

contemporary a cappella arrangers, which is a useful place to start looking for names.

Consider some keywords to help narrow your search, such as: “A cappella,” “contemporary a cappella,” or “pop a cappella” + [Song Title] or [Artist]. You need the song title/artists, as any of those terms alone will give you way too many results to sort through.

In addition, you can use filters to help narrow your search: try “pop” under Genre and “school and community” under Usages.

Conclusion

Selecting repertoire for a pop a cappella group can feel overwhelming, but it doesn't have to be. Hopefully you now feel more confident in knowing which songs to choose and how to choose them. Using all these tools together will help you find great, current arrangements for your group that both they and your audience will love!

Tenor-Bass Choirs



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Teaching and Leading with TLC: An Interview with Dr. Tim Seelig

by Dustin S. Cates

Dr. Tim Seelig is internationally recognized for his contributions to choral music and LGBTQ+ advocacy through the arts. He is conductor laureate of the San Francisco Gay Men's Chorus and conductor emeritus of the Turtle Creek Chorale in Dallas, Texas. Dr. Seelig is a frequent guest conductor for honor choirs across the country, and his own ensembles have also performed at state, regional, and national ACDA conferences.

As a champion of new music, Seelig has commissioned numerous new works, including the first AIDS Requiem, *When We No Longer Touch* by Kristopher John Anthony, *Testimony* by Stephen Schwartz, and *I Am Harvey Milk* by Andrew Lipa. In addition to his work on the podium, he is a respected author and educator. His publications, *The Perfect Blend* and *The Perfect Rehearsal*, are widely used practical resources in choral methods and choral pedagogy, and his 2020 autobiographical memoir, *Tale of Two Tims: Big Ol' Baptist, Big Ol' Gay*,



offers a personal reflection on his life and career. His work has also been featured in award-winning documentaries, including the Emmy-winning, *After Goodbye: An AIDS Story* and *Gay Chorus Deep South*, which premiered at the prestigious Tribeca Film Festival.

Over a career spanning more than three decades, Dr. Seelig has conducted a broad range of ensembles. However, the bulk of his work has been teaching and leading tenor-bass choirs, particularly gay men's choruses, within the context of the broader LGBTQ+ choral movement.

As a result of his vast experience and success working with tenor-bass voices, I invited Dr. Seelig to present at our Repertoire and Resources Tenor-Bass Forum at the 2025 ACDA National Conference in Dallas, Texas. The forum, titled “Programming Tenor-Bass Choirs with TLC,” offered insights into repertoire selection, rehearsal strategies, and his signature approach emphasizing tears, laughs, and chill bumps. Following the forum, I had the opportunity to speak with Dr. Seelig in greater depth about his teaching philosophies, his work with tenor-bass choirs, and the lessons he has drawn from a remarkable career in choral music.

A Philosophy Rooted in Respect

Tim Seelig's approach to teaching is rooted in his background as a professional opera singer and voice teacher. His transition from the studio and stage to the conductor's podium was not only a career shift but also an evolution. “I didn't know any better than to think



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that choirs also warmed up and used the same technique as I had used in the voice studio,” Seelig recalls. This foundational belief in vocal technique shaped the sound of the Turtle Creek Chorale and became a hallmark of his choral leadership.

He admits that the early years of his conducting career were marked by trial and error. “I learned choral technique by the seat of my pants. I knew vocal technique very well. I knew conducting pretty well. But I didn’t know how to communicate that as a conductor.” Over time, he developed a practical and accessible approach that was tailored to his volunteer, community-based ensemble. “It was a matter of just communicating as quickly and as easily as I could—a lot with gestures and a lot with modeling.”

This pragmatic and practically applicable approach ultimately led to his widely used book, *The Perfect Blend*, which originated from a suggestion by composer and friend Greg Gilpin. “He said, ‘Just write down what you’re doing,’” Seelig recalls. The result was a resource that leveraged years of trial and error into a clear, relatable and often humorous guide for conductor-teachers. At the heart of Seelig’s philosophy is a deep respect for the music, the singers, and their time: “There’s only one answer to a great rehearsal, and that’s preparation. To not plan a rehearsal within an inch of its life is disrespecting your singers and their time.”

Repertoire that Resonates

For Dr. Seelig, programming is a deeply creative and meaningful task. “Choosing repertoire is both the most challenging and most fun thing any of us does,” he explains. His approach is guided by intentionality and emotional resonance, using what he calls the “TLC” model: tears, laughs, and chill bumps.

Seelig draws a distinction between programmers who build concerts piece by piece, and “top-down” thinkers who begin with a thematic vision. “I’m more of the top-down. I want to do a concert on butterflies. I can feel it. I can hear the applause. I don’t know any songs about butterflies, but I know it’s going to happen,” he says to illustrate his point. For him, this imaginative approach has led to concerts that are musically compelling but also emotionally and socially impactful.

