

# ELGAR



## ENIGMA VARIATIONS



### EDWARD ELGAR: THE COMPOSER

Edward William Elgar was born on 2 June 1857 in a small village in England. His father played the organ in a church and had a shop that sold pianos and sheet music. Elgar learned to play the violin and the organ at a young age. He was an autodidact, which means he taught himself to play these instruments. Apparently, he also tried the trombone, but that was not a big success!

*'My idea is that there is music in the air', Elgar once said, 'Music is all around us, the world is full of it and you simply take as much as you require.'*

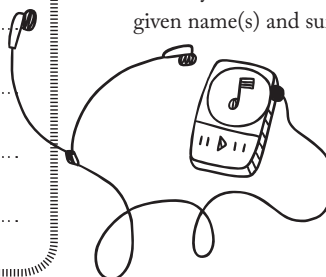


Friendship was important to Elgar, and so were dogs. He was crazy about his beloved animals!

NAME	INITIALS
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....
.....	.....

### ACTIVITY: Who are your friends?

In the table below, write the name of your best friends or people who are important for you. Put their initials next to the name, so that you can see the first letters of their given name(s) and surname.



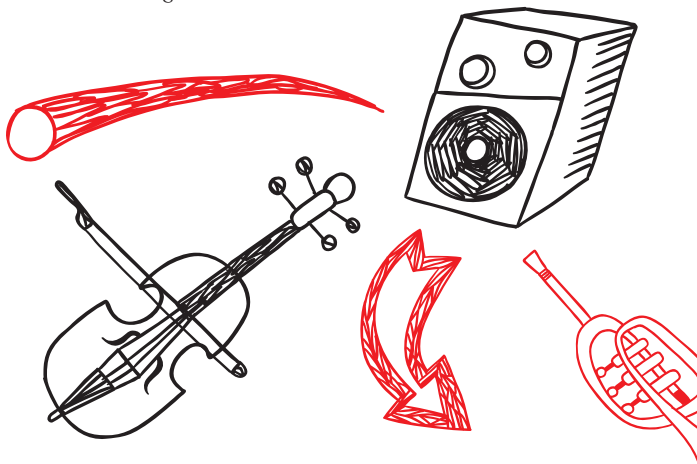
# ENIGMA VARIATIONS

On an autumnal October afternoon in 1898, the composer Edward Elgar lit a cigar and sat down to the piano. It had been a tiring day of teaching. Dreamily, he improvised something random. Suddenly, his wife interrupted him.



'Edward', she said, 'that's a lovely tune'. It was as if the composer had awakened from a dream. 'Tune?' he asked. 'Which tune?' 'What you just played a moment ago', she replied. 'Do it again, I thought it was lovely.' Elgar started over and over, until his wife suddenly exclaimed: 'That's it!'

And that's how the melody (the theme) of his famous *Enigma Variations* came to be.



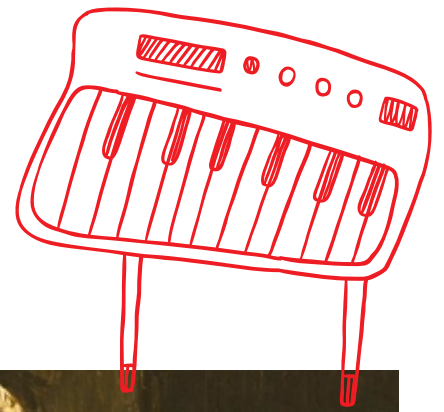
Enigma means riddle, and variation means change. The *Enigma Variations* is a musical work made up of 15 short pieces, in each of which the theme is changed around.

The variations are musical portraits of Elgar's friends and family.

The first variation, 'CAE', is about his wife Caroline Alice Elgar. This is followed by a long series of friends. You can detect the characters or qualities of the person in each one: the stammering of Dora Penny, a friend of Elgar's for whom he wrote the tenth variation, 'Dorabella'. Nervous laughs, slamming doors – each of them a musical joke that Elgar worked into his music.

The most famous variation is the ninth, *Nimrod*, named for the Biblical hunter in the Old Testament, who was the first ruler on earth. The movement also alludes to a meeting Elgar had with August Jaeger (a name that means hunter). Elgar suffered from self-doubt and wanted to stop composing. Fortunately, his good friend August was able to talk him out of it!

