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CSO Keyboardist Joins Tower Chorale as Second-Ever Director

For the first time a quarter century, the Chorale will have a new director, the multi-talented Patrick Godon.

By [Darren McRoy](#) | [Email the author](#) | August 19, 2011

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For 25 years, since its inception, the Western Springs Tower Chorale has been directed by James Winfield. Starting this July, in their 26th season, the Chorale has welcomed as their new headman Patrick Godon, a veteran of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and a well-regarded pianist and musical director.

Godon is currently the head Director of Music at St. Gregory the Great Church in Chicago, and is the founder of the International Chamber Artists, a Chicago classical chamber-music supergroup. He has also performed with the Virginia and Delaware Symphony Orchestras, the Ars Viva Symphony Orchestra and the CSO's MusicNOW ensemble.

And with the Tower Chorale, he's going to be turning things around—literally as well as figuratively. One of his first steps has been to reorient the entire rehearsal room 180 degrees to face away from the door, to ensure late arrivals wouldn't distract anyone.

He also says he'll take a personal approach to directing rather than try to replicate Winfield's—which he anticipates will have a multifaceted effect.

"The bad would be that some members are probably pretty attached to Jim, and I could see change being a problem with some folks," Godon said. "On the other hand, I think the change is good, and the only thing that is consistent is change.

"I'm 32 years old, so I'm bringing a kind of youthful energy to the group, reinvigorate the whole base and get people excited about music again. We'll get the opportunity to try some new things, and I think it's worth trying some new things after a while."

The upcoming 2011-2012 season will reflect Godon's vision, with the Christmas concert loaded with more staple classic tunes, and the March orchestral performance of Hayden's "The Creation," which Godon says has special significance for his new position.

"The idea is kind of that we're starting again, a second beginning," he said. "It's a great work, but it also has symbolism with the changing of the guard."

The Chorale's May pops performance will be "A Night of Gershwin," on the 75th anniversary of the great composer's death.

"We are very much looking forward to starting our 26th season under Patrick Godon's direction, and feel very

fortunate to have found such a wonderful musician to carry on for Jim Winfield," said Mark Miner, Chairman of the Tower Chorale Board, in a press release.

"I have performed with a lot of different conductors in my 25 years as a professional singer, but it is rare to come across someone with as much talent as Patrick," said Janet Mensen Reynolds, a Lyric Opera of Chicago performer and frequent Chorale soloist, in the same release.

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