

E d w a r d E l g a r



Edward Elgar
Life Dates: 1857-1934
Nationality: English
Period: Late Romantic

“Look out for this man’s music; he has something to say and knows how to say it.”

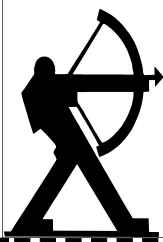
Hubert Parry (1848-1918)

He is known for his orchestral music and oratorios.

- Elgar’s father ran a music shop and was organist at St. George’s Catholic Church.
- Elgar taught himself various instruments at his father’s shop and also composing music.
- He brought many British works back into popularity with his works and awarded an honorary doctorate by Cambridge University in 1900.
- He wrote the elegiac *Cello Concerto* and three chamber works depicting his distress caused by World War I.
- Elgar died of cancer in 1934.

Enigma Variations IX: Nimrod (1899)

The story is told of how Elgar, returning home from giving violin lessons, sat down at the piano and, to unwind, began improvising. His wife, Alice said she like the tune and Elgar responded by suggesting how certain of their friends might play it. Out of that conversation grew the idea of the Enigma Variations, the work that helped Elgar become famous. It is a set of 14 variations on the original Enigma theme that Elgar composed. Each variation pictures a friend and, to help us identify them, Elgar gave each variation a short title relating to his subject. For most, he chose simply the subject’s initials, making this the more easily solved enigma attached to the variations. But the ninth and most widely loved variation he named **Nimrod**. The variation pictures his friend and mentor AJ Jaegar, Elgar’s closest musical friend, the man who edited his music and whose judgement he trusted more than anyone else’s. The piece is said to have developed from a conversation between Elgar and his friend Jaegar about their love of the slow movements in Beethoven piano sonatas.



This feeling of reverence & love (of Beethoven’s music) is the essence of the Nimrod variation. Jaegar’s name is German for ‘hunter,’ while Nimrod a legendary Biblical hunter. The Nimrod variation is a beautifully crafted slow movement scored for strings. This variation has achieved it’s own popularity. Its noble sincerity and loving intimacy have made it an appropriate commemorative piece, used for a variety of occasions from Weddings to Funerals.

■ Link up to learn more about Elgar!
<http://www.elgar.org>

Lesson Plan for *Enigma Variations*, IX: “Nimrod” (1899)

Standards Addressed and Performance Indicators:

Standard 3: Responding to and Analyzing Works of Art

Students will:

- through listening, tell what they liked or disliked about the two specific musical works, Elgar’s “Nimrod,” from the Enigma Variations and Beethoven’s “Adagio Cantabile” from Sonata No. 8, Op. 13 in C minor, “Pathétique,”
- learn about the basic elements of music such as melody, rhythm, harmony, dynamics, timbre, form, style, etc. in “Nimrod,”
- learn about the basic means by which instruments can alter pitch, loudness, duration and timbre in “Nimrod.”

Standard 4: Understanding the Cultural Contributions of the Arts

Students will:

- listen to music which portrays the emotion “LOVE” by well-known composers of classical concert music,
- learn about the cultural implications related to emotion of two musical compositions and the functions of that type of music within those cultures and our culture.

This is evident, for example, when students:

- listen to and compare the two musical compositions and identify elements (such as rhythm, harmony, melody & instrumentation) that they liked and disliked,
- listen to and compare the two pieces of music which set a mood and tell what mood (happy, sad, mad) they are feeling and tell what they liked/disliked about it.

Objectives:

Students will:

- use musical elements and instrumentation to draw conclusions and make generalizations about musical style and function.
- develop an understanding of the personal and cultural forces that shape artistic communication and how the arts in turn shape their culture.
- begin to generalize about the emotional purpose of the variety of music in their culture.

Materials:

- Stereo or boombox to play CD’s
- Background information on Elgar’s *Enigma Variations*
- Vocabulary Activity for musical elements
- Compare & Contrast double-bubble graphic organizer
- Scarves (optional)
- World map (optional)

Listening Repertoire:

- Recordings of Elgar's "Nimrod," from Enigma Variations, and the "Adagio Cantabile" movement from Beethoven's piano Sonata No. 8, Op. 13 in C minor, "Pathétique." Any other slow piece of music may be used.

