

Holst, The Planets

Lawrence University
Symphony Orchestra

Mark Dupere, conductor

Cantata

Phillip A. Swan, conductor

Sunday, November 5, 2017

3:00 p.m.

Lawrence Memorial Chapel



Please donate to **Music for Food** before leaving tonight!

What is **Music for Food**?

Music for Food believes both music and food are essential to human life and growth. Music has the power to call forth the best in us, inspiring awareness and action when artists and audiences work together to transform the ineffable into tangible and needed food resources.

Music for Food is a musician-led initiative for local hunger relief. Our concerts raise resources and awareness in the fight against hunger, empowering all musicians who wish to use their artistry to further social justice.

Donations of non-perishable food items or checks will be accepted at the door. All monetary donations are tax-deductible, and will be processed by the national office of **Music for Food**. 100% will be sent to the food pantry at St. Joseph's.

Each year the St. Joseph Food Program distributes thousands of pounds of food to those who are hungry in the Fox Valley. Lawrence is proud to help.

The Planets: Suite for Large Orchestra, op. 32

Mars, the Bringer of War

Venus, the Bringer of Peace

Mercury, the Winged Messenger

Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity

Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age

Uranus, the Magician

Neptune, the Mystic

Gustav Holst
(1874-1934)

Please join us for a reception in SH163 following the performance.

PROGRAM NOTES

The Planets

GUSTAV HOLST

Born: 1874, Cheltenham, England; Died: 1934, London

Composed: 1914-16

Premiered: September 29, 1918, Queen's Palace, London, Queen's Hall Orchestra and St. Paul's Girls School, Adrian Boult, conductor

Gustav Holst based his famous suite *The Planets* on the concept of astrology. Each of the individual movements is based on the influence of the planets on the psyche, with the exclusion of Earth. The planets are also not put in their natural order throughout the piece, but are rather put in groups that complement each other; for example, the opening movement, which portrays Mars as the bringer of war, is immediately followed by Venus, the bringer of peace, and so on. The under rehearsed September premier in the final months of the First World War was made possible through the support of Holst's friend, music patron H. Balfour Gardiner. Later, a public performance was given in London on February 27, 1919. The premier, though not playing all the movements at the composer's decision, was a success, and a century later *The Planets* remains the composer's most famous work.

The first movement, titled Mars, the Bringer of War, opens with a quiet but unsettled and ferocious march-like rhythm played by the strings (using a technique called *col legno*, which involves hitting the wood of the bow against the string) and percussion, before the low brass and bassoons play a dark, brooding theme. The entire orchestra begins a slow crescendo based upon repetitions of this melody, building up to the first of several massive climaxes bristling with unbridled dissonance. The trombones and horns introduce a second theme, before passing it on to the strings. This theme grows in intensity before erupting into a series of sharp, jagged chords, accompanying a solo that is traded off between the tenor tuba and trumpet. There is more thematic trading between the brass and strings that brings the music to yet another climax, ending in a sudden change in tempo and a dramatic, crashing chord from the entire orchestra that slowly fades into silence. This begins a slow, ominous interlude as the second theme appears at half tempo. The theme is shared throughout the strings, steadily building up before erupting into a thundering recapitulation of the opening rhythmic motif. At the very end, there is a flurry of activity in the strings and one final, enraged crescendo as each note is exhaustively emphasized, culminating in massive defeat.

As the chaos and adolescent ferocity of war fades, Venus, the Bringer of Peace, rises like a phoenix from the ashes. The simplicity and raw beauty of the second movement was a rarity for Holst, and was arguably never recaptured in his later compositions. Structured around various solo instruments, horn, violin, cello, and oboe, pay particular attention to melodies as they reemerge. Each restatement brings us further from the violence of the first movement, until we can finally relax into a dreamlike state as the celesta fades away.

Mercury, the trickster and prankster, foils this dreamlike spell, taking flight immediately, with fleet fragments nimbly rising upwards. The rapidity then settles into a more spoken quality, depicting the Winged Messenger – and again flipping back and forth in character as Mercury changes whimsically. Mercury’s message is an allusion to Morse code, with a long-short pattern, each repetition penetrating further into grandiosity and weight before returning to the agility and lightness of the opening, with scales darting and fast figurations scurrying about the orchestra. Holst said that this movement reflected the “process of human thought,” a continuous journey of expeditious searching and arrival.

