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Marquette Symphony Orchestra

Octavio Más-Arocas, Principal Conductor

presents

A Universe of Music

Saturday, May 7, 2022 – 7:30 p.m.

Louis G. Kaufman Auditorium

Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26..... Max Bruch

I. Vorspiel: Allegro moderato

II. Adagio

III. Finale: Allegro energico

Christine Harada Li, violin

(MSO Youth Concerto Competition Winner)

INTERMISSION

The Planets: Suite for Large Orchestra, Op. 32..... Gustav Holst

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



Afterglow immediately following the concert at the UP Children's Museum

Octavio Más-Arocas, Musical Director

Octavio Más-Arocas is a versatile and dynamic conductor whose achievements demonstrate his talent and musicianship. Más-Arocas is the Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Conducting at Michigan State University College of Music, and serves as Music Director and Conductor of the Mansfield Symphony Orchestra in Ohio, Music Director and Conductor of the Marquette Symphony Orchestra in Michigan, Music Director and Conductor of the Clinton Symphony in New York, and Conductor-in-Residence at the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music in California.



Mr. Más-Arocas served as Principal Conductor of the Green Bay Symphony Orchestra, Wisconsin, and held the positions of Director of Orchestras and Professor of Orchestral Conducting at Ithaca College in New York, Director of Orchestral Studies and Opera Conductor at the Lawrence University Conservatory of Music in Wisconsin, Director of Orchestral Studies and Associate Professor of Conducting at the Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music in Ohio, Director of Orchestras at the Interlochen Arts Academy in Michigan, Resident Conductor of the Sewanee Summer Music Festival in Tennessee, and Assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra in Colorado. In 2013, simultaneously to his work with the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra, Mr. Más-Arocas was the Resident Conductor of the Unicamp Symphony Orchestra in Campinas, Brazil, where he also was a Visiting Professor of conducting at the Universidade Estadual de Campinas. Mr. Más-Arocas spends part of his summers in the Grand Traverse area, where he continues his association as conductor at the Interlochen Center for the Arts.

An award-winner conductor, Mr. Más-Arocas won the Robert J. Harth Conducting Prize at the Aspen Music Festival, the Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Award, given by Kurt Masur, is the recipient of the Thelma A. Robinson Award from the Conductors Guild, a Prize Winner of the Third European Conductors Competition, and a winner of the National Youth Orchestra of Spain Conductors Competition. Mr. Más-Arocas was selected by the League of American Orchestras to conduct the Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra in a showcase event during the League's National Conference in Dallas.

Chosen by Kurt Masur, Mr. Más-Arocas was awarded the prestigious Felix Mendelssohn-Bartholdy Scholarship. Consequently, he worked as Maestro Masur's assistant with the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra and the Helsinki Radio Orchestra, and made his German conducting debut with the Leipziger Symphonieorchester. The offer came after Mr. Más-Arocas' New York debut concert sharing the podium with Maestro Masur and the Manhattan School of Music Symphony.

In the last few years Mr. Más-Arocas has conducted orchestras across North and South America and Europe including the Filarmonica George Enescu in Romania, the Orquestra de Valencia and Granada City Orchestra in Spain, the Leipziger

Symphonieorchester in Germany, the Orquestra Sinfônica da Unicamp in Brazil, the Green Bay, Traverse City, Bluewater, Catskill, Clinton, Fort Worth, Spokane, Toledo, Phoenix, Memphis, Kansas City, and San Antonio Symphonies, the National Repertory Orchestra, the Manhattan School of Music Symphony, the orchestras of Viana do Castelo and Artave in Portugal, the Interlochen Philharmonic, the Universidad Nacional Autónoma de México Philharmonic, the Rosario Symphony in Argentina, Kharkov Symphony in Ukraine, the National Youth Orchestras of Portugal and Spain, the Pescara Symphony in Italy, the Amsterdam Brass in the Netherlands, and the Ciudad Alcalá de Henares Symphony. In

addition, Mr. Más-Arocas has served as assistant conductor at the Madrid Royal Opera House.

