



From the Top at Carnegie Hall
Episode 2: "Family Ties"
Airing on PBS (check local TV listings)
Available online at pbs.org

Learning Activity

Title: *Listening with Your Eyes*

Description: Students will compare the experience of listening to a piece of music (without video or other visual accompaniment) and the experience of watching a performer as the piece is played.

Grade Level: 5-8, 9-12 (may be adapted for different grade levels)

National Music Standards: **6** Listening to, analyzing, and describing music, **7** Evaluating music and music performances

Background

In this episode we watch as violist Matt Lipman rehearses a piece before his performance and again while he plays it on stage. Matt is experimenting with different phrasing in a close collaboration with Christopher O'Riley, the pianist. In this brief activity, students will compare the experience of listening to the piece with the experience of watching as Matt rehearses and performs it.



Materials: Computer/DVD player, speakers (if needed), video clip from Episode 2 (*La Campanella*, from the Second Violin Concerto by Niccolò Paganini).

Activity Instructions

- 1) **Explain** to the students that they will first hear a short piece of music played by a 15-year-old violist and will then hear the piece again, while watching a video of his performance. Ask them to note their thoughts, reactions, and questions during each hearing, and to observe their level of engagement.
- 2) **Play the music** without showing the video. Give students 30-45 seconds to note any reactions, thoughts, etc. and to rate their level of engagement.
- 3) **Play the video** again and allow the students to watch both the rehearsal segment and the on-stage performance. Ask them to note reactions, questions, thoughts, and to rate their level of engagement.
- 4) **Discuss the differences** between hearing the piece only, watching the performance, and seeing the rehearsal footage. What changes about the way you listen to music when you can see the performer? When you know something about how he approaches the music and the challenges of playing it?

Find out more!

About Matt Lipman

Matt also appeared on From the Top's radio program. You can hear him play and read his "Top Ten Ways to Procrastinate When You Should Be Playing the Viola" at:

<http://fromthetop.org/Programs/Performers.cfm?pid=2350>

About string instrument technique

Matt uses a variety of techniques for making different sounds on the viola. These include playing double stops, bowing, and plucking (pizzicato). How many different techniques can you find?

More information about violin technique can be found at The Violin Site:

<http://www.theviolinsite.com/history.html>

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