



Public Radio's *From the Top* Becomes PBS Television Series

By Vivien Schweitzer
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From the Top, the radio series highlighting the talents of young musicians ages 8 to 18, comes to PBS this month as *From the Top: Live from Carnegie Hall*, a new series of 13 half-hour programs showcasing the skills and lives of America's best young classical musicians.

Pianist Christopher O'Riley, host of the radio series, hosts the television programs as well. Guest stars such as violinist Joshua Bell and mezzo-soprano Denyce Graves make occasional appearances.

The first program spotlights musical families, while the second looks at a 13-year old cellist from California and an 18-year old violinist and self-described "Asian Cowboy" from Austin, Texas. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma reveals the "Top Ten Reasons Why Cello is the Coolest!" Then it's on to the banjo, with a program featuring Béla Fleck, the man who reinvented the instrument.

In the next program O'Riley presents a rumba with a 17-year-old saxophone player from Kentucky, who then plays a beatbox performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony, and a teenage string quartet from Philadelphia play works by a Navajo composer.

A piano extravaganza featuring one of the youngest students at Juilliard and other talented teenagers includes a four piano finale: Wagner's "Ride of the Valkyries" with O'Riley also at the keyboard. For the sixth episode, Joshua Bell is joined by 13-year-old classical guitarist from Pasadena, California, and the La Campana Trio, three teenagers who study violin, viola and cello.

In another episode, New England Conservatory's Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, led by Benjamin Zander, performs Beethoven's *Coriolan* Overture, and O'Riley joins two young musicians for the finale of Beethoven's Triple Concerto. Music for piano, marimba and drums is highlighted in the eighth program, then strings take center stage as a 12-year-old violinist plays Wieniawski and a quartet of teenage boys from Ohio play Ravel.

Guest star Denyce Graves shares her story of discovering opera as a youth in inner-city Washington, D.C., then O'Riley welcomes a teenage trombone quartet from Chicago and that city's Children's Choir sing spirituals. For the final program O'Riley introduces a 17-year-old clarinetist from South Carolina and a 12-year-old violinist, pianist and composer.

Check broadcast information at www.pbs.org/fromthetop.

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