

CHRISTMAS ^{with} the CLASSICS

A School-Time, Yule-Time Journey

*Great Composers
Great Classical Works
Great Itinerary:*

London, England
Paris, France

Vienna, Austria
Prague, Czechoslovakia

Bergen, Norway
Hometown, U. S. A.

Music Arranged by

John Carter

Lyrics, Narration and Activity Sheets by

Mary Kay Beall

Recording Orchestrated and Produced by

Alan Billingsley

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1. OPENING FANFARE

Adapted from
GEORGE F. HANDEL

Edward Elgar (1857-1934)

EDWARD ELGAR was born June 2, 1857, in Broadheath, Worcester, England. His father was a church organist and ran a music store. His mother was a poet, well-educated and a dreamer. There were seven children in ELGAR'S family and money was scarce, so when EDWARD decided that he was interested in music there was no money to send him to school. His father taught him what he could but, eventually, EDWARD had to teach himself. Judging from his eventual success, he must have done a good job of it.

EDWARD married late at the age of 31. His wife had been a long-time student of his and was seven years older than he. He taught school for a while but really didn't like being a schoolteacher. All he ever really wanted to do was write music.

Like many great artists and composers, ELGAR had to wait a good while to be recognized by the public. For 25 years he was ignored in London but when Richard Strauss referred to him as "the foremost English composer of the day" he was an overnight sensation and became the most talked about composer in England.

ELGAR'S first great success as a composer was a new march he wrote in 1901 which he called *Pomp and Circumstance*. He seemed to know that it was special before anyone else ever heard it. He said, "I've got a tune that will knock 'em flat. A tune like that comes once in a lifetime!" He was certainly right about the tune. At the London premiere people stood up and cheered when they heard it and the orchestra had to play it again and again. When King Edward VII heard it, he liked it too. He suggested that someone should write words for it so it could be sung. *Pomp and Circumstance* emerged later in the year as *Land of Hope and Glory* with words by Arthur Christopher Benson. It became a second national anthem in England. Soon after his success with this popular march, ELGAR was honored with knighthood and became SIR EDWARD ELGAR.

ELGAR made several trips to America to conduct his works and received honorary degrees from both Yale and the University of Pittsburgh. Although he was highly regarded in the United States, he missed his homeland and eventually returned to England. He received many other honors and was appointed conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra during the years 1911-1912.

His wife died in 1920 and ELGAR was devastated. She had devoted her life, as she put it, "to the care of a genius." After her death, he composed only from earlier sketches. It was as if his creative spirit was sorely dampened by the loss of his partner. ELGAR returned to Worcester where he lived until he died February 23, 1934.

EDWARD ELGAR'S success as a major composer is particularly remarkable since he was self-taught. In addition, he was the first great composer to realize the importance of the gramophone and to record much of his own music. He had an outstanding gift for melody and was a master at both vocal and instrumental writing. We remember him today mostly because his "once in a lifetime tune," *Pomp and Circumstance*, is played at many high school and college graduation ceremonies in the United States.

3. CHRISTMAS IN PAREE

("Toreador Song" from the opera CARMEN)

GEORGES BIZET

March, marcato throughout (♩ = ca. 92)



Far off in France, they cel - e-brate *No-el
Oh, can't you see it, me in my *ber-et



four love - ly weeks, It must be swell! All the fun be-gins De -
cruis - ing a - long the *Champs E - ly - sées? *"Bon - jour!" No-el! I'd



cem - ber Six, they say, On St Nick's feast - ing day.
call to *mes a - mis. They'd call back to me, *"Oui! Oui!"



Oh, how I'd love to be _____ in gay Par - ee,
Then in some French ca - fé _____ on Christ-mas Day,



light-ing the Christ - mas tree.
I'd think of Georges Bi - zet!

*VERSE 1

"Noel" (Noh-well) — The Christmas Season

*VERSE 2

"beret" (bear-ay) — a French cap

"Champs-Elysées" (Shahmps-eh-lee-say) — a popular avenue in Paris

"Bonjour! Noel!" (Bohn-joor! Noh-well!) — Good Day! Merry Christmas!

"mes amis" (mays ah-mee) — my friends

"Oui! Oui!" (Wee! Wee!) — Yes! Yes!/Same to you!