

What a Classic!

Listening Resource Booklet



Name _____

The Baroque Era (1600 – 1750)

The music, art, architecture and literature of the 17th and early 18th centuries is usually referred to as “baroque”, a term which now implies ornate design, magnificent effects, dramatic contrasts and an overall theatrical quality. The period was marked by the rise in importance of instrumental music, the birth of the modern orchestra and the beginnings of large vocal forms such as opera and oratorio. The leading baroque composers were Bach, Vivaldi and Handel.

Characteristics of baroque music:

- ♪ Melody: one melodic idea spun out throughout the work with frequent use of sequences
- ♪ Rhythm: forward rhythmic drive with continuous movement
- ♪ Tonality: use of major and minor keys; modulation to related keys
- ♪ Texture: frequently polyphonic; imitation
- ♪ Timbre: new violin family, harpsichord, organ
- ♪ Dynamics: terraced dynamics (contrasting levels or blocks of sound); no crescendos or diminuendos
- ♪ Forms: fugue, ritornello



Baroque Listening Example 1 - "Spring" from *The Four Seasons*, first movement (Vivaldi)

Antonio Vivaldi's most popular work is undoubtedly "Spring", one of the set of four concertos written for solo violin and small string orchestra, known as *The Four Seasons*, published in 1724. Each concerto is really a piece of **program music** describing the sights and sounds of one of the four seasons of the year.

The first concerto, "Spring", contains images of singing birds, murmuring breezes and sudden storms with thunder, lightning and rain, all of which are indicated in the corresponding places above the score. The work is written for solo violin (called 'Violino principale' in the score), first and second violins, violas, and cello, bass and harpsichord, known as the **basso continuo**.

A **basso continuo** is a bass line in baroque music played by a low stringed or wind instrument with a keyboard filling in the chords, which are indicated by numbers above or below the music.

Like most concertos, "Spring" comprises three movements: fast, slow, fast. The first movement, Allegro (lively and fast), is written in **ritornello form**. In this form, developed in the baroque period, the opening section, called the **ritornello** (meaning 'returned to'), returns wholly or in part at times during the piece. The ritornello is always played by the full group, called "tutti" in the score.

Different sections, known as **episodes**, are heard between appearances of the ritornello. These episodes provide contrasting textures and levels of sounds that create the typical baroque **terraced dynamics**.

The ritornello theme, written in G major, is given below. Become familiar with it so that you can recognise when ritornello sections occur between the episodes.

The musical score for the ritornello theme is presented in four staves. The first staff begins with a forte (*f*) dynamic and concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic. The second staff starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and ends with a forte (*f*) dynamic. The third staff begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic and features a trill (*tr*) on the final note. The fourth staff starts with a piano (*p*) dynamic and also concludes with a trill (*tr*) on the final note. The music is written in G major and common time.

Listen to the first movement of “Spring”, following along with the score.

Listen again, and this time, fill in the following listening guide.

	Ritornello 1	Episode 1	Ritornello 2
Bar numbers?			
What is the key?			
What is the programmatic idea?			
How are musical elements used to portray this idea? (Think about pitch, rhythm, texture, dynamics and ornamentation.)			

	Episode 2	Ritornello 3	Episode 3
Bar numbers?			
What is the key?			
What is the programmatic idea?			
How are musical elements used to portray this idea? (Think about pitch, rhythm, texture, dynamics and ornamentation.)			

	Ritornello 4	Episode 4	Ritornello 5
Bar numbers?			
What is the key?			
What is the programmatic idea?			
How are musical elements used to portray this idea? (Think about pitch, rhythm, texture, dynamics and ornamentation.)			

	Episode 5	Ritornello 6
Bar numbers?		
What is the key?		
What is the programmatic idea?		
How are musical elements used to portray this idea? (Think about pitch, rhythm, texture, dynamics and ornamentation.)		

Baroque Listening Example 2 – “Hallelujah Chorus”

from *Messiah* (Handel)

George Frederic Handel was the greatest composer of **oratorios** in the baroque period.

An oratorio is a large work based on a religious theme written for choir, solo singers and orchestra. Unlike an opera, it is not acted or performed with costumes and sets, but is sung in a church or a concert hall.


Handel's oratorio *Messiah* (1741) is in three parts. The first part deals with biblical prophecies of the birth of Jesus; the second part deals with Jesus's sufferings, death and resurrection; and the third part refers to the second coming of Christ and redemption through faith.

