

Tulane choir joins Josh Groban onstage

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C. Leonard Raybon, Virginia Beer Professor in Singing and director of choirs, directs the the Tulane men's choir. He directs the choir that will back up singer Josh Groban at the Saenger Theatre on Thursday night (Oct. 22). (Photo by Paula Burch-Celentano)

EDITOR'S NOTE: *Thursday night's performance has been canceled because singer Josh Groban is ill.*

When Josh Groban sings at the Saenger Theatre in New Orleans on Thursday night (Oct. 22), he'll have the support of the Tulane University community behind him ? in choral form, that is.

A chamber choir led by [C. Leonard Raybon](#), Virginia Beer Professor in Singing, chair of the [Newcomb Department of Music](#), associate professor of music and director of choirs, will sing two pieces with the Grammy-nominated, chart-topping artist when he performs Broadway numbers with an orchestra during the New Orleans stop of his “Stages” tour.

Raybon says he has been a fan of Josh Groban since the singer's early days. “The thing that I love about him most is that he is arguably the only person of his generation who has made a popular career out of singing in a classical manner. He's a great model for young people who are trying to sing in a classical-based approach,” Raybon says.

The 20-person choir will sing “Anthem” from *Chess* and “You'll Never Walk Alone” from *Carousel* with Groban. They were scheduled to have one rehearsal with Groban at the Saenger, on the day of the sold-out show. Meantime, the students have been practicing with modified tracks from Groban's new *Stages* album.

On the day that Raybon delivered the news to his group, “I did not know what the reaction was going to be, but they were overjoyed,” he says of the students in the choir, adding that they learned the music quickly.

Thursday night's performance will happen because another of Raybon's choir groups [sang music from *Star Wars*](#) at the former New Orleans Arena in 2009. The same producer booked Raybon's singers both times. But it is probably the first time that any of the current students have performed at the Saenger, or with an internationally known artist.

“It's a new experience for us all,” Raybon says.