BBC TEN PIECES

Elgar

‘Enigma’ Variations – Theme (Enigma), variations 11 (GRS), 6 (Ysobel) & 7 (Troyte)

Primary classroom lesson plan

Written by
Rachel Leach

BBC TEN PIECES

Lesson outcomes

After this lesson, pupils will be able to:

- Listen and reflect on a piece of orchestral music
- Learn to play a tune
- Create pieces inspired by Elgar
- Perform as an ensemble
- Begin to learn simple staff notation
- Learn musical language appropriate to the task

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Curriculum checklist

Learners will:

- play and perform in ensemble contexts, using voices and playing musical instruments
- improvise and compose music for a range of purposes using the interrelated dimensions of music
- listen with attention to detail and recall sounds with increasing aural memory

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Glossary of music terms

Term	Definition
Drone	one long, continuous sound (pitched or unpitched) that is present throughout a piece, usually at the bottom of the texture
Motif	a very short musical 'idea'
Pitched percussion	percussion instruments that can play different pitches (or 'notes') – xylophones, glockenspiels, chime bars etc.
Theme	another word for 'tune' or 'melody'. A linear line of notes, like a musical sentence
Unpitched percussion	Percussion instruments that make sounds that don't have a specific pitch (or 'note') – drums, shakers, woodblocks, tambourine.

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

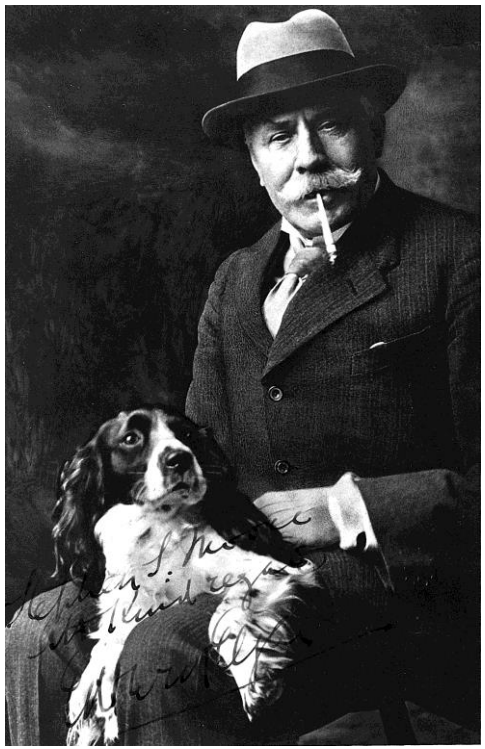
Elgar – Lesson 1

Watching and listening

Copyright Rachel Leach & BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Background – the composer



Edward ELGAR (1857 - 1934)

- English composer
- Took many years to find fame but then, with ‘Enigma’ Variations, he found himself suddenly very famous

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Background – the music

‘Enigma’ Variations



Written in 1899
Uses one theme to describe 14 of his friends
‘Variation' means the same as 'version’
The 'enigma' remains a mystery - no one can work out the origin of Elgar's theme

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Listen to each of the three variations

Listen to Variation 7



Listen to Variation 6



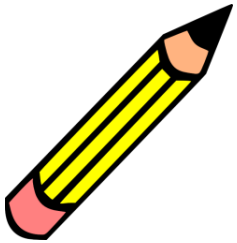
Listen to Variation 11



For each one, as you listen try to imagine the person Elgar was describing when he wrote this piece:

- How old do you think they are?
- What do they look like?
- What are they doing?

Draw a picture for each





Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

These are the variations:

Variation 7 (Tryote): Arthur Troyte Griffith • Male, aged about 40 – one of Elgar's closest friends • This variation depicts him sheltering during a thunderstorm	
Variation 6 (Ysobel): Isabel Fitton • Female, aged about 30 – she was a beautiful violist • This variation depicts her practising her viola	
Variation 11 (G. R. S.): A bulldog called Dan • Dog! • This variation depicts him doing 'doggy' things such as running, biting a bone and panting • G. R. S are the initials for Dr. George Robert Sinclair who owned Dan the dog	

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design – BBC , Images credit to The Elgar Foundation

BBC TEN PIECES

Get to know Elgar's Engima Variations



http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/articles/xFHT9GvfKjBbtw28pgDgyG