Elgar wanted the work to be a riddle. So for example, he gave the thirteenth variation the title: '\*\*\*'. To this day, listeners try to guess who this variation was about. Elgar refused to say.



Elgar and his wife Caroline, painting by Roger Payne

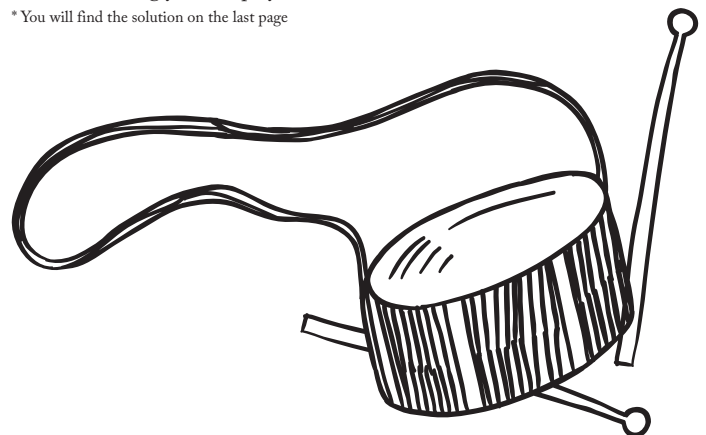
## DID YOU KNOW THAT...

Elgar loved wordplays, riddles and puzzles?

Guess what this is:

A head covering you can play music on: .....

\* You will find the solution on the last page



# ACTIVITY:

## Do the puzzle!



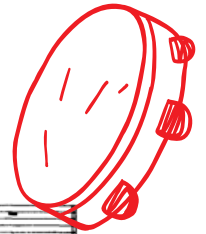
Link the title of the variations with the correct name of Elgar's friends.

Var. I	C.A.E.	•	•	Dora Penny
Var. II	H.D.S.-P.	•	•	George Robertson Sinclair
Var. III	R.B.T	•	•	August Jaeger
Var. IV	W.M.B.	•	•	Basil George Nevinson
Var. V	R.P.A.	•	•	Winifred Norbury
Var. VI	Ysobel	•	•	Arthur Troyte Griffith
Var. VII	Troyte	•	•	Isabel Fitton
Var. VIII	W.N.	•	•	William Meath Baker
Var. IX.	Nimrod	•	•	???
Var. X	Dorabella	•	•	Richard Baxter Townshend
Var. XI	G.R.S.	•	•	Hew David Steuart-Powell
Var. XII	B.G.N.	•	•	Caroline Alice Elgar
Var. XIII	***	•	•	Edward Elgar
Var. XIV	E.D.U.	•	•	Richard Penrose Arnold



# THE INSTRUMENTS AND THE SCORE

Below, you can see the first page of the score showing all the instruments of the orchestra. In the first movement, only the strings play (at the bottom, you can see the notes they have to play). At the top, you can see the woodwinds, beneath them the brass instruments, the percussion and the organ. In the version that the Brussels Philharmonic will be performing, the organ is not included.



## ENIGMA VARIATIONS (Variations on an Original Theme) Op. 36

- 1 flute
- 1 flute + piccolo
- 2 oboes
- 2 clarinets
- 2 bassoons
- 1 contrabassoon
- 4 French horns
- 3 trumpets
- 3 trombones
- 1 bass tuba
- 1 timpani
- 3 percussion
- organ
- 14 1st violins
- 12 2nd violins
- 10 violas
- 8 cellos
- 6 double basses