The “Hallelujah Chorus”, the most famous of all oratorio choruses, occurs at the end of Part 2. It is a triumphant song of praise for Christ's resurrection. At the first London performance in 1743, King George II was so moved by the chorus that he stood up, prompting the audience to stand also. This established the tradition of standing for this chorus. The music features the use of monophonic, polyphonic and homophonic textures for dramatic expression.

Monophonic Texture: *Texture consisting of one line of music heard by itself, including singing or playing in unison or in octaves*

Polyphonic Texture: *two or more melodic lines heard together but moving independently*

Homophonic Texture: *Texture involving one melodic line heard against a chordal accompaniment; this also includes block chords where all parts have the same rhythm*

It has a recurring motive:  on the word “Hallelujah”, which helps to unify the piece (that is, hold the sections together).

Listen to the Hallelujah Chorus, following the vocal score, and paying attention to the composer's use of **texture** for dramatic purposes. Note: the orchestral parts have been reduced to a piano score, to save space.



Listen again, and answer the following questions.

1. What are the four voice types that are used in this chorus? Write them from lowest to highest, and state whether they are male or female voices.

2. What is the key of the music?

3. What texture is used in the following bars:

a) Bars 1 - 16 _____

b) Bars 17 - 19 _____

c) Bars 22 - 32 _____

d) Bars 34 - 41 _____

4. Which voices sing the melody in bars 41 - 43? _____

What happens to this melody in bars 44 - 51? And what texture is heard here?

5. What is the basic texture of the final section, bars 51 - 95?

6. What is the key of the music in bars 61 - 63 and bars 64 - 66?

7. What reason do YOU think Handel used monophonic and homophonic texture in the Hallelujah Chorus?

8. What reason do you think that Handel used polyphonic texture in the Hallelujah Chorus?



The Classical Period (1750-1825)

In the second half of the 18th century, public tastes in art, literature and architecture changed from the grandiose to the less ornate, more balanced forms reminiscent of ancient Greece and Rome. In music this was reflected in a shift away from the complex polyphony of the baroque to simpler, homophonic music in which emotional restraint, balance and clear-cut forms prevailed. Melodies were tuneful, often folk-like, with little or no ornamentation. The period was marked by the emergence of the symphony orchestra, the string quartet and the development of important forms such as the symphony and the solo concerto. The most important composers were Mozart, Haydn and Beethoven.

Common characteristics of classical music:

- ♪ Melody: short, balanced four-bar phrases; two or more contrasting themes in a movement
- ♪ Rhythm: clearly defined and regular
- ♪ Tonality: contrast of tonic and dominant keys; modulation to a range of keys
- ♪ Texture: homophonic
- ♪ Timbre: fortepiano (the term used for the early piano that had a smaller range, a lighter touch and softer volume than the modern piano), string quartet and symphony orchestra
- ♪ Dynamics: wide range of dynamic levels including crescendo and diminuendo
- ♪ Form: sonata form



Classical Listening Example – Symphony No. 94, “Surprise”

Second Movement (Haydn)

The four-movement **symphony** was the most important large instrumental form of the classical period.

*A **symphony** is a large instrumental work for orchestra, usually with four movements in different forms and contrasting keys and tempos.*

Its development went hand in hand with the development of the orchestra, which was standardised to include pairs of woodwind and brass instruments in addition to the strings. It gave composers like Haydn a new medium with a wealth of instrumental timbres and dynamics to express the contrasting ideas and moods of classical period music.

One of Haydn’s most popular orchestral works is the “Surprise Symphony”, written in 1792. The nickname refers to the sudden fortissimo chord that occurs unexpectedly in the second movement. The symphony is scored for a small classical orchestra without clarinets. The second movement is in **Theme and Variations** form, whereby Haydn varies the theme melody, as well as all other musical elements.

***Theme and Variations** is a musical form in which a simple harmonised theme is stated then restated with variation to one or more of its musical elements.*

The theme melody from the Surprise Symphony, 2nd movement, is given below. Become familiar with this theme.

Andante

9

17

21

Listen to the movement as you follow along with the score. Then answer the following questions about the theme and each variation.

Theme (bars 1 – 32)

- 1) What is the key? _____
- 2) What is the form? Allocate letters (A, B etc) to bar numbers to demonstrate your answer.

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- 3) Which instruments play the theme melody? _____
 - 4) How are bars 25 – 32 different from bars 17 – 24 in pitch, timbre and texture?

