

GUSTAV HOLST
The Planets

arranged for two pianos
by the composer

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INTRODUCTORY NOTE

This is Holst's own version of *The Planets* for two pianos, dating from the years 1914 to 1916. Unlike most keyboard versions of an orchestral work it was not an arrangement of the full score. It existed before the orchestral score had been written out, although details of the instrumentation had already been clear in Holst's mind from the moment when he began sketching the work. The reason that he needed a keyboard version on paper was that he suffered from neuritis in his right arm, and this often prevented him from playing over his sketches while he was composing.

He was able to ask two of his colleagues on the music staff of St. Paul's Girls' School, Vally Lasker and Nora Day, to play his two-piano version to him on Saturday mornings in his sound-proof music room at the school. These two friends were his chief amanuenses. When the time came for them to help him to write out the full score they were able to follow the details of instrumentation which they had written from his dictation in the margins of the keyboard manuscripts they had been playing from. (The manuscripts, autograph and partly autograph, are in the British Library Add. MS 57881; the Royal College of Music Parry Room Library MS 4556-61; and the Royal Academy of Music MS 303.)

The seven movements of this two-piano version were first published separately in 1949-51, and most have been out of print for some time. They are now reissued complete in one volume, providing a welcome opportunity for pianists to discover the music for themselves in performance.

Imogen Holst 1979

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I. MARS

The Bringer of War

Allegro

I

Allegro

II

I

II

I

II

p *cresc.*

8 *3*

I

II

mf *dim.*

8va bassa.....

8 *3* *loco*

I

II

p

I

8 *3*

I

8

II

cresc.

I

mf cresc.

8

II

cresc.

I

8

II

f

I

II

I

II

I

II

sempre fff

The musical score is organized into three systems, each consisting of two grand staves. The first grand staff (labeled 'I') contains the piano part, while the second grand staff (labeled 'II') contains the harpsichord part. The piano part features complex, chromatic passages with many accidentals and dynamic markings, including a *sempre fff* instruction at the beginning. The harpsichord part provides a rhythmic accompaniment with a steady eighth-note pattern. A triplet of eighth notes is indicated in the bass line of the harpsichord part in each system. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, ties, and dynamic hairpins.

I

II

III

Detailed description: This system contains the first two systems of music. The first system (I) consists of two staves: a treble clef staff with complex chordal textures and a bass clef staff with a rhythmic accompaniment of eighth notes. The second system (II) continues the same textures. A third system (III) is indicated by a box above the treble staff, showing a change in the bass line.

I

II

Detailed description: This system contains the third and fourth systems of music. The first system (I) features a treble staff with sustained chords and a bass staff with a steady eighth-note accompaniment. The second system (II) continues this texture with some melodic movement in the treble staff.

I

II

poco meno

Detailed description: This system contains the fifth and sixth systems of music. The first system (I) shows a treble staff with chords and a bass staff with eighth notes. The second system (II) continues the texture. The instruction 'poco meno' is written in the bass staff of the second system. The system concludes with a final chord in the treble staff.

IV

f sempre pesante

L.H.

marcato

L.H.

meno

mf

f

marcato

L.H.

6

mf

System 1: First system of music. It consists of two staves, I and II. Staff I has a treble clef and a key signature of one sharp (F#). It begins with a piano (*p*) dynamic. Staff II has a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It features a series of chords and a triplet of eighth notes. The system concludes with a repeat sign.

System 2: Second system of music. Staff I continues with a treble clef and one sharp, featuring a long, sustained chord. Staff II continues with a bass clef and two sharps, showing a melodic line with a quintuplet of eighth notes. The system ends with a repeat sign.

System 3: Third system of music. Staff I has a treble clef and a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#). It contains a quintuplet of eighth notes and a *mf* dynamic marking. Staff II has a bass clef and a key signature of two sharps, featuring a *mf* dynamic and a *marcato* marking. The system concludes with a repeat sign.