



Edward Elgar

KS2 objective: To appreciate and understand a wide range of high-quality live and recorded music drawn from different traditions and from great composers and musicians

Edward Elgar is a famous British composer who has written some of the most popular and well-known classical music.

- Edward William Elgar was born on 2nd June 1857, during the reign of Queen Victoria.
- Elgar was born in Broadheath, Worcestershire.
- He first learnt to read music by studying the paper copies of music in his father's music shop.
- Apart from a few violin lessons, he first started playing music when he took over his father's job as the church organist.
- In 1889, he married his wife, Caroline Alice Roberts.
- In 1899, Elgar wrote an orchestral piece called the *Enigma Variations*. There is a main tune, and then a series of variations on the tune. Each variation describes one of his friends, but he did not say which friends they were: he only put their initials or nickname at the top of each variation. This is why the piece is an enigma (a "puzzle" or "secret"). People have managed to work out who each friend was, but the meaning of the main tune is still a puzzle. This music made Elgar very famous.
- Elgar's most popular piece is the first of his *Pomp and Circumstance Marches*. It has the tune which is sung to the words "Land of Hope and Glory" and the audience always join in singing it at the 'Last Night of the Proms' every year.
- Elgar was Professor of Music at Birmingham University for a while.
- He wrote many other famous pieces, including his cello concerto (Miss Teagle's favourite!)
- Elgar died 23rd February 1934 in Worcester.

Fun facts about Elgar

- Elgar's wife used to draw neat lines on paper with a ruler to make his music manuscript paper for him.
- Elgar didn't have his first big success until he was 42 years old (with 'Enigma Variations').
- In his younger days, Elgar was an enthusiastic cyclist. He named his favourite bike 'Mr. Phoebus'.