Variation 1 (bars 33 – 48)

- 5) Which instruments play the theme melody? _____
- 6) What is heard against the theme melody? _____

Variation 2 (bars 49 – 74)

- 7) What is the key? _____
- 8) To which key does the music modulate at the end of the A section? What relation is this to the key used at the beginning of the variation?

-
- 9) Which instruments play the theme melody throughout the A section?
-

10) Which of the following are features of the B section?

a) imitation

b) countermelody

c) sequences

Variation 3 (bars 75 – 106)

11) What is the key? _____

12) Which instruments play the varied theme melody for the first A Section?

13) How has the theme melody been varied?

14) Which instruments play the theme melody for the remainder of the variation?

15) What is heard against the theme melody?

Variation 4 (bars 107 – 138)

16) How has the theme been varied in the first A section? Refer to pitch, timbre, texture, dynamics and rhythm.

17) What is heard after this variation (commencing at bar 139)?

Classical Score Reading Example – Minuet

from *Don Giovanni* (Mozart)

Study the music of the 'Minuet' from *Don Giovanni* and then answer the questions below.

Andante

6

12

1) Name the form of the music and label the music with letters to represent this.

2) Name the key of the music and give two reasons to justify your answer.

3) On the staff below, write the scale to which this piece belongs. Use a key signature and mark the semitones with slurs. Use the clef of your choice.

4) Name the key to which the music modulates in bars 5 – 8 and give a reason to justify your answer.

5) Explain how you know the music has returned to the tonic key at bar 9.

6) Describe the contour of the melody. Is it mainly angular or mainly smooth?

7) Give the meaning of the tempo indication at the beginning of the piece.

8) What is a minuet? _____



The Romantic Period (1825 – 1900)

The romantic period represented a reaction against the balance, order and emotional restraint of the classical period. Born out of the social turmoil caused by the industrial and French revolutions, romanticism stressed the importance of freedom, individuality and free expression of emotions.

The artists, writers and composers of this period drew inspiration from the past, the natural and the supernatural world, and the exotic and the fantastic, and explored a wide range of emotions, especially love and longing. This period also saw the rise of nationalism as the people in the different countries of Europe became more aware of their history and national character. Nationalist composers were inspired by their country's folk music, often using folk melodies and traditional dance forms in their compositions. Some of the leading romantic composers were Chopin, Wagner and Tchaikovsky.

Common characteristics of romantic music:

- ♪ Melody: singing or lyrical; irregular phrase lengths
- ♪ Rhythm: not clearly defined; use of rubato (a flexibility in the rhythm by speeding up or slowing down for expressive purposes)
- ♪ Harmony: much use of chromatic chords (containing notes foreign to the key) and dissonance for colour and mood
- ♪ Pitch: expanded range in upper and lower registers of the piano and orchestra
- ♪ Texture: homophonic
- ♪ Timbre: grand piano, use of pedal to add richness; new instruments such as the cor anglais, lower brass, celeste and other percussion added to the orchestra
- ♪ Dynamics: wide range of levels



Romantic Listening Example 1 – *The Moldau*

(Smetana)

The Moldau is the best known of Smetana's set of six symphonic poems called *Ma Vlast (My Country)* that were written between 1874 and 1879.

A symphonic poem is a programmatic orchestral composition with a number of different descriptive sections.

The work depicts the long journey of the river Moldau through the Czech Republic as it flows from its source to its junction with the river Elbe. Like much of Smetana's music it has a strong Czech flavour from the use of folk-like tunes and rhythms.

The work begins by depicting two bubbling springs, the first warm and the second cool. These join to form a stream and then a river that flows through meadows and forests, past a hunt and a peasant wedding. At night, nymphs (beautiful supernatural forest maidens) dance on the waters in the moonlight and the river flows past medieval castles and ruins. It reaches the turbulent St Johns rapids and emerges majestically. After flowing past an ancient fortress in Prague, it disappears into the distance to join the river Elbe. Themes for most of these programmatic ideas are given separately.

Listen to the work and answer the following questions relating to the various sections. For some of these questions you will need to refer to the particular themes in the score pages.

The Springs

1) What musical elements depict the bubbling springs?

2) What aspects of the music suggest the warm spring?

3) Conversely, what aspects of the music suggest the cool spring?

The River

4) What is the key of the music?

5) What is the contour of the melody? Suggest a reason for the composer using this contour.

Forest; hunt

6) Which instrumental family dominates the hunt section? Why is the use of this family appropriate?

7) How many notes of different letter names are used in the first eight bars of the hunt theme? Name these notes. What do you notice about these particular notes?

8) Which of the following best describes the hunt theme?

a) smooth

b) triadic

c) step-wise

Peasants' Wedding

9) Is the key of this section E minor or G major? Give a reason to justify your answer.

10) What aspects of the music make this sound like a traditional country dance?

11) What is the mood of the music?

Moonlight: Nymphs' Dance

12) What is the key of the music?

13) Which Italian words are used to indicate that the violins are muted in this section? What is the effect of the mutes on the string sound?

14) What sign is used to indicate that the violins are playing one octave higher than they are written?

15) Which instruments suggest the idea of moonlight? What aspects of the music suit this programmatic idea?

16) Which instruments suggest the idea of nymphs dancing? What aspect of the music suggests this programmatic idea?

The Old Castles

17) Which instrumental family plays the theme?

18) What aspects of the music suit the programmatic idea?

19) Which theme is heard at the end of this section?

St John's Rapids

20) How does the composer depict the programmatic idea with each of the following musical elements?

Dynamics	Pitch	Texture	Duration of Notes

21) Which percussion instruments dominate in this section?

22) Which high-pitched instrument adds to the drama?

The Moldau flows broadly along

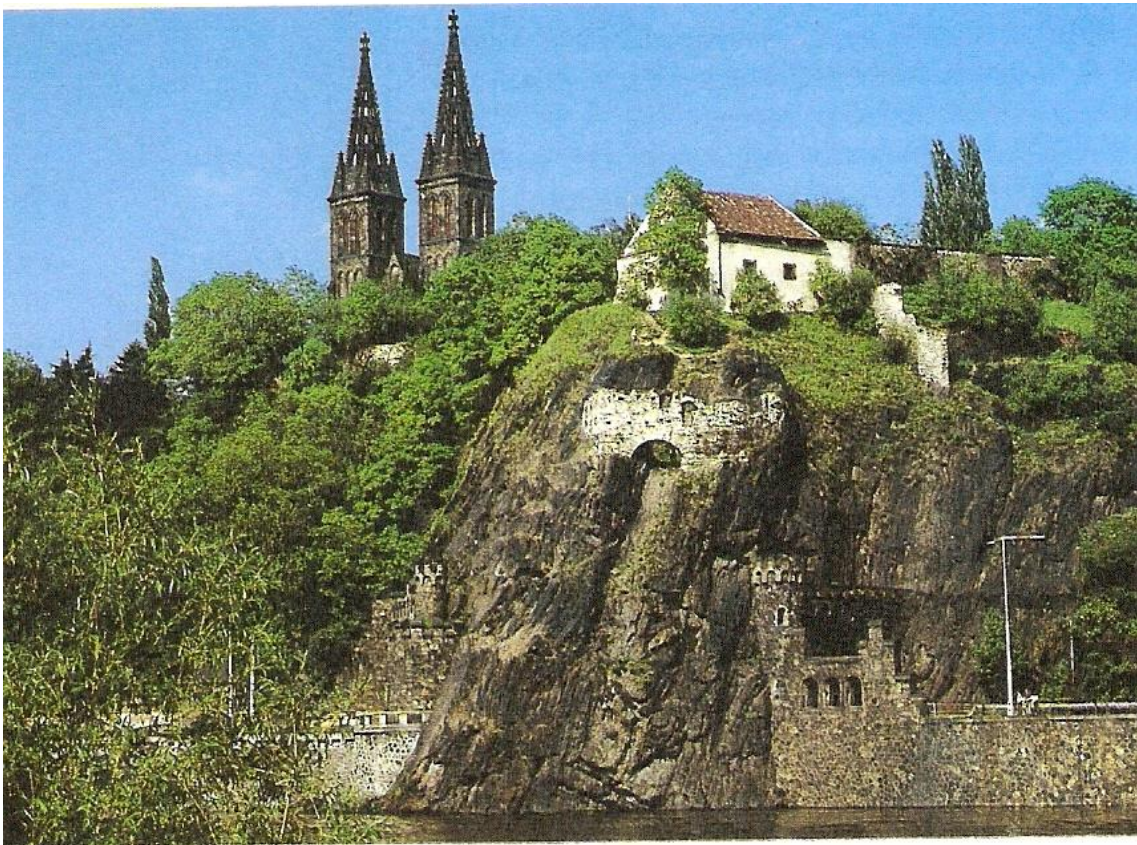
23) What is the key of the music? How is this key different from that of the river theme heard earlier?

Vysehrad (the ancient fortress)

24) What aspect of the music suggests the thick walls of the fortress?

