

Physics Department Seminar

Friday May 14th, 2004

11:00am in PhSc 105



“The Physics of Song”

*Why are operatic
sopranos difficult
to understand?*

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Abstract:

An experiment by acoustical physicists John Smith and Joe Wolfe scientifically demonstrates what Hector Berlioz understood long ago when he warned composers never to give a soprano crucial dialogue at a high note.

This talk will discuss the physiological and physical factors involved to explain why vowel differentiation becomes nearly impossible at the top of a soprano's vocal register.