Mr. Más-Arocas was assistant conductor of the National Repertory Orchestra, which he conducted in subscription, family, and pops concerts. As the Resident Conductor at the Sewanee Summer Music Festival he conducted the Festival, Symphony, and Cumberland Orchestras. Other festival appearances include the Aspen Music Festival, the Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, the Festival Internacional Carlos Gomes in Campinas, Brazil, the Interlochen Music Festival, the Bach Festival at Baldwin Wallace University, and the MidAmerican Center for Contemporary Music.

His ability to work, inspire, and transform young talents has led him to be a frequent guest conductor with prominent music education organizations and ensembles around the world. He has worked with the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, the national youth orchestras of Portugal and Spain, has conducted All-State Honor Orchestras, and has been in residence with university orchestras in Chicago, Cornell University, Portugal, and Brazil. Mr. Más-Arocas has led tours with the National Youth Orchestra "Templarios" of Portugal, the Interlochen Symphony, the Baldwin Wallace Symphony, and toured Argentina with the Silleda Wind Symphony.

In demand as conducting teacher, Mr. Más-Arocas has taught workshops and masterclasses in the USA, Portugal, Brazil, and Spain and is currently on the faculty of two of the world's most competitive conducting workshops, the Cabrillo Festival Conducting Workshop, which attracts the most talented conducting students from all around the world, and the Ithaca International Conducting Masterclass. He has taught at the Queens College Conducting Workshop in New York and leads the very selective graduate orchestral conducting program at Ithaca College.

Mr. Más-Arocas is an alumnus of the prestigious American Academy of Conducting at Aspen, where he studied with David Zinman. He completed doctoral studies and his main mentors include Kurt Masur, Harold Farberman, and Emily Freeman Brown.

Christine Harada Li, violin

Marquette Symphony Orchestra Youth Concerto Competition Winner

Violinist Christine Harada Li is a versatile artist who has performed across the USA, Canada, Japan, Germany, Italy, Austria, Spain, and Israel. She has frequently performed with the award-winning Koinonia Trio, which has been playing together since 2015. As an orchestral musician, Christine has had the opportunity to play with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, the CityMusic Cleveland Chamber Orchestra, and Ann Arbor Symphony. She has performed (both violin and viola) as a guest artist at the Maui Classical Music Festival, Center Stage Strings, Oberlin Acoustics Workshop and Ann Arbor Chamber Fest.

In addition to performing, Christine takes leadership in various arts organizations and serves as Artistic Director of the Anchorage Chamber Music Festival and President of the Anchorage Fine Arts Society, a non-profit organization in Anchorage, Alaska. She was Co-Education Director at the Innsbrook Institute Summer Music Academy from 2016–2019.

Koinonia Trio has received numerous awards including 1st place for the American Prize and 1st Prize in the Briggs Chamber Music Competition. Christine was the winner of the University of Michigan Concerto Competition and has won awards in the Hannoversche Börse der Musiktalente

Competition with Das Hammerstein Trio, Marguerite Downey Piano Competition, Alaska MTNA Piano/Violin Performance Competition, among others. In 2012, Christine was selected as the winner of the Young Alaskan Artist Award and Scholarship and presented a recital with YAA director, Juliana Osinchuk.



Christine grew up in a musical family and began studying violin at the age of five and piano at the age of ten. Her childhood principal teachers were Beverly Beheim for violin and Rumi Smith for piano. Christine made her international debut when she was 10 years old at the Talent Education Research Institute's Suzuki Summer School in Matsumoto, Japan.

Christine completed her Doctorate in Musical Arts (D.M.A.) in 2019, studying with David Halen at the University of Michigan School of Music, Theater and Dance. Christine graduated summa cum laude with a Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Michigan and completed her Master of Music degree at the Hochschule für Musik, Theater und Medien in Hannover, Germany. Her principal teachers there were Yehonatan Berick, Elisabeth Kufferath, Anne Röhrig (baroque), and Arthur Greene (piano). Currently she serves as Assistant Violin Professor at the Ohio University School of Music in Athens, Ohio.

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Violin Concerto No. 1 in G minor, Op. 26

1. Vorspiel: Allegro moderato
- II. Adagio
- III. Finale: Allegro energico

Christine Harada Li, violin

Max Bruch
Born 1838—Died 1920



Renowned German Romantic composer and conductor Max Karl August Bruch was born in Cologne, on January 6, 1838. His father, a police official and his mother, a very talented singer, both encouraged his love for music. In fact, he received his first musical education on the piano from his mother and started composing at the age of nine. In his early teen years, Bruch was asked to give informal concerts. At one such performance, the well-known Bohemian pianist and composer Ignaz Moscheles, heard Bruch play and urged him to cultivate his remarkable gifts. Within a

few years, Bruch's musicianship received a great deal of publicity. When he was just 14, Bruch won the coveted Frankfurt Mozart-Stiftung Prize by submitting a string quartet. This enabled him to study with composer Carl Reinecke and other such musical luminaries of the time. His first substantial work was an opera based on a Goethe Singspiel, and it was followed by numerous grand pieces that both performers and audiences found truly engaging.

In 1865, Bruch decided to continue his romance with composing, and actively pursue a career in music. He was appointed as the Music Director of Koblenz, Germany, where he was able to use his creativity on a managerial level. Only two years later, Bruch moved, accepting the position of Court Kapellmeister in Sonderhausen. It was in Sonderhausen that Bruch discovered his passion for teaching. During his time, Bruch's understanding of multiple instruments grew, and he developed confidence in his musical ability.

So, when he was offered the opportunity to become the conductor of the esteemed Liverpool Philharmonic Society, Bruch was eager to take on the



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challenge. He began his position in the spring of 1880, and while on tour in Germany met and fell in love with alto singer Clara Tucek, whom he married in 1881. These events provided food for his soul. In 1883, he toured throughout the United States, captivating audiences, and in April of that year, a tremendous tribute was given to him at the Ontario Street Temple. Bruch left Liverpool to become director of the Breslau Orchesterverein, where he stayed through the end of the season in 1890.

Bruch spent the last decades of his life in Berlin, working as a professor of composition until his retirement in 1910, and conducting masterclasses until his death in 1920. He was greatly respected as a teacher, with Respighi and Vaughan Williams among his students in his Berlin composition classes. Owing to his extraordinary musical talent, Bruch was destined to become one of the great legacy composers. He did not quite achieve that degree of status, however, perhaps because he not only worked in the shadow of Brahms, but also because he chose to follow a compositional style much like Mendelssohn and Schumann, the Romantic Classicists that he grew up revering. Even though music of his time was on the cusp of a tremendous shift in terms of its language and its very role in society, Bruch did not care to be part of this trend. He saw no reason, therefore, to alter his writing approach and he was quite vocal in his criticism of the “Neudeutche” (New German) composition school of Wagner and Liszt, which definitely lessened his popularity with critics and peers. Still, his compositional output was prolific, featuring over 200 works in his long life, and spanning genres from opera to symphonic music, large-scale dramatic works for chorus and orchestra, to a variety of concertos.

On tonight’s program, the MSO accompanies competition-winning violin soloist Christine Harada Li to bring you Bruch’s universally known *Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor*, the most famous of the nine pieces he wrote for violin. Today, he is remembered especially for this work, two further outstanding violin concerti, the *Kol Nidrei*, *Variations for Cello and Orchestra* and *The Scottish Fantasy for violin and orchestra*. The things which established Bruch as a composer are those qualities that keep his music alive today: his love for melody, including traditional and

folk music, his openness to it and his ability to summon it up at will. His ears were always clearly attuned to the truly beautiful, whatever its source. He refrained from dark and overly serious compositions and instead embraced the splendor of sound. Bruch’s life came to a close in Friedenau, Berlin, in October of 1920, when he was eighty-two years old. His daughter, Margaretha later had carved on the gravestone, “Music is the language of God.”