Procedures:

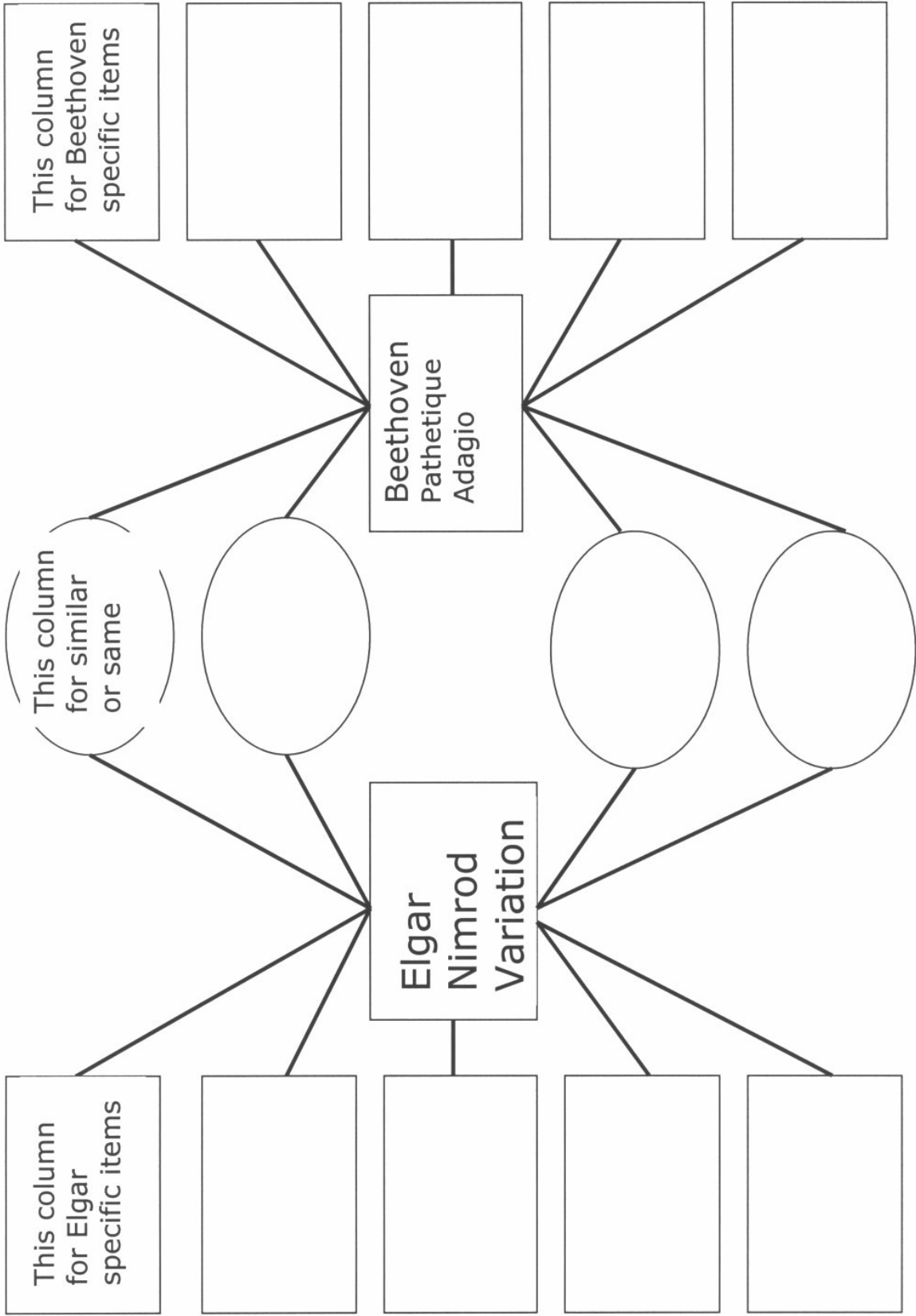
- Begin the lesson by reading the basic biographical information about Elgar aloud to your class.
- Read the background information about the Enigma Variations and the Nimrod variation.
- Pass out VOCABULARY CATEGORIZING activity & have students do activity, placing the correct terms under their correct headings.
- Play the recording of Elgar's Nimrod Variation from Enigma Variations.
- Have students write down other feelings or moods that it makes them feel, steering them toward LOVE.
- Play the recording (or play on piano) Beethoven's Adagio Cantabile from the Pathétique Sonata.
- Have students fill out the CONTRAST & COMPARE sheet using their VOCABULARY CATEGORIZING sheet for terms to go into the "bubbles."
- Discuss the similarities & differences in the pieces and that they were written almost exactly 100 years apart.

Lesson Extensions:

- Movement Activity-have students express the melodic line & flow of the music using scarves and continuous flow from low to high.
- Get someone show the class where England (Elgar's homeland) is in relation to New York state. Do the same for Germany (Beethoven's homeland).