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Elgar – Lesson 2

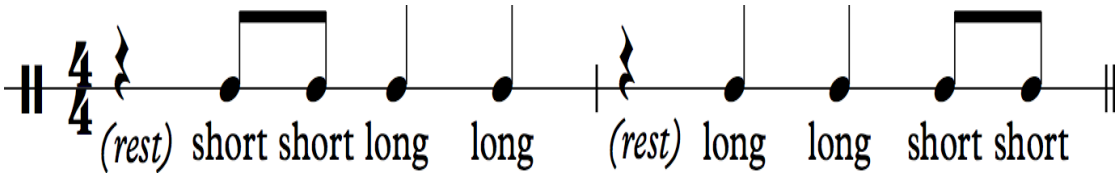
Elgar's theme

Copyright Rachel Leach & BBC

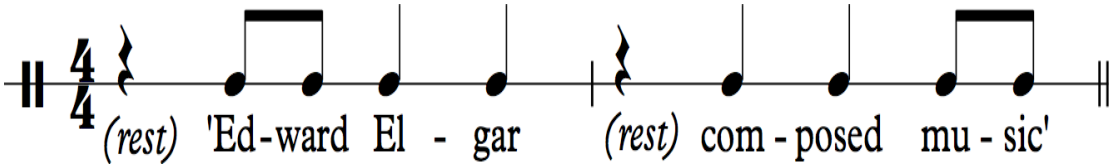
BBC TEN PIECES

Let's learn to play Elgar's theme

Try clapping the following rhythm:



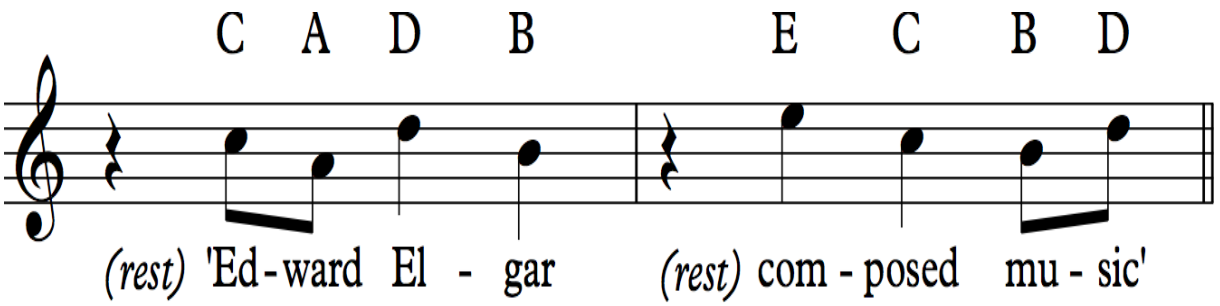
It might be easier to put it to words:



Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Try singing or playing the tune on any pitched instruments

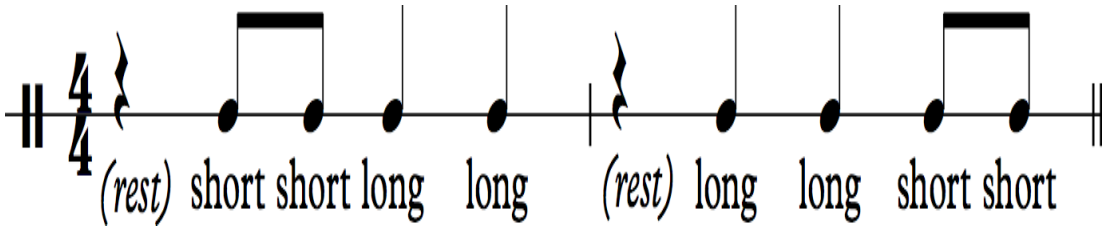


Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Try and create your own theme

- Use the same rhythmic shape and create your own new melody to accompany the theme
- Make sure you end on the note A



Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Write up your theme here and perform it!

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

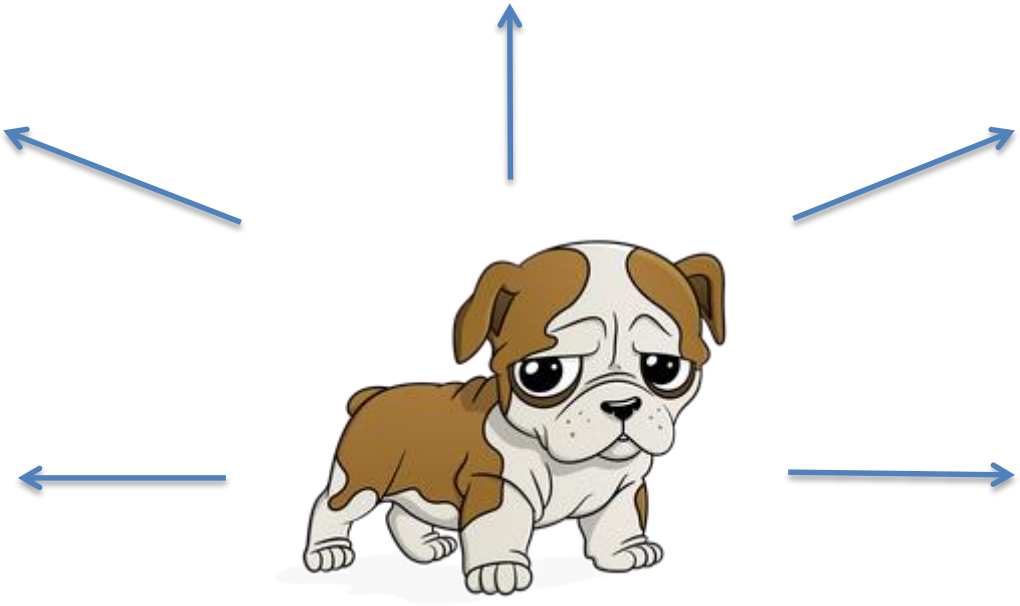
Elgar – Lesson 3

Elgar's dog

Copyright Rachel Leach & BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Variation XI
What do dogs do?