25) How does the rhythm of the Vysehrad theme differ from that of the river theme? Suggest a reason for the change.

26) How does the composer depict the river flowing away into the distance?



Romantic Listening Example 2 – *Etude Melody*

Chopin

Chopin's E major etude, Opus 10, Number 3, is a good example of a romantic piano piece with its lyrical melody, chromatic harmonies and contrasts of dynamics and mood. This ternary-form piece is played in a typical romantic style with great expression and much rubato. The piece is technically challenging and requires great pianistic skill.

Listen to the piece as you follow the score. Compare and contrast the musical features of the A and B sections in the table below.

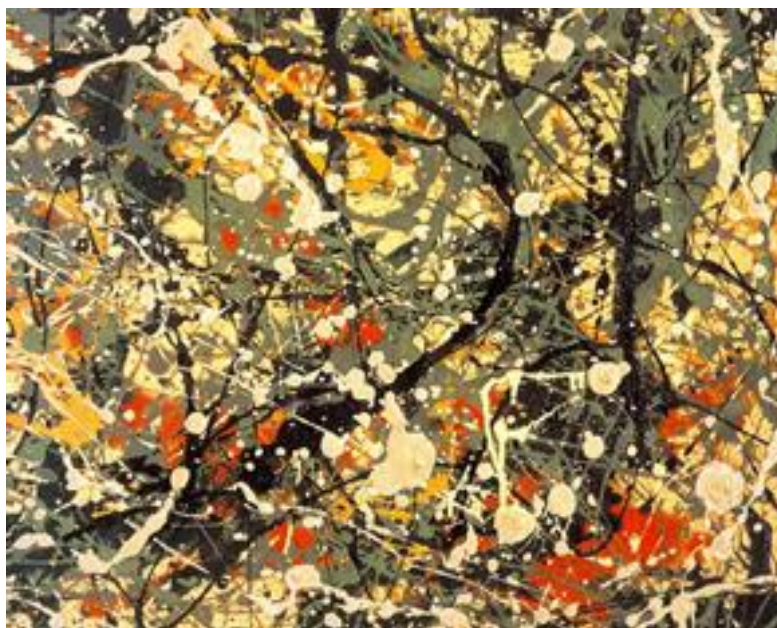
	Section A	Section B
Tempo		
Rhythm		
Pitch		
Melodic Contour		
Use of Chromaticism		
Dynamics		
Mood		

The 20th Century

In the 20th century, great changes occurred in both compositional techniques and compositional styles. Like the abstract artists of the early 20th century, some composers totally broke with the past and used revolutionary new styles, while some returned to styles of past eras to which they added 20th century characteristics. Other composers continued development from the romantic period, while still others absorbed influences from different types of music, such as popular, ethnic and electronic, to create new hybrid styles. It is therefore difficult to make comments about characteristics that would apply to 20th century music in general. However, most 20th century composers have explored new instrumental timbres and harmonic colours, especially discordant harmony or dissonance, and employed a free use of rhythm.

Some characteristics of 20th Century Music

- ♪ Rhythm: use of ostinatos and polyrhythms, complex time signatures and mixed metres
- ♪ Harmony: use of dissonant chords; fundamental pedal notes (very low pedal notes establishing the tonality)
- ♪ Tonality: new concepts of tonal centres; new scales; free use of tonality
- ♪ Melody: may be angular and fragmented and based on new scales
- ♪ Timbre: use of new and unusual instruments, including electronic; unconventional combinations of instruments; new ways of using instruments
- ♪ Pitch: use of extreme registers
- ♪ Dynamics: very wide range of levels



20th Century Listening Example 1 – “On The Trail”

from *Grand Canyon Suite* (Grofé)

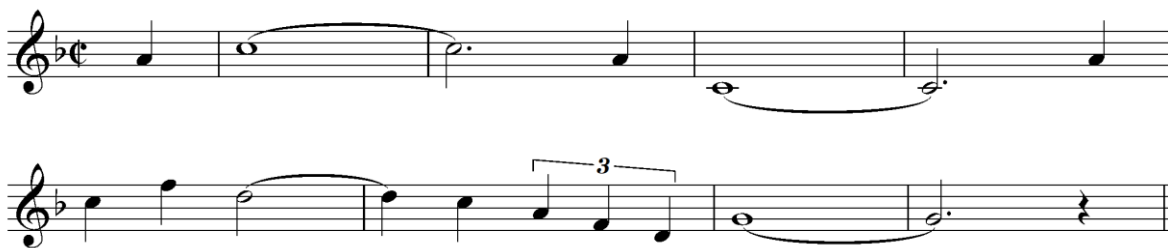
The Grand Canyon Suite is made up of five movements. It was completed in 1931 for a 20-piece band and revised two years later as an orchestral suite. The work is programmatic, written to depict the changing moods, colours, sights and sounds of a day in the Grand Canyon. Grofé also captures the grandeur and beauty of the canyon and the Colorado River that flows through it.

