THE PLANETS:  
Listening and Composition Lesson for Music Classrooms  

Student population: 5th grade beginning orchestra students  

Part 1: Listening  

Objective: Students will listen to Holst’s The Planets and record what they hear and what the music reminds them of.  

Plan:  
- Give each student a “Planets: Listening” chart. Play 30-60 seconds from each movement of The Planets and invite students to record a) what they hear and b) what it reminds them of.  
- Have students discuss first with a partner or small group and then as a large group what they heard.  

Assessment:  
- Just for fun: quiz students by replaying the recordings out of order and see if they can identify each movement!  

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Part 2: Composition  

Objective: Students will compose a new movement inspired by Holst’s The Planets.  

Plan:  
- Give each student (or pair of students) a “Planets: Composition” worksheet and go over the prompts.  
- Each student (or pair of students) will choose:  
  - Title  
  - Time signature  
  - Dynamic  
  - ...and compose two measures of melody with pitches and rhythms they choose. They will then color a picture of what their planet looks like.  
- Invite students to write a short story about their planet.  
- Share out: students will share and/or perform their composition for the class.  

Assessment: next page
### Assessment Rubric

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Emerging</th>
<th>Approaches</th>
<th>Meets</th>
<th>Exceeds</th>
<th>Standard</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Novice    | Composed less than two measures of music, used few of the required musical elements, had multiple rhythmic inaccuracies. | Composed two measures of melodic and rhythmic ideas, but were missing some of the required musical elements or had rhythmic inaccuracies. | Composed two measures of melodic and rhythmic ideas with the required musical elements. | Composed two measures of melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.  
**MU:Cr1.1.E.5a** | Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.  
**MU:Cr1.1.E.5a** |

| Novice    | Identified expressive qualities in fewer than two movements and made no connections to their own composition. | Identified expressive qualities in multiple movements and made a connection to their own composition. | Identified expressive qualities in all movements and applied at least one to their own composition. | Identified multiple expressive qualities in all movements and then applied those elements in their own composition. | Identify expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music that can be demonstrated through prepared and improvised performances.  
**MU:Pr4.3.E.5a** |

### Aligned Standard

- **Compose and improvise melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives that reflect characteristic(s) of music or text(s) studied in rehearsal.**  
  **MU:Cr1.1.E.5a**

- Share personally-developed melodic and rhythmic ideas or motives – individually or as an ensemble – that demonstrate understanding of characteristics.  
  **MU:Cr3.2.E.5a**

- **Identify expressive qualities in a varied repertoire of music that can be demonstrated through prepared and improvised performances.**  
  **MU:Pr4.3.E.5a**

- Identify interpretations of the expressive intent and meaning of musical works, referring to the elements of music, contexts, and (when appropriate) the setting of the text.  
  **MU:Re8.1.E.5a**

- Exhibit music literacy by speaking and writing about music; interacting with subject-specific words, symbols, and notation; and presenting musical concepts through movement, gestures, or other non-verbal means.  
  **MU:Cn10.1.E.5a-WI**

- Demonstrate understanding of the relationship between music and the other arts or subject areas, including musical and extra-musical considerations.  
  **MU:Cn11.1.E.5b-WI**

### Point in Lesson

- Students will compose melodic and rhythmic ideas relating to characteristics found in Holst’s *The Planets*.

- Students will share their final projects with their classmates.

- Students will listen to selections from each movement of *The Planets* and identify expressive and musical qualities.

- Students will relate the title of each movement to what they hear, referring to which musical and expressive qualities they hear.

- Students will utilize music vocabulary, elements and notation, and will present musical concepts through performing and presenting their composition.

- Students will make connections between what they hear and what it reminds them of, *The Planets* and outer space, and a drawing they create of their planet.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>PLANET</th>
<th>I HEAR...</th>
<th>IT REMINDS ME OF...</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Mars: Bringer of War</td>
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<td>Venus: Bringer of Peace</td>
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<td>Mercury: Winged Messenger</td>
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<td>Jupiter: Bringer of Jollity</td>
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<td>Saturn: Bringer of Old Age</td>
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<td>Uranus: the Magician</td>
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<td>Neptune: the Mystic</td>
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Gustav Holst composed “The Planets” in 1916. He wrote one song (or movement) for each planet: Mars, Venus, Mercury, Jupiter, Saturn, Uranus and Neptune. Now it’s your turn to finish what Holst started!

1. Name your planet:

2. Compose 2 measures:
   - Draw your clef
   - Choose a time signature
   - You may use quarter notes, half notes, and eighth notes (you may also use rests)
   - Choose at least one dynamic (forte or piano)
   - Choose one element you heard in the REAL “Planets” and incorporate it into your composition
   - You may also add ONE sound effect

3. Draw and color your planet!

4. On the back of this paper, write one paragraph describing what your planet is like.