The fourth movement, titled Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity, is a rondo that is by far the most lively and joyous movement in the entire suite. It begins suddenly with an ecstatic flurry of notes in the violins, soon accompanied by a quick, excited theme in the horns and violas, soon picked up by the low brass and timpani. This introduction ends in a sudden, thunderbolt-like crash from the entire orchestra, simmering down into quieter, varied repetitions of the opening theme, building up until coming to an abrupt, unexpected thunderbolt. A spritely theme dances in, and these two themes are traded off in this quiet section before the pace of the movement changes into a quick dance-like rhythm, in which a third, theme is introduced in the horns. This theme is traded throughout the orchestra, growing in velocity before yet another thunderbolt-like crash interrupts, after which the orchestra quiets down into an interlude in which fragments of the first theme are repeated, slowly fading into nothing. Here, the tempo slows dramatically, as a new, hymn-like theme is introduced in the horns and strings. This slow theme builds up with grandeur and ecstatic volume, before once again fading into silence. After this, the various themes and sections from before all make reappearances in slightly varied forms of their precursors. Finally, after one final repetition of the slow theme in the cello, bass, and low brass, the work speeds into a short, exciting coda of frolicking, excited woodwinds and

violins accompanied by booming blows from the brass and timpani, building up to the movement's final, triumphant chord.

After this bombastic ending, this lengthy exploration of frothing excitement, it is as if the whole orchestra is tired out – and thus comes Saturn, *The Bringer of old Age*, which begins with two oscillating, syncopated chords, the sonorities of which seem to groan and sour with age. As they continue to vacillate, yearning surges emerge, etching ripples from the steady tread of time that continues, with little allowance for push and pull. As the horns enter, it feels as though we are propelled through a processional, as if a funeral for fate. Rhythm, and time, is obscured with ambiguous metric entrances, as the aged buckling transforms into clangorous bells and deep dissonance on alternating beats, as the surging motif from the opening is shortened into a brassy bristle, angularly poking out from this ringingly relentless fabric. Holst does not end here, however, and continues the music into a realm of acceptance, as the syncopation settles into an almost cyclical descending figure. The theme is the same, despite the tumult of bells, but the harmonic bed changes this soul of the movement into an unstuck syncopation that has lost the polarity of tick and tock, a journey through a vast spread of ethereal and beautiful music.

Suddenly, we break the placidity of Saturn, as the brass section rudely interrupts this evocation of the heavens. Uranus is certainly a magician with a taste for vulgarity. His movement takes off into a gallop, where meter, rhythm, and tonality somehow lose their prominence in favor of wild energy and devious tricks of the ear. The smallest instrument on the orchestra, the piccolo, must somehow match the excitement of the largest, the 33-foot-tall Brombaugh organ. As suddenly as he arrived, however, Uranus regresses into the shadows; although he has spent his energy, his magic remains.

When Holst completed *The Planets*, the most remote planet known to humanity was Neptune. It would be another 46 years before the first human would even leave Earth's atmosphere, much less actually visit a place like Neptune. The lifeless, barren landscape of such a planet was certainly on Holst's mind as he completed Neptune, the Mystic. Melodies enter and exit our sonic palette with ease, and harmonies shift seamlessly with little regard for their neighboring chords. From a distance, perhaps from the stars themselves, beautiful voices waft into the hall. As the orchestra fades, these celestial voices carry a circling tune away with them into the abyss of space; the Music of the Spheres.

(Eleanor Legault, Bryn Rourke, Nathaniel Sattler, LSO Musicians)

Lawrence University Symphony Orchestra

VIOLIN I

Laura Duggan
McKenzie Fetters
Jessica Gehring
Grace Halloran
Margaret Norby
Matt Piper
Alex Quinn
Rehanna Rexroat
Joanie Shalit
Rachael Teller
Katie Weers, concertmaster

VIOLIN II

Sarah Colimon
Marsophia DeSouvre
Jelani Jones
Abigail Keefe
Ella Kile
Wendell Leafstedt
Alan Liang
Clancy Loebel
Amanda Milne*
Claire Sternkopf

VIOLA

Hannah Aitken
Laura Burke
Kanyon Beringer
Camille Copp
Lia Eldridge
Jae Franklin
Amy Gruen
Trent Guerrero
Gabriel Hartmark
Eleanor Horner
Eleanor Legault
Emily McCabe
Meghan Murphy*
Julien Riviere

VIOLA, cont.