‘On the Trail’, the 3rd movement of the suite, portrays a cowboy riding a sometimes lazy and noisy mule along steep and bumpy canyon trails. The mule and the cowboy have separate musical themes:

Mule theme



Cowboy theme



Learn each theme so that you will recognise them whenever they occur in the music. “On the Trail” has an introduction, followed by six sections, most of which use one or both of the themes.

Listen to the work, and answer the following questions for each section.

Introduction

- 1) What impression is created in the opening bars of the music?

- 2) Which solo instrument is heard? What sound is this instrument trying to imitate?

3) Which terms are used for the three string effects heard in this section?

Section 1

4) How would you describe the metre, rhythm and articulation of the mule theme? Select the correct alternative from each of the following pairs.

- a) Metre: duple / triple
- b) Rhythm: smooth / jerky
- c) Articulation: legato / staccato

5) Which instrument plays the mule theme?

6) Which percussion instruments accompany the theme? What do they represent?

7) What happens to the tempo towards the end of this section. Give an Italian word to describe this change.

8) Which bass instrument then plays part of the mule theme by itself?

Section 2

9) How are the themes presented? What texture is produced as a result?

10) Which instrument plays the mule theme?

11) Which instrument plays the cowboy theme?

12) In what ways is the cowboy theme different from the mule theme in this section?

Section 3

13) Which of the themes is heard here?

14) Which instruments are heard in this section?

15) What aspects of the music are different from those of earlier sections? What do you think the composer is trying to suggest?

Section 4

16) Which of the themes predominates here?

17) Which instruments play the mule theme?

18) Which instruments play the cowboy theme?

19) What percussion instruments are heard at the end of this section?

Section 5

20) Which solo instrument is heard here? To which orchestral family does it belong?

21) What impression do you think the composer is trying to create by using this instrument?

22) On which theme is this section based?

Section 6

23) What string effect is heard at the start of this section?

24) On which theme is this section based?

25) What pitch effect is heard in the low strings just before the end?

26) In what ways does this section differ from the preceding sections?



20th Century Listening Example 2 – “Mars, the Bringer of War”

from *The Planets* (Holst)

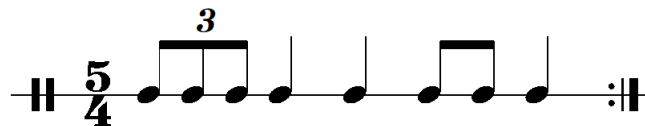
The Planets suite by Holst, completed in 1917, is a large **post-romantic** orchestral work of seven movements, based on the extra-musical ideas of the astrological significance of the planets.

*The term **post-romantic** is applied to compositions of the 20th century that continue in the 19th century style with music that has an emotional, philosophical or programmatic basis and uses a large orchestra.*

The composer’s interest in astrology and mythology helped him to create a powerful and dramatic composition that has remained one of the most performed works by a 20th-century English composer. The opening movement, the terrifying and bleak ‘Mars, the Bringer of War’, has been used many times in science fiction films and war documentaries. Many commentators have suggested that the piece, written during the horrors of World War 1, depicts a military scene – the tramp of advancing soldiers, the rumble of tanks and the explosion of bombs.

The movement is scored for a huge orchestra, providing Holst with a vast palette of colours to paint his dark vision of warfare. He used many special effects, including: *col legno* strings (playing with the wood of the bow) for a stark, percussive sound; wooden sticks on the timpani for a sharp, dry sound; and gong rolls, providing an underlying rumble.

‘Mars, the Bringer of War’ has a tonal centre of C and commences on a repeated G, the dominant. It is written in the complex metre $\frac{5}{4}$ and features the following rhythmic ostinato that is heard for much of the excerpt:



The composer also uses many other elements, especially dissonance, to depict the relentless violence of war.

Listen to the work, and answer the following questions.

- 1) Why did the composer use a 5/4 time signature? What effect was he trying to create?

- 2) What idea is suggested by the ostinato pattern?

9) Why is dissonance such an important aspect of the music? What is the composer trying to communicate?

