

# The Planets

## VII. Neptune, the mystic

Gustav Holst  
(1874-1934)

Andante (3 beats followed by 2)

1st Soprano

Chorus I  
2nd Soprano  
Alto

1st Soprano

Chorus II  
2nd Soprano  
Alto

Piano I

*sempre una corda e pp*

Andante (3 beats followed by 2)

Piano II

*sempre una corda e pp*

5

I

II

9

I

II

II

14 I

Musical score for measures 14-17. The first system (I) consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system (II) also consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The music is in a key with three sharps (F#, C#, G#) and a 3/4 time signature. Measure 14 starts with a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The notation includes eighth and sixteenth notes, slurs, and dynamic markings.



18

Musical score for measures 18-21. The first system (I) consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system (II) also consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The notation includes chords, slurs, and dynamic markings. Measure 18 starts with a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The music continues with complex chordal textures and melodic lines.



22

Musical score for measures 22-25. The first system (I) consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The second system (II) also consists of a grand staff with a treble clef and a bass clef. The notation includes chords, slurs, and dynamic markings. Measure 22 starts with a first ending bracket labeled 'I'. The music features complex chordal textures and melodic lines, with fingerings 1, 2, 3, 4, 6, and 7 indicated.

25 **II** *8va*  
*both hands*

I

II

1 2

7 7

28 *8va*

I

II

1 2

7 7

1 *8va* 2 3 4

31 **(8)**  
*r.h. only*

I

II

7 7

6 6

IV

34 **III** *8va*

I

II

36 **1** **2**

I

II

38

I

II

39 *8va* **1** **2** **3** **1** **2**

I

II

41

I

6

6

6

6

6

8<sup>va</sup>

II

42

I

6

6

6

6

6

8<sup>va</sup>

II

43

I

6

6

6

6

6

8<sup>va</sup>  
both hands

II

44

I

6

6

6

6

6

8<sup>va</sup>  
both hands

II

VI

45 **IV**

I

II

48 **1** *8va* **2 3 4** **1** **2 3 1** **2**

I

II

50 **V** Allegretto

S.1

I

S.2

A.

S.1

II

S.2

A.

I

II

55

S.1 I *pp*

S.2 A.

S.1 II *pp*

S.2 A.

I

II



60

S.1 I

S.2 A.

S.1 II

S.2 A.

I *poco* *tre corde*

II *dolce* *poco* *tre corde*

65

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

I  
*p* *sempre pp* *tre corde*

II  
*p* *sempre pp* *tre corde*

70

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

I  
*pp* (Voices in the distance)  
*una corda*

II  
*pp* (Voices in the distance)  
*una corda*



75

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

I

II



80

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

I

II

X

85 **VII**

S.1 I  
S.2 A.

S.1 II  
S.2 A.

I

II



88 *8va*

I

II

1 2 3 4 5

90

Score for measures 90-91. The score is in G major (one sharp) and 4/4 time. It features four vocal parts (S.1, I, S.2, A.) and two piano parts (I, II). The vocal parts have rests in measure 90 and enter in measure 91 with a half note followed by a quarter rest. The piano parts feature complex textures: Part I has a descending eighth-note line with ties, while Part II has sustained chords. Dynamics include *pp* (pianissimo) and *ppp* (pianissimissimo). A circled '8' is present in the piano parts.



92

Score for measures 92-95. The score continues with the same vocal and piano parts. The vocal parts continue with a half note followed by a quarter rest. The piano parts feature sustained chords and textures. Dynamics include *pp* and *ppp*. A circled '8' is present in the piano parts.

#### Notes by the composer

[Bar 1.] The Chorus is to be placed in an adjoining room, 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. The Chorus, the door, and any sub-conductors that may be found necessary, are to be well screened from the audience.

[Bar 101.] \* This bar is to be repeated until the sound (of the voices) is lost in the distance.

#### Further notes on the Chorus

If the Chorus must be placed within the auditorium, the singers should remain seated for the entire performance until bar 48 of Neptune (two bars before figure V).

If the Chorus is within an adjoining room, the stage door should remain initially closed until bar 35 of Neptune (figure III), when it should be slowly and silently opened (i.e. the reverse of the end of the movement). The Chorus should assemble in the room sometime earlier, ideally after bar 189 of Uranus (four bars before figure VII of movement VI). This should be neither visible nor audible to the performers and audience.

The Chorus sings throughout to the sound of 'u' in 'sun'. In the original manuscript the chorus entry at bar 56 is marked **pppp**.

At the very end it may be desirable to effect some of the *diminuendo* by having members of the Chorus turn away from the stage, or use a hand or handkerchief to gradually muffle their singing.

One editorial change from Holst's scoring is desirable: at bar 99 the Chorus I Soprano 1 part is divided; instead this edition divides the Chorus I Alto one bar earlier at bar 98, to cover the original Soprano 2 and Alto parts, while Soprano 2 takes the lower Soprano 1 *divisi*.

#### Indications for pianists (Holst's own version for two pianos)

- ✓ repeat the previous crotchet beat;
- // repeat the previous two crