Felix Mendelssohn’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream: Music of Two Worlds
Variation Playground

Skills/Learning Goals:
- Exploring musical characteristics of Mendelssohn’s “fairy music” and “human music”
- Creating improvised compositions in real time using Mendelssohn’s musical ideas

Big Idea:
Musical themes can be transformed using contrasting musical characteristics.

Preparing for the Game:
Assure that computers have strong internet connections and good sound quality. Try the game yourself ahead of time, so that you can help guide students. The Variation Playground is designed to be intuitive, but specific instructions are always available by clicking the (?) button at the top of the screen, and then the […] icon to the right.

How to Use this Video:
Students may play the game individually, in pairs, or in small groups at their desks or in a computer lab. Or, a whole class can play in front of a large monitor: call on individual students to guide “Puck” – the pulsing blue dot – to improvise short compositions. Listen to each work created by clicking on its visual representation in the tray at the bottom of the screen. Discuss outcomes and make new pieces with increasing intentionality. An almost infinite number of outcomes are possible in this Variation Playground.

When a session is complete, it can be shared with anyone via a unique URL, by clicking the ↩ button at the top of the screen. In order to protect children’s privacy, links should be shared only with trusted family and friends, or else anonymously.