Nat Sattler
Julia Tibbetts
Gawain Usher
Courtney Wilmington

VIOLONCELLO

Hannah Baron
Julian Bennett
Madison Creech
Alyssa Cox
Basil Eastman-Kiesow
Natalie Galster-Manz
Julia Johnson
Mikaela Marget*
Sarah Ogden
David Sieracki
Evan Stroud
Joshua Tan
Ian Wasserman
David Yudis

BASS

Jeanette Adams
Jason Duncan
Clay Knoll
Sarah Krysan
Zoe Markle
Ali Remondini
Sam Taylor*
Steven Traeger

FLUTE

Madeleine Leonowitz
Jordan Peterson (picc)
Hannah Elizabeth Tobias
(picc/alto)
Erec VonSeggern*

OBOE

Ellie Coale (EH)
 Manny Ferreira
 Delaney Olsen*
 Logan Willis

CLARINET

Abbey Atwater*
 Anthony Dare (bass)
 Madeleine Duncan*
 Kate Kilgus

BASSOON

Andrew Hill*
 Emilia Jackson
 Susan McCardell (contra)
 Stuart Young*

HORN

Julian Cohen
 David Germaine
 Hayden Guckenberger (asst.)
 Jonathan Ibach
 Emma Jensen*
 Brittany Neil
 Zach Prior

TRUMPET

Adrian Birge
 Caleb Carter
 Devin Gay
 Ricardo Jimenez*

TROMBONE

Cole Foster
 Allie Goldman
 Liam McDonald* (Bass)

TENOR TUBA

Daniel Quiroga

TUBA

Tanner Stegink

HARP

Lily Atkinson
 Christian Messier

CELESTE

Ethan Valentin

ORGAN

Ethan Mellema

TIMPANI

Sean Goldman*
 Alex Quade

PERCUSSION

Nolan Ehlers
 Adam Friedman
 Dan Green

*Denotes principal or section leader

LSO Stage Crew

Jeanette Adams
 Gabriel Hartmark
 Joan Shalit

LSO Librarians

McKenzie Fetters
 Liam McDonald
 Katie Weers

Cantata

Phillip A. Swan, director
Gabrielle Claus, accompanist

Soprano I

Meghan Burroughs
Grace Drummond
Amanda Karnatz
Anna Mosoriak*
Rehanna Rexroat
Sarah Scofield
Sam Stone

Soprano II

Emily Austin
Maren Dahl
Marieke de Koker
Samantha Gibson
Emma Milton
Katie Mueller
Charlotte Noble
Emily Richter*

Alto I

Izzy Beltz
Jenna Bliss
Grace Foster
Emma Jones
Frances Lewelling
Bea McManus*
Anna Nowland
Anna Patch
Mary Grace Wagner

Alto II

Amy Courter
Susie Francy
Caroline Granner
Allie Horton*
Erin McCammond-Watts
Eva Tourangeau
Lauren Turner

*Section leaders

We gratefully acknowledge the important role all of the Lawrence faculty play in preparing our students academically and musically, from our colleagues in music history and theory, to our colleagues in sight-singing, aural skills and keyboard skills, and to our colleagues in the liberal arts. We give special thanks to the studio instrumental faculty.

Special Thanks to the Lawrence University Conservatory Instrumental Artist Faculty

Samantha George, violin
Wen-Lei Gu, violin
Matthew Michelic, viola
Horacio Contreras, cello
Mark Urness, bass
Nathan Wysock, guitar
Suzanne Jordheim, flute
Erin Lesser, flute
David Bell, clarinet
Howard Niblock, oboe
Sumner Truax, saxophone
Steve Jordheim, saxophone
Carl Rath, bassoon

James DeCorsey, horn
Jeffrey Stannard, trumpet
John Daniel, trumpet
Nick Keelan, trombone
Tim Albright, trombone
Marty Erickson, tuba and
euphonium
Dane Richeson, percussion
Catherine Kautsky, piano
Michael Mizrahi, piano
Anthony Padilla, piano
Kathrine Handford, organ

Upcoming Performances

Friday, January 26, 8:00 p.m., Rachmaninoff *Symphonic Dances*

Friday, March 9, 8:00 p.m., Beethoven *Symphony No. 2*

Friday, April 20, 8:00 p.m., Hailstork *Done Made My Vow* and
I Will Lift Up My Eyes

Friday, June 1, 8:00 p.m., Mussorgsky/Ravel *Pictures at an Exhibition*

As a courtesy to the artists and to those in attendance, please be aware that sounds such as whispering and the rustling of programs and cellophane wrappers are magnified in the hall. Please turn off all watch alarms, pagers, and cellular telephones. And please, no flash photography.