The legendary violinist Joseph Joachim, celebrating his 75th birthday in 1906 declared that Germany had four great violin concertos. Among the four (of course including the masterful creations in this category by Beethoven, Mendelssohn and Brahms) Joachim also included *Bruch’s Violin Concerto No. 1 in G Minor, Op. 26*, calling it “the richest and most seductive violin concerto of them all.” Bruch, who had very definite opinions of what he did and didn’t like musically, had little use for the piano. He loathed it in fact, dubbing it “a dull rattle-trap.” But oh, how he loved the violin!! He famously remarked that “the violin can sing a melody much better.” Well, one’s preferences for particular instruments notwithstanding, this work undeniably expresses Bruch’s affection for the power and beauty of sound.

Perhaps it would be even more romantic to think that since the *G Minor Concerto* was one of the world’s most popular musical creations, it was quickly and feverishly spawned in a burst of inspiration! Well, um...nope. It actually had a long gestation and a pretty difficult birth. Bruch made the first sketches for it in 1857. He wrote to his former teacher Ferdinand Hiller: “My violin concert is progressing slowly—I do not feel sure of my feet on this terrain. Do you think that it is very audacious to write a violin concerto?”

A first version, completed by the beginning of 1866, was withdrawn by Bruch after a single performance in April. Dissatisfied, Bruch sent the manuscript to Joachim for his comments. The violinist made a detailed list of possible improvements and he and Bruch would brainstorm back and forth. Bruch later prohibited the publication of their letters, fearing that it would make him seem too dependent upon Joachim for compositional guidance. Still insecure about his work, Bruch then sent the score to his conductor

friend Hermann Levi and the composer and violinist Ferdinand David for his comments (David had advised Mendelssohn on his *Violin Concerto in E minor* two decades earlier and had given its first performance.) At last, having been rewritten in Bruch's words "at least a half a dozen times," the concerto was completed to his satisfaction and given its first performance in its final version on January 7, 1868, in Bremen with Karl Reinthaler as conductor and Joachim as soloist. The score's manuscript bears the dedication "Joseph Joachim in Verehrun zugeeignet," though the word "Verehrun" (respect) was crossed out by Joachim and the work "Freundschaft" (friendship) was written in its place.

This passionate work, which is one of the most frequently performed of all violin concerti, is set in the traditional three movements but departs considerably from the Classical form. It is venerated for its lyrical melodies, which span nearly the entire range of the violin.

The first movement marked **Allegro moderato** is named Vorspiel (Prelude) and it serves as a kind of

extended free-form introduction. Bruch entitled the concerto's opening section Prelude, implying that it serves primarily as an introduction to the more important second movement, the **Adagio**. The Prelude opens in an air of dark and quiet melancholy before breaking out into an exhilarating **Allegro**. It serves up two major high points for the listener before dying away in emotional exhaustion.

Bruch segues without pause into the second movement, the heartfelt central **Adagio**, carried almost entirely by the solo violin, which employs soaring lines and brilliant technical displays with the sweetness of a lullaby. The movement plays without pause except for a brief orchestral passage in the middle. Three lovely, leisurely themes are introduced and developed in turn. This begins in a prayer-like atmosphere, then gradually gains both in activity and expressiveness. It features some of the most beautiful writing in the entire literature for violin.

While the first two movements ask the violin to sing in the way that Bruch so admired, the finale is unabashedly animated and robust. This movement,

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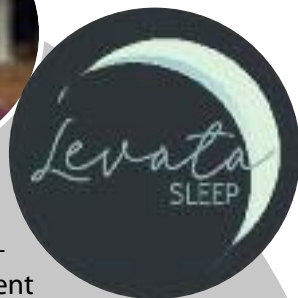
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marked **Allegro energico**, makes full use of the Rondo form. In this form, a principal theme, sometimes called the refrain, alternates with one of more contrasting themes, generally called episodes. The movement, reminiscent of a folk song, starts with a piece of the theme passing around the orchestra. The full theme, which makes use of many impressive double stops in the violin, is at last introduced by the soloist and has a strong, lively character. The second subject is even grander and stronger than the first. The mood stays exuberant to the finish with a Coda which is rhythmically uplifting and utterly invigorating.

As he grew older, Max Bruch's popularity began to decline. He had always tended to be a grumpy old soul like Brahms, and with age he became even more cantankerous. He was frequently called upon to give advice to young virtuosi on the performance of his works. "Which concerto are you planning to play?" he would ask violinists. "The one in G minor" was invariably the reply. While he had pride in this masterful piece, he was frustrated that his whole body of work seemed to be defined by it. It was rumored that he would groan, shake his head and say "but why don't you play one of the other two, they're just as good? My friends, play the *Second Concerto* or the *Scottish Fantasia* for once!" Well, here it is again. The *G minor*. Sorry not sorry, Mr. Bruch;)

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
Born 187—Died 1934



Gustav Holst, who grew up in the world of Oscar Wilde, H.G Wells, George Bernard Shaw, Monet, Wagner, Tchaikovsky and Puccini, was born in

Cheltenham, Gloucestershire, England in 1874 to a family of Swedish extraction (by way of Latvia and Russia). He was educated at Cheltenham Grammar School for Boys. Holst's father, an accomplished organist, pianist and choirmaster, gave both piano lessons and recitals; and his mother, a singer, was a sweet, quiet woman with hypersensitive nerves, who died when Gustav was only 8 years old. He and his brother were raised by their Aunt Nina, who, it was rumored, had scattered rose petals for composer Franz Liszt to walk on. As a frail child whose early recollections were musical, Holst had been taught to play piano and violin, and began composing when he was about 12. Both he and his sister learned piano from an early age, but Holst, stricken with a nerve condition called neuritis, that affected the movement of his right hand in adolescence, gave up the piano and violin in favor of the trombone, which proved less painful to play. Later on, he was able to conduct, and perform for a time as a trombonist in the Scottish Orchestra in spite of his handicap.

What had the most profound effect on Holst, however, was studying composition at the Royal College of Music in London, with Sir Charles Villiers Stanford. This opportunity to become a composer and teacher gave him new confidence and allowed him to find his niche in life. Here he also met and formed what would become a lifelong friendship with composer Ralph Vaughan Williams, and in 1901 he married choir soprano Emily Isobel Harrison. They had a daughter, Imogen in 1907.



Sometime after the turn of the century, Holst became deeply involved in Indian philosophy and religion, and he taught himself Sanskrit to make his own translations of the hymns in the ancient book called Rig Veda, four of which he composed between 1908 and 1912. Other compositions of Holst's include *First Suite in E-flat for Military Band*, *St. Paul's Suite*, *In the Bleak Midwinter*, *Moorside Suite*, *In Youth is Pleasure*, *First Choral Symphony*, *The Wandering Scholar*, *The Magician* and *Hammersmith*.

Holst taught for most of his adult years at the James Allen and Saint Paul's schools for girls, at Morley College for Working Men and Women, and briefly at Harvard. He kept the association with Saint Paul's

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until his death—the alumni used to reintroduce themselves to him by naming the Bach cantatas they had sung under his direction. And it was at St. Paul’s that he would eventually compose the brilliant work the MSO will perform for you this evening, *The Planets*. This process took place in the soundproof room of the new music wing opened in 1913, a paradise where he could be undisturbed and indulge in the extremely warm indoor temperatures he favored.

In 1914, Holst bought a country house in Essex. Ill health prevented him from enlisting in the army at the onset of WW I, but he volunteered to help the YMCA bring music to the troops in Greece and Istanbul in 1918. He returned to London, and from about 1920, when his music was very popular thanks to the success of *The Planets* and a choral work, *Hymn to Jesus*, he went on to publish some older work, to conduct on recordings with the London Symphony, and to write music, fulfilling commissions for the New York Symphony and the BBC. He visited the US for the third time in 1932, where he lectured at Harvard. But again, his health forced him to return to England, where, after he had an operation to remove an ulcer, he suffered heart failure and passed away on May 25, 1934. He was 59 years old. His ashes were interred in Chichester Cathedral, close to the memorial to Thomas Weelkes, his favorite Tudor composer. In the 1970s, Holst’s home in Cheltenham, England was opened as a museum of his life and times.