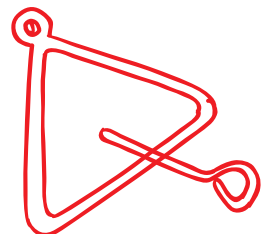
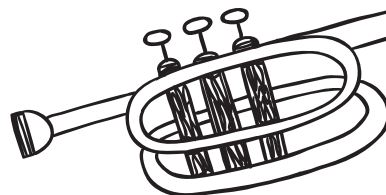
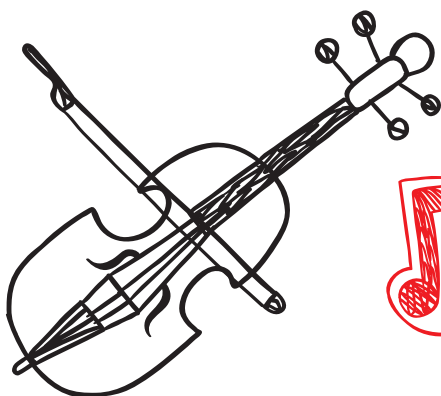
- I  
Flauti
- II  
(e picc.)
- Oboi I. II.
- Clarineti I. II  
in B $\flat$
- Fagotti I. II.
- Contra Fagotto.
- I. II  
Corni in F
- III. IV.
- Trombe I. II. III  
in F.
- I. II  
Tromboni  
III e Tuba.
- Timpani.  
()
- Tamburo piccolo  
e Triangolo.
- Gran Cassa  
e Piatti.
- Organo, *ad lib.*
- I  
Violini
- II.
- Viole.
- Violoncelli.
- Bassi.

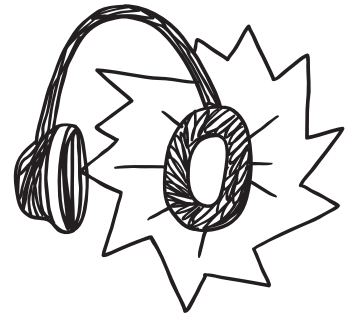
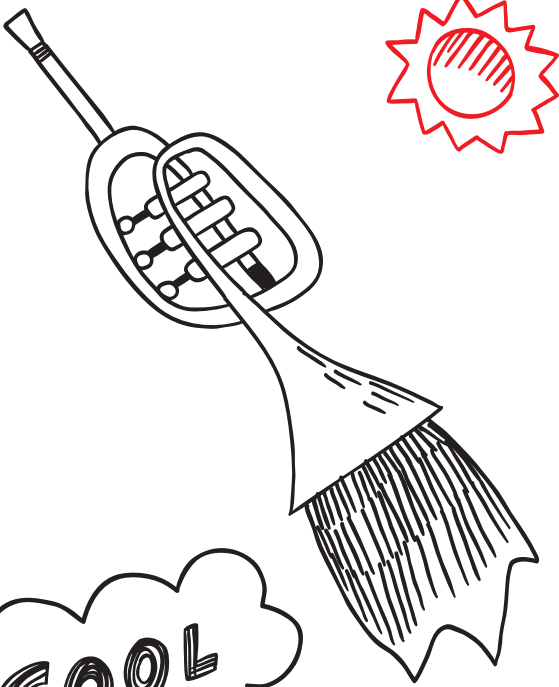
Andante.  $\text{♩} = 63.$



Andante.  
*legato e sostenuto*  
*ten.*  
*molto espress.*  
*div.*  
*ppz*  
*cresc.*  
*dim.*  
*pp*  
*cresc.*  
*dim.*  
*pp*  
*cresc.*  
*dim.*

Andante.



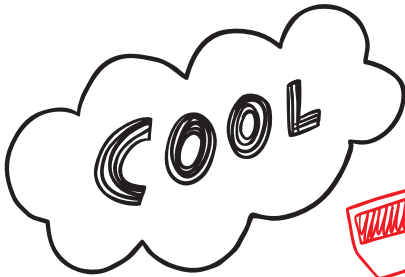


## ACTIVITY: YOU ARE THE CONDUCTOR!



Watch the following film

You can follow the conductor's score yourself here. Find a baton and play the role of the conductor. Indicate when your imaginary orchestra should play loud by using large arm movements, and where they should play quietly with smaller movements. Throw yourself into it!



TOP

Classic



## EXTRA ACTIVITY: CREATE YOUR OWN VARIATIONS

Choose a song you know very well, such as Frère Jacques. Choose some friends or family members for whom you will change the song slightly in each case. For a person who is sometimes nervous, you can sing quickly and at a high pitch, for example; for others, you can sing as if you were laughing or crying, angry or happy, and so on ... Put your musical imagination to work!

HAVE FUN AND ENJOY THE MUSIC!