

Talks with TENET

2023-2024 Season

INTRODUCTION

In 2021, TENET Vocal Artists launched a free mentorship program in which aspiring artists forge connections with members of TENET's accomplished roster, as they develop careers in early music and chamber ensemble singing.

The goals of the program are to help artists:

- Expand awareness of early music
- Inspire careers focused on solo and chamber singing
- Become leaders through the creation of dream projects
- Develop and expand professional networks
- Gather practical resources for building a career

TENET's artists have regularly supported colleges, universities, and conservatories through teaching, offering masterclasses, and engaging with students. These interactions often lead to wonderful conversations with aspiring musicians who are curious to know more about what a career in music is like. This program strives to more fully realize these relationships and offer a structure where they can flourish.

There is a window of time between the completion of degree programs and the beginning of professional work when career development can feel uncertain. Many colleges and conservatories prepare artists to perform well, but fail to provide resources and opportunities to help students and early professionals bridge the gap between school and an active career.

The pathway to early music and chamber singing in particular can be circuitous. Some artists may not have had much exposure to it during their studies, as many arts programs focus primarily on musical theater and opera. The field of early music can seem inaccessible and specialized. The question of how to get started can be difficult, and accessing ensemble leaders can be challenging.

Furthermore, there is a distinct lack of diversity in our field that does not reflect the broader community in which we live and work. TENET strives to ensure that our program is welcoming, holistic, and accessible for these singers in particular.

MENTORSHIP

TENET prides itself on creating thoughtful and holistic experiences for our performers, while striving to offer intimate, joy-filled concerts for our audience

members. Creating a mentorship program that reflects our values is important to us, and we hope to provide concrete guidance and a transformative experience to 12-15 artists each term.

To be clear, TENET does not seek to emulate the existing young artist programs, but instead invent a new model that offers substantial individual attention to artists as they explore a career in early music and vocal chamber music performance.

Each mentor built a successful career by following their own path. By highlighting their varying experiences, we hope to inspire and encourage artists, so that they will gain confidence and knowledge as they find their own unique path.

PROGRAM DESCRIPTION

TENET has engaged 5 inspiring, accomplished musicians to guide this fall's cohort. Over a 4-month period, TENET's mentors regularly meet with participants and cover a variety of focused topics:

- Career development
 - How to build a career that works for you as an individual
 - Building and keeping connections within our network
 - Creating promotional materials and websites
 - Interpersonal relationships in ensemble environments
- Dream Projects and Concert Creation
 - How to bring a great idea for a concert to fruition
 - How to form an ensemble and when is the right time
 - Nonprofit creation and umbrella organization options
 - Fundraising for your dream project
- Skill Sets for a Career in Music
 - Exploring your talents beyond your instrument
 - Promoting your varied skills successfully
 - Broadly define your goals for overall comfort and security

In practical terms, the program is shaped as follows:

- Mentors meet with up to 3 artists every 1-2 weeks and explore topics related to their group's area of focus.
- Mentors guide artists through the curriculum topics, share networking contacts, and make introductions whenever appropriate.
- Mentors communicate with each other about the progress with their assigned artists. When topics arise that another mentor would be most helpful to address, alternate mentors will step in to assist.

The program is free for participants!

In addition, mentees are invited to attend TENET rehearsals throughout the 2022-2023 concert season, as well as attend concerts with a guest free of charge. Our goal is to help mentees feel welcomed into our community, and by connecting them with our roster of artists, broaden their knowledge-base of performers who can serve as resources to them.

ACCESSIBILITY

TENET Vocal Artists provides the necessary funds for the program, and mentors are compensated by TENET for their time. In this way, TENET strives for inclusion by removing any financial barriers for artists to participate.

TENET is currently selecting participants who have been recommended to us by educators, colleagues, and individuals who have contacted TENET in hopes of learning more about our organization's work.

In addition, participants have an initial discussion with TENET's artistic director, Jolle Greenleaf, so that she can help ensure we have appropriate mentors to support each participant. We have opted to avoid an application process for the time being, to remove barriers for anyone who may be disadvantaged by a formal application process.

We are also prioritizing the recruitment of participants who self-identify within a group historically underrepresented in early music: artists of color, LGBTQ+ and gender-expansive artists, disabled artists, and other marginalized identities.

This exciting new program has long been on our minds, and we are happy to finally launch it. Mentorship is an important aspect of belonging to a community that goes beyond performing. TENET hopes to do our part in creating a more welcoming, inclusive, and diverse artist community that, in turn, will help early music continue to thrive for many future generations.