The Planets was composed over a span of nearly three years, between 1914 and 1917. The work had its origins in spring of 1913, when Holst and his friend and benefactor Balfour Gardiner vacationed in Spain with the composer Arnold Bax and his brother Clifford. A discussion about astrology sparked Holst’s interest in the subject. Clifford later commented that Holst became “a remarkably skilled interpreter of horoscopes.” Shortly after this, Holst wrote to a friend: “I only study things that suggest music to me That’s why I worried at Sanskrit. Then recently the character of each planet suggested lots to me, and I have been studying astrology fairly closely.” He continued, “whether it’s good or bad, [it] grew in my mind slowly—like a baby in a woman’s womb...For two years I had the intention of composing that cycle and during those two years it seemed of itself more and

more definitely to be taking form.” Interestingly, Holst began his suite *The Planets* as a duet for two pianos, with “Mars, the Bringer of War.” It was given a privately funded premiere in 1918.

Holst’s biographer Michael Short and musicologist Richard Greene both believe that a major inspiration for Holst to write a suite for large orchestra was the example of Schoenberg’s *Five Pieces for Orchestra*, which Holst adored. He considered his personal copy of the score which he annotated heavily, to be one of his most cherished possessions. In fact, the title of the first publication of *The Planets* was *Seven Pieces for Large Orchestra*.

This innovative, eclectic work might have been gestating in Holst’s mind, but the rest of the world was rather surprised about it, feeling that it was so different, it must have arisen from a near void. The composer was happy about its popularity, but frustrated that, despite his varied output of work, *The Planets* would go on to define him as a one-hit wonder.

The Planets has seven movements, each devoted to a particular planet in our solar system (excluding the earth, the focus of the other planets’ influences), beginning with the inner three but in reverse order from their distance from the sun, and then proceeding outwards through the rest. Holst described *The Planets* as “a series of mood pictures acting as foils to one another, with very little contrast in any one of them.” He took the title of two of the movements (Mercury the Winged Messenger and Neptune, the Mystic from a booklet he was reading at the time, written by Alan Leo, called What is a Horoscope? But although Holst used astrology as a jumping-off point, he arranged the planets to suit his own scheme, which ignored some astrological factors such as the influence of the sun and the moon and attributing certain non-astrological qualities to each planet. Holst denied that horoscopes had anything to do with *The Planets* but rather that, as the underlying idea of astrology, “the character of each planet suggested lots to me” and that he regarded the universe as “one big miracle.” It didn’t matter to Holst that the order of movements wasn’t the same as that of the planets’ orbits around the sun. He was only interested in musical effectiveness.

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In an early sketch for the suite, Holst listed Mercury as “No. 1”, which Greene suggests raises the possibility that the composer’s first idea was simply to depict the planets in the obvious order, from nearest the sun to the farthest. Then, Holst decided against that and said “opening with the more disturbing character of Mars allows a more dramatic and compelling working out of the musical material.” The first movement to be written was Mars in mid-1914, followed by Venus and Jupiter later that year, Neptune later in 1915 and Mercury in early 1916. Holst completed the orchestration during 1917.

Holst provided this note for the November 15, 1920 premiere of the piece, played by the London Symphony Orchestra under the direction of Albert Coates: “These pieces were suggested by the astrological significance of the planets; there is no programme music, neither have they any connection with the deities of classical mythology bearing the same names. If any guide to the music is required the subtitle to each piece will be found sufficient, especially if it be used in the broad sense. For instance, Jupiter brings jollity in the ordinary sense, and also the more cere-

monial type of rejoicing associated with religions or national festivities. Saturn brings not only physical decay, but also a vision of fulfillment. Mercury is the symbol of mind.”

Here is a walk through the movements of *The Planets* as they occur in the finished work, the full orchestral score of which was published in late 1921.

