



**From the Top at Carnegie Hall**  
**Episode 6: "Style and Substance"**  
Airing on PBS (check local TV listings)  
Available online at [pbs.org](http://pbs.org)

## Learning Activity

### **Title: *One String, Many Sounds***

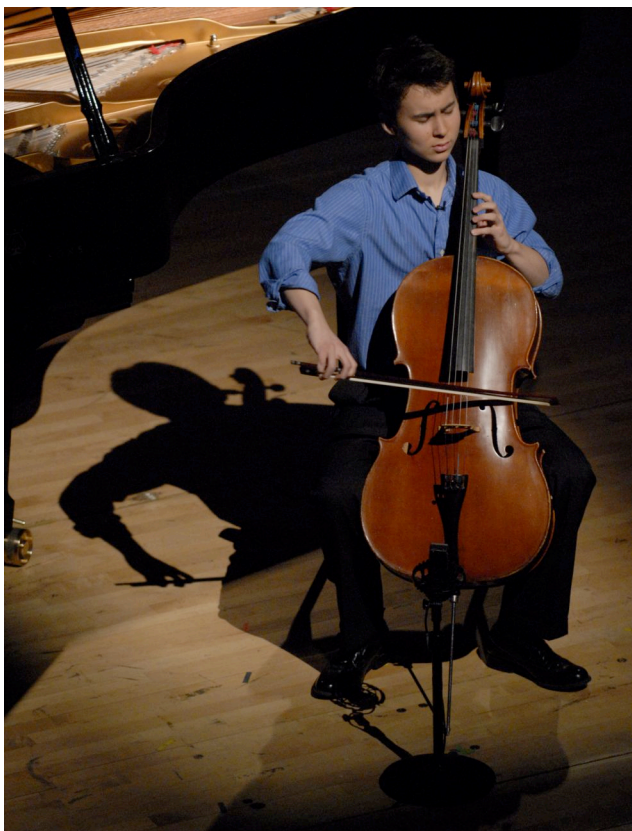
**Description:** In this brief activity, students will listen closely to a young cellist perform a piece played on only one string of the instrument and identify the variety of sounds he produces.

**Grade Level:** 5-8

**National Music Standard: 6**, Listening to, analyzing, and describing music

### **Background**

In this episode, 13-year-old cellist **Jonah Ellsworth** plays an especially challenging piece, Paganini's Variations on One String. While utilizing only the A string, Jonah still produces a wide variety of sounds including changes in pitch, volume, speed, and special techniques such as slides (glissando), and oscillation of pitch (vibrato).



Jonah Ellsworth performs at Carnegie Hall

## Materials

Television or computer, DVD player, speakers (if needed), video of Episode 6

## Activity Instructions

- 1) Before watching the video, **explain to students** that Jonah is playing variations on a theme, which means he repeats a melody in different ways. Something else that is unique about this piece is that it is only played on one string (the cello has four strings). Ask students to pay attention to the *variety* of sounds Jonah produces on his cello with just that one string.
- 2) **Watch the video segment** that contains Jonah's performance.
- 3) **Discuss** what you've seen and heard. Ask students about the different sounds they heard. Were some parts faster than others? What was he doing to make that happen? What else did you notice Jonah doing as he played and what sounds came from those actions?

## Find out more!

### About Jonah Ellsworth


Jonah has appeared on From the Top's radio program twice before: once as an eleven-year old in a quartet, and at thirteen as a soloist. Listen to his chamber music performance at:  
<http://fromthetop.org/Programs/Performers.cfm?eid=280>

### About the cello

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Cello>

### About some of the techniques Jonah employs

<http://www.lunanova.org/CelloET/index.html>

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