Edward Elgar – Variations Enigma; Pomp and Circumstance (1990)



01. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:01:31.22] 02. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:02:12.03] 03. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:00:47.02] 04. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:01:25.28] 05. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:00:30.30] 06. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:02:11.20] 07. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:01:22.10] 08. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:00:59.30] 09. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:01:50.07] 10. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:03:35.08] 11. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:02:37.07] 12. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:00:55.03] 13. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:02:36.70] 14. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:02:37.60] 15. Variations on an Original theme for Orchestra, OP. 36 [0:05:15.15] 16. Pomp and Circumstance Marches, OP. 39 No. 1 in D Major [0:05:56.57] 17. Pomp and Circumstance Marches, OP. 39 No. 2 in A Minor [0:05:07.53] 18. Pomp and Circumstance Marches, OP. 39 No. 3 in C Minor [0:05:27.52] 19. Pomp and Circumstance Marches, OP. 39 No. 4 in G Major [0:05:24.00] 20. Pomp and Circumstance Marches, OP. 39 No. 5 in C Major [0:05:56.13] London Philharmonic Orchestra Daniel Barenboim - conductor (CBS Masterworks – Great Performances 91)

Barenboim's tempi in the Pomp and Circumstance Marches are curiously fast. (Incidentally I should perhaps mention that Boosey and Hawkes have recently published all five marches as a special limited edition at L500.) Were the recording itself richer and more expansive the brilliance of approach might be more successful, but as it is the result is rather dry and a similar lack of comparative bloom in the sound affects the Grown of India Suite adversely. Of course these recordings are modern and those who like the 'transatlantic' balance will not be disappointed, but compare Cockaigne against Barbirolli (ASD548, 11/63) or Boult (ASD2822, 9/72), both on HMV, to see how gloriously this music can expand when the engineering balance is more idiomatic in feeling. The finest performance here is that of the Enigma Variations, showing Barenboim on peak form, with many imaginative touches, and here the sound is more atmospheric. --- gramophone.net

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Written by bluesever Wednesday, 21 December 2011 09:50 - Last Updated Monday, 02 December 2013 15:13

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