Mars, the Bringer of War - The association of Mars and war goes back as far as recorded history. The planet’s satellites are Phobos (fear) and Deimos (terror), and its astrological symbol combines shield and spear. Holst’s Mars is a fierce, cold-hearted Allegro. The British conductor Sir Adrian Boult recalled that the aspect of war Holst most wanted to express was its stupidity. Holst wastes no time launching his *Planets* with startling gestures. Holst’s rhythm is neither the smooth 5/4 time with a waltz feeling one hears in Tchaikovsky’s *Pathetique Symphony* nor the sassy, bouncing 5/4 of Dave Brubeck’s *Take Five*. The overall tone of *Mars, the Bringer of War* is militaristic, and Holst writes it in sharp, percussive, insistent 5/4 time.



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Venus, the Bringer of Peace - After the moon, Venus is the brightest object in our night sky. The identification with Ishtar, Aphrodite's Babylonian predecessor, goes back to at least 3000 BCE. In *The Principles and Practices of Astrology*, Noel Tyl tells us that, to astrologers, "when the disorder of Mars is past, Venus restores peace and harmony." Horn and flutes answer each other in this adagio. High violins have an extended song, but the dominant colors are the cool ones of flutes, harps, and celesta

Mercury, the Winged Messenger - Hermes, God of cattle, sheep, and vegetation, deity of dreams, and conductor of the dead, first assumes the role of messenger in the *Odyssey*. Mercury, his Roman counterpart, was primarily a god of merchandise and merchants, and his winged sandals and winged cap are taken over from Hermes. To astrologers, Mercury is "the thinker." The composer makes this a virtuosic scherzo, unstable, nervously changeable in meter and harmony—in a word, mercurial.

Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity - The most massive of the planets, possessing twelve satellites (one of them larger than the planet Mercury), named for the light-bringer, the rain-God, the god of thunderbolts, of the grape and the tasting of the new wine, of oaths, treaties, and contracts, and from whom we take the word "jovial." "Jupiter," says Noel Tyl, "symbolizes expansiveness, scope of enthusiasm, knowledge, honor, and opportunity . . . [and] corresponds to fortune, inheritance, bonanza." Holst gives us an unmistakably English Jupiter. In 1921, he would decide to take the big tune in the middle and set the words "I vow to thee, my country" to it as a unison song with orchestra.

Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age - Saturn is the outermost of the planets known in ancient times. The god is associated with Cronus and traditionally portrayed as an old man. To quote Tyl again, Saturn is "man's time on earth, his ambition, his strategic delay, his wisdom toward fulfillment, his disappointments and frustrations." Another Adagio dominated by the sound of flutes and harps, like Venus in both characteristics, but static, full of the suggestion of bells, and serene at last. This movement was Holst's favorite.

Uranus, the Magician - The first planet discovered in the age of the telescope, specifically in 1781 by Sir William Herschel, who wanted to name it for George III. In astrology, Uranus rules invention, innovation, and astrology itself. Holst begins with a triple incantation (trumpets and trombones, then tubas, then timpani) and leads the way into a movement of vigorous, thumping dance. At the end, the apparitions disappear into the night.

Neptune, the Mystic - Pluto was discovered in 1930, so when Holst wrote his suite, Neptune, discovered in 1846, was the extreme point in our system. In 2006 the International Astronomical Union stripped Pluto of its status as a planet and consigned it to a new category, dwarf planet; and although the composer Colin Matthews created a Pluto movement in 2000 as an addition to Holst's original, Holst apparently had things right all along. In astrology, Neptune means confusion and mystic rapport with other worlds. Neptune is invisible to the naked eye, and to Holst it speaks of distance, mystery, unanswerable questions.

