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### Mars, Bringer of War: Concept Statement

The one word that immediately comes to mind when listening to this piece is violence. I get the feeling that this piece represents a never-ending conflict that has its own ups and downs. When listening to it, I always think that the music fits well with a war setting, especially the beginning where everything is in perfect rhythm, just like soldiers marching in formation.

It all starts with an army marching its troops and equipment down a country road, ready to hit their next target. Everyone is serious. Suddenly, the enemy is spotted over the hill. Chaos ensues as the troops split and get to their posts in order to defend their position (Holst 1:11). As the tone changes, the battle begins (Holst 1:23). Bullets fly. There is the occasional sound of an explosion in the distance. However, through their efforts, the troops manage to hold back the enemy long enough for them to get a couple minutes of quiet time (Holst 2:20). Relief fills the air as they get some breathing time. There is a male soldier (the protagonist) having a few laughs with his girlfriend (also a soldier), which he met a couple of years ago on another army mission. He has had many feelings about his girlfriend, and after what just happened, he gains the confidence to ask her the question he wanted to ask since the start of their relationship. He shares his feelings with her and ends up asking her to marry him in a rare burst of joy despite the challenges facing them (Holst 2:50). As they hug, a colleague spots the enemy reappearing. Once again, chaos ensues as this heart-filled moment is shattered by waves of gunfire (Holst 3:00). As this attack is occurring, the enemy throws a grenade at our protagonist and his group. It lands

next to them and explodes, creating a big cloud of dirt and debris (Holst 3:18). The group is knocked out as a result of the explosion.

A couple minutes later, some people in the group, including the protagonist and his girlfriend, regain consciousness. They don't have time to mourn the many losses of their colleagues, they need to escape the enemy (Holst 3:30). They are all scared and shaken as they hatch a plan to get to safety. Once again, the survivors are spotted by the enemy and gunfire continues. They stop, grab weapons from the dead, and start to fire back to save themselves (Holst 4:35). A break occurs in the battle, where the protagonist says his final goodbyes to his girlfriend, expecting to be killed in combat by the sea of enemies just a couple of feet away from them. There is a clear sense of urgency in this part as people are scared of what's happening around them. (Holst 5:30). As the battle continues, the group gains some small victories. They share words of encouragement to make it through the moment (Holst 6:02). Finally, after a battle lasting a couple of minutes, the group manages to push back the enemy to the trees. They celebrate an unanticipated victory (Holst 6:36). Unfortunately, this is when the protagonist sees a barrage of missiles quickly approaching their location (Holst 7:02). The missiles make huge explosions that rock around the protagonist. Once they stop, the protagonist recomposes himself, only to realize that his girlfriend was the one killed in the attack. His heart fills with sorrow as the piece ends (Holst 7:35).

Going into this piece, I imagine the audience feeling scared because of the tense music. The audience has no idea what's about to happen due to the powerful tone of the bass instruments makes the piece powerful and intimidating. But there are points where the music breaks to more reassuring instruments. Throughout the piece, I want to make the audience feel hope for the characters even though there is little hope to go around. The ending is very

surprising, after a challenging victory, everything is destroyed, the hope, the optimism, and turned into a time of mourning and sadness. The overall theme I get from this piece is the idea of the effect of wars, even with it's ups and downs, the effects can be devastating to everyone involved, and that's a major idea I want to show with my design.

Works Cited

Gustav Holst. "Mars, Bringer of War" *Canvas*.

[https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2208688/files/138213732?module\\_item\\_id=36615011](https://psu.instructure.com/courses/2208688/files/138213732?module_item_id=36615011).