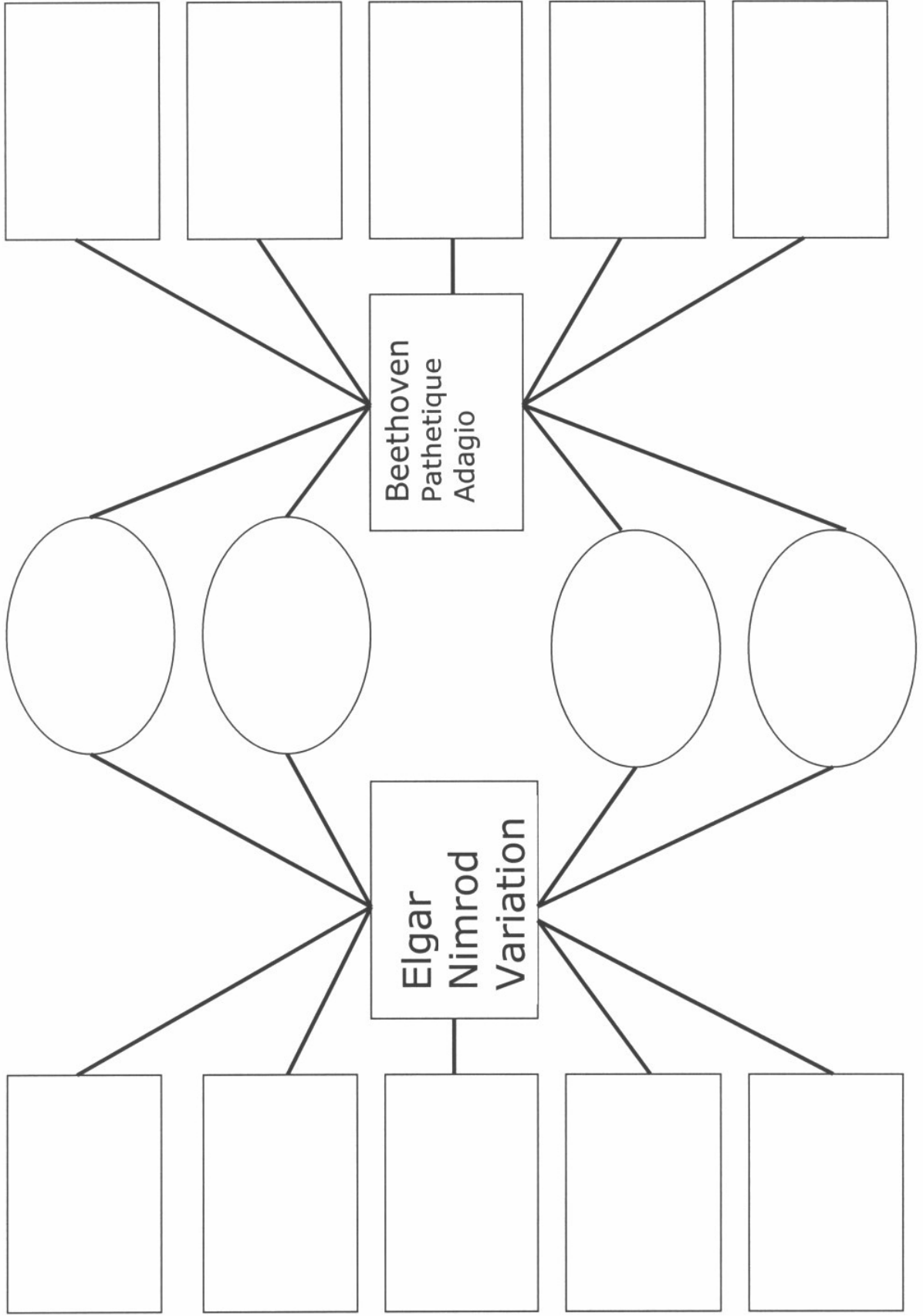
Compare

Name _____



Compare

Name _____



VOCABULARY CATEGORIZING

Use the words from the bottom of the page and place them under the correct terms in the appropriate column:

Instrumentation	Dynamics	Melodic line/Contour	Tempo	Mood
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----
-----	-----	-----	-----	-----

Adagio
 Noble
 Low to high
 Piano
 Love
 Arpeggios
 Orchestra

Slow
 Mezzo Piano
 Strings
 Melancholy
 Crescendo
 Piano
 Steps

VOCABULARY CATEGORIZING

Use the words from the bottom of the page and place them under the correct terms in the appropriate column:

Instrumentation	Dynamics	Melodic line/Contour	Tempo	Mood
Strings	Mezzo piano	Low to high	Adagio	Noble
Piano	Crescendo	Arpeggios	Slow	Melancholy
Orchestra	-----	Steps	Piano	Love

Adagio
Noble
Low to high
Piano
Love
Arpeggios
Orchestra

Slow
Mezzo Piano
Strings
Melancholy
Crescendo
Piano
Steps