He makes of it another slow movement in swaying, irregular meter, softly dissonant in harmony, full of the sound of shimmering harps and celesta, and dissolving in the voices of an invisible chorus of women. While such a resource was not entirely novel (Debussy had already used wordless sopranos and altos to conclude his 1901 *Sirènes*), Holst's haunting indefinite ending was quite innovative. After all the other instruments fade away only the choruses are left repeating a mild cadence that never really resolves. Holst specifies: "This bar is to be repeated until the sound is lost in the distance." To achieve this, Holst further instructs: "The Chorus is to be placed in an adjoining room, . . . well-screened from the audience, . . . the door of which is to be left open until the last bar of the piece, when it is to be slowly and silently closed."

While each individual movement has unique and fascinating import, the overall structure is significant as well. It has been said that the progression of the movements parallels the ages of man, from youth to old age. It has been suggested that there is a similar but psychological progression from life in the physical world to a mystical, stoic state. We hear a range of human personalities, from the unpredictable volatility of

Mars and the extroverted quality of Jupiter to the relaxed elusiveness of Mercury. The form of the suite moves from tightly structured to more open-ended. Even within each movement, Holst does not develop his themes symphonically, but rather uses them to create a structure suited to the psychological character and associations of each planet.

Holst's orchestration in *The Planets* gives us moments of wonder and change. A statement of exultant ferocity might live right next door to a phrase filled with a sense of spare isolation. Holst's experience as a trombonist probably lent him a good understanding of the orchestra from the inside. It is hard to deny the sparkling radiance of his brass writing, and the novelty of including the unusual timbres of seldom-used instruments. Holst's scores employ emotional, lush harmonies, but at the same time are crafted with great simplicity and precision. After a piece was written,

Holst would go through it with an eraser and remove notes or phrases he considered inessential.

He had tremendous admiration for Ravel's orchestration. His daughter Imogen emphasized that "clarity was his watchword," that "he never could understand slovenly workmanship" and "though his music dwells in mystical regions yet it is never indefinite or shadowy." Holst uses his large orchestra with such skill that he is able to write crisply whether his material is bombastic or delicate. In this case he does it for over 50 remarkable minutes. The MSO invites you to take a fantastic trip through the changeable moods of our temperamental universe, from Mars's first burst of power, to Neptune's last soft clouds of ethereal harmony...

—Program Notes by Claudia Drosen

UPCOMING MARQUETTE SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA EVENTS

Sunday, May 8 from 2:00-3:00 p.m. – Master classes with MSO Concerto Competition winner Christine Harada Li, violin and Nathaniel Pierce, cello in the Marquette Senior High School Orchestra Room. Free and open to all to observe.

Monday, May 9 – MSO Children's Concerts at Kaufman Auditorium. The orchestra will perform for Marquette County 4th and 5th graders during their school days. The performances are sponsored by an anonymous donor and The Louis G. Kaufman Foundation.

Monday, May 9 at 7:00 p.m. – Violin & Cello Duet Recital with MSO Concerto Competition winner Christine Harada Li, violin and Nathaniel Pierce, cello at the Besse Center in Escanaba. Tickets are on sale at baycollege.tix.com (\$12 general public, \$6 K-12 students).

Thursday, May 19 at 7:00 p.m. – Cello & Piano Recital with MSO cellist Andrew LaCombe and pianist Ryan Ford at the Besse Center in Escanaba. Tickets are on sale at baycollege.tix.com (\$12 general public, \$6 K-12 students).

Friday, June 24 at 8:30 p.m. – The MSO Summer Strings will take center stage at Mattson Lower Harbor Park in Marquette as part of a free Marquette Art Week event and Finnish Midsummer celebration.

Saturday, July 9 at 7:30 p.m. – The full Marquette Symphony Orchestra will begin its 26th season with a free performance for the community at NMU's Shoreline Theater, by the Superior Dome and soccer field. This free performance is once again made possible by a sponsorship from Eagle Mine.

Saturday, July 23 – The MSO Summer Strings will be working with young fiddlers in the teen and tween tents at the Hiawatha Music Festival at Marquette's Tourist Park. Visit hiawathamusic.org for ticket information.

Saturday, August 27 at 1:30 p.m. – The MSO Summer Strings perform at HarborFest at Mattson Lower Harbor Park in Marquette, an annual event hosted by the Marquette West Rotary Club.

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