His commitment to thematic programming is influenced by his experience with GALA Choruses, a network of over 200 LGBTQ+-centered choral ensembles from around the world. Seelig believes that GALA Choruses have influenced broader choral practices. “When I came out and we were planning concerts that were themed, other people had no idea what in the world that was,” he recalls. “We taught by example. People started looking over the fence at the success of gay and lesbian choruses and wondering how we were filling our audiences. Now, non-GALA choruses are using thematic programming and ‘choral theatre’ more than they ever did.”

Seelig is also an advocate for expanding tenor-bass repertoire. “The repertoire was sad at best,” he says of his early career. “We had not begun writing for ourselves.” Since then, he has commissioned numerous works and continues to push publishers to release more tenor-bass repertoire. “Publishers still say the market is not big enough. But in today’s age, you can publish digitally with no money.”

Among his favorite pieces are those that reflect his TLC philosophy. For laughter, he recommends Jonathan Wilcox’s *Musical Risotto* and Eric Lane Barnes’s *Landscapes*. For tears, he cites Stephen Schwartz’s *Testimony*, a powerful work that has become a staple in LGBTQ+ choral literature. And for chill bumps, he points to pieces like Morten Lauridsen’s *O Magnum Mysterium* and Jacob Collier’s arrangement of *Bridge Over Troubled Water*. Ultimately, for Seelig, programming is about the connection between the music and mission and performers and audience. “Music is not the end. It’s a means to the end. And that end is to touch every possible emotion in a concert—maybe a couple of times.”

Working with Tenor-Bass Choirs

Seelig’s work with tenor-bass choirs includes a blend of vocal pedagogy, ensemble psychology, and an understanding of the opportunities and challenges these choirs present. He emphasizes the importance of building the sound from the bottom up. “It’s always built on a pyramid. I love a good choir with 21 first tenors, 30 second tenors, and 50 basses,” he jokes.

This approach is especially important in tenor-bass

choirs, where tuning can be a challenge because of the close harmonic structure. “We can shake the walls with sound as opposed to peel the paint,” he quips. While acknowledging the distinct qualities of tenor-bass choruses, he maintains that the fundamental techniques for good singing are universal. “I don’t think there’s anything particularly unique about one choir to another. The key is listening.” He also advocates for clear communication, efficient rehearsal pacing, and a strong emphasis on outer voice tuning.

Music and Mission

Dr. Tim Seelig’s legacy in choral music is inseparable from his lifelong commitment to advocacy, particularly through the lens of LGBTQ+ visibility, inclusion, and empowerment in the arts. His work has consistently embodied what he describes as the “twins of music and mission ... I’ve tried to feed them both every single day,” he says. For Seelig, a choir is not just a group of people singing together; it is a vehicle for social change.

Since retiring from the San Francisco Gay Men’s Chorus in 2022, Seelig moved to Portland, Oregon. Aside from the occasional honor choir, guest lecture and a TedxTalk (available on YouTube), he has been

enjoying his retirement and spending lots of time volunteering at the Oregon Humane Society. In the fall of 2024 he came out of retirement to found the Portland Sage Singers, a community-based choral ensemble for older LGBTQ+ singers. “Who starts a choir when they’re seventy-four?” he jokes. The group’s motto—“singing for the rest of our lives”—was gifted to the ensemble by activist and songwriter Holly Near, who wrote the LGBTQ+ social justice anthem, “Singing for Our Lives.”

As Seelig reflects on his career, he returns to this truth: “Lives are changed in rehearsal, not performance.” This belief underscores his commitment to preparation, presence, and purpose. Whether conducting a world premiere, mentoring an emerging conductor, or building a new ensemble from the ground up, Seelig remains focused on creating meaningful human connection through music. “I try to make sure that every single person I meet feels full and whole just the way they are.”

His legacy, however, is not measured in accolades or performance, but in impact. “At the end of the day, it’s the same for all of us who are music educators or conductors. I’m most proud of the people whose lives have been changed.”

World Musics and Cultures



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Bridging Centuries, Crossing Borders: An Introduction to Dutch Choral Music

by Michel Hogenes and Madlen Batchvarova

From Jan Pieterszoon Sweelinck’s polyphonic masterworks to Calliope Tsoupaki’s avant-garde vocal landscapes, Dutch choral music exhibits a remarkable convergence of tradition, experiment, and cultural expression. Because of its rich historical heritage and constant sensitivity to modern artistic trends, the

Netherlands is frequently referred to as a *Korenland*,¹ literally “a choir country.” This article offers a brief synopsis of the Dutch choral tradition, examining its historical roots, variety of repertory, and distinct sociocultural character. By doing this, we intend to offer information that will be helpful to choral conductors and educators worldwide, but especially in the United States of America.

A Nation of Choirs

The Netherlands boasts one of the highest per capita densities of choirs in the world. The term *Nederland* *Korenland* reflects a strong national self-image: that of a singing society in which amateur and professional