



Classroom Guide

Title: **Ty's One-Man Band**

Author: **Mildred Pitts Walter**

Illustrator: **Margot Tomes**

Theme: Recognizing that music is everywhere enables people to create and enjoy it as an important part of life.

Program Summary: On a hot, humdrum day Ty meets a mysterious man who uses a washboard, comb, spoons, and a pail to create a one-man band out of thin air. LeVar explores a concert in the park where he discovers a rap group, doo-wop group, jazz band, and salsa band — all different types of music. An acapella singing group and the talented Ben Vereen add to the mix. A visit with *Reading Rainbow's* music director shows how he performs magic with a music synthesizer.

Topics for Discussion:

Before viewing the program, ask the class, “Is it necessary to have a musical instrument to make music?” and discuss why or why not.

Discuss with students why they think Andro quietly slips away when the townspeople are making their own music.

Music often creates different feelings in people. Discuss with students how music makes them feel.

Curriculum Extension Activities:

Obtain a copy of the book *Ty's One-Man Band* and read it to the students. Have them use sounds that they can make with only parts of their bodies (e.g., snaps, clicks, slaps, taps, etc.) to create the sounds in the story.

Have students look around the classroom for items they can use to make music. Encourage them to be creative.

Working in small groups, have students think of a familiar melody and compose words to an original song that can be sung to that tune.

Make a list of all the musical instruments that students can think of. Have students sort them into groups according to the following: strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. (Younger students may start more simply with categories such as “Strings” and “No Strings.”) Have students look through catalogs and magazines for pictures of musical instruments that they can cut out and glue to their lists.



Classroom Guide

Title: **Ty's One-Man Band**

Author: **Mildred Pitts Walter**

Illustrator: **Margot Tomes**

Make a recording of common sounds for students to identify. These might be sounds from home or school, inside or outside, city or country sounds, and the like. Play the recording and have students guess the sounds. Play the recording again and confirm correct guesses.

Have students work in small groups to make music using bottles containing amounts of water. Fill five glass bottles with varying amounts of water. Each bottle should have a different tone when struck with a spoon. (Experiment with the water levels until you have five distinct tones.) Color code the bottles with a few drops of food coloring in the water. Have the groups compose a musical refrain by tapping the bottles and then record their refrain on a piece of paper, using the color codes. Allow each group to share its tune. To add another dimension to this activity, have students add words to their tunes. Word cards could be made ahead of time for them to use, or they can make up their own words.

“Onomatopoeia” is discussed in the program. Explain to students that these are “sound words,” such as “hiss,” “click,” “boing,” and “pow.” Have students listen for these types of words in stories they hear and watch for examples in books and cartoons. Make a class list of sound words and add to it as students find other examples. After they have accumulated quite a few of these words, have each student draw a picture that shows one of the words “in action.” Display the pictures on a bulletin board or bind them into a book for the classroom library.

Book Review:

The Amazing Bone by William Steig

Supplementary Booklist:

Ben's Trumpet by Rachel Isadora

The Philharmonic Gets Dressed by Karla Kuskin, illustrated by Marc Simont

Max Found Two Sticks by Brian Pinkney

Related Themes:

- dance
- types of music



Classroom Guide

Title: **Ty's One-Man Band**

Author: **Mildred Pitts Walter**

Illustrator: **Margot Tomes**

Related Reading Rainbow Programs:

- Program #125 — Zin! Zin! Zin! A Violin
- Program #90 — Berlioz The Bear
- Program #127 — Hip Cat
- Program #30 — Mama Don't Allow

About the Author: Mildred Pitts Walter began writing because, while teaching, she felt there were few books for or about African American children. Many books later, she views herself as writing for all children as she strives to develop “characters who appear real” and bring “children a sense of who they are.” The recipient of numerous awards, including the Coretta Scott King Award for *Justin and the Best Biscuits in the World*, she is also the author of the Reading Rainbow review book, *My Mama Needs Me*.

About the Illustrator: In a career that spans many years, Margot Tomes has illustrated more than 60 books for children, including folk tales, biographies, and poetry. In addition to *Ty's One-Man Band*, she is also the illustrator of *Reading Rainbow* featured book, *Snowy Day: Stories and Poems* by Caroline Feller Bauer.