not only for the outstanding performances of *Les Misérables*, *A Chorus Line* and *Cabaret*, but as the final year that Summer Lyric Theatre was led by artistic director [B. Michael Howard](#). Recently, Howard announced his decision to step down as artistic director of the musical theater company, although he will retain his role as a tenured member of the Newcomb Music Department.

[C. Leonard Raybon](#), chair of the Newcomb Department of Music, will serve as interim artistic director, overseeing the 2015 season. The School of Liberal Arts will begin a national search for a new artistic director, who will join Tulane in summer 2015.

“My first love is teaching, and I will still do that,” Howard said. “When I started with Summer Lyric 47 years ago in my first show with [the late] [Mr. \(Frank\) Monachino](#), I fell in love with every aspect of the art form of musical theater. For all these years, I’ve been devoted to the art form and the wonderful opportunity to teach students and use what we were doing in the classroom on the stage.”

Through the years, Howard has been a performer, musical director, costume designer, hair and makeup designer, and director.

In 1997, he was named artistic director, and under his direction, Summer Lyric Theatre reached large audiences, with 92 percent of all seats sold at performances and a budget that became the envy of other theater companies. Among Howard's numerous recognitions were a 2004 Big Easy Lifetime Achievement Award for Theatre and a 2004 Mayor's Arts Award for the City of New Orleans.

Even Hurricane Katrina could not stop Summer Lyric Theatre. In keeping with the idea that "the show must go on," Howard mounted a successful season in 2006, with only a month to plan.

An event celebrating Howard's leadership of Summer Lyric Theatre is being planned, said Carole Haber, dean of the School of Liberal Arts.

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