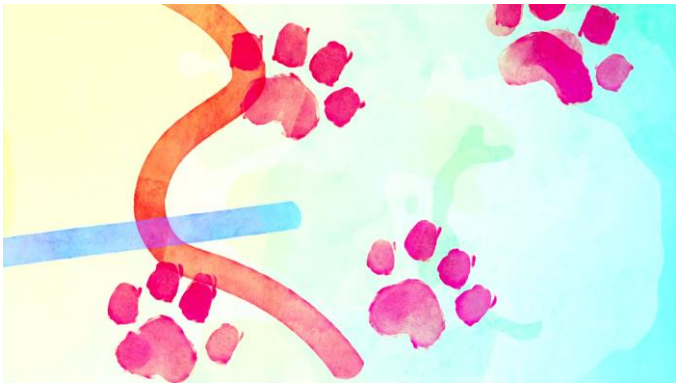
Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Make a piece of ‘dog music’

Elgar’s dog variation is made up of three basic ideas:

- SCAMPERING
- CHOMPING
- PANTING



Think about sounds and rhythms that you might want to use for each bit!

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

‘Dog music’: scampering sounds

Take a look at your instruments and see what you can make a scampering sound on

Elgar’s scampering looks like this:



You don’t need to hit the same note, but just make something of a similar shape. Using a xylophone or glockenspiel, this might look like:



Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

‘Dog music’: chomping sounds

Elgar’s chomping is simply one big, loud chord – which is made up by lots of instruments playing at exactly the same time

- What will you use for this sound?
- Do you need to appoint a conductor to practice when you all come in?

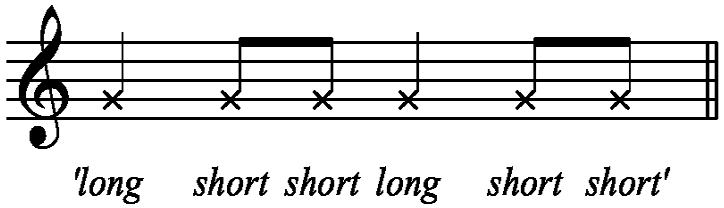


Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

‘Dog music’: panting sounds

This is Elgar’s panting rhythm – can you clap along?



- Which instrument(s) do you think could do this?
- Remember this is the quietest sound in the piece!

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

‘Dog music’: bring it all together

Decide on an order:

1) Scampering

2) Chomping

3) Panting

Perform your piece!

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Elgar – Lesson 4

Composing your own ‘Enigma’ Variations 1

Copyright Rachel Leach & BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Today we will describe someone or something in music!

First we need to pick your subject!

List any celebrities/animals/things you'd like to use:

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Pick a person/thing from your list

Think of three actions/characteristics for them and list them here:

1)

2)

3)

Can you create a sound (**musical motif**) for each thing?

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Now make your own piece in groups



1) Choose a ‘subject’
2) Three descriptive words
3) Make three motifs
4) Put them together to make one piece

Perform it to the rest of the class

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Elgar – Lesson 5

Composing your own

‘Enigma’ Variation 2

Copyright Rachel Leach & BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Your theme and variation

- Recap your **theme** from Lesson 2

Insert your theme here

- In your groups, play your piece based on someone's character from last lesson – this will be part of your **variation**



Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Your theme and variation

- Elgar's variations would feature his **theme** somewhere within them
- Try and put some (or all) of your theme into your **variation**
- Try and work out what your theme represents
- Come together and perform it with the rest of the class

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Elgar – Lesson 6

Put it all together

Copyright Rachel Leach & BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Can you remember the three sections of music you have created?



1)

2)

3)

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Decide on an order for all the variations and put it all together to perform a completed piece

Dog music	1) The full class theme
The group variations	2)
The group variations 2 etc.	3)
	4)

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC

BBC TEN PIECES

Taking it further : Cross-curricular activities

ART: draw the people you are describing or listen to the other variations from Elgar's Enigma and draw them

VISIT: an art gallery and describe some of the portraits you see using the same method as above

LISTEN: Scottish composer James MacMillan wrote a piece with a similar idea called '…as others see us…'. Take a listen. All of his subjects are in the National Portrait Gallery and their pictures can be seen online

LITERACY: write words to fit Elgar's tune or your own and make a singing variation

Copyright : Words - Rachel Leach, Design - BBC