

Knowledge Organiser: **MARS THE BRINGER OF WAR** *- Gustav Holst*

**Key Vocabulary**

**Dynamics –** volume of a sound or note

**Tempo –** the speed at which a piece of music is played

**Ostinato –** a repeated short phrase

**Motif –** a short melodic or rhythmic idea

**Transposition –** Moving a musical idea to a lower or higher pitch

**Tutti –** Everybody plays altogether

**Consonant –** Sounds that are pleasing

**Dissonant** – Sounds that clash or are harsh

**About the piece**

**Title:** “Mars Bringer Of Wa ”  **Composer**: Gustav Holst

**Facts/info**: Gustav Holst was an English composer best known for his orchestral suite: “The Planets”. A suite is a group of individual pieces. There are seven pieces in “The Planets” and “Mars” is the first one.

The ancient Romans believed that Mars was the god of war. Holst composed this piece of music in anticipation of the outbreak of World War 1.

It is a march but an unusual one. Normally a march has 4 beats in a bar so that you can say, “ left, right, left, right”. BUT Mars has 5 beats in a bar, which makes it quite tricky to march to!

**Listen out for:**

* The opening harps
* Strings playing with the wood of the bow
* Timpani using very hard headed sticks
* The gong
* Solo from the euphonium



Gustavus Theodore von Holst was born in Cheltenham on 21st September 1874.

After studying, Gustav Holst made a living in orchestras as a rehearsal pianist before becoming a teacher of music. Holst liked to encourage those who enjoyed singing and

composed work

especially for his

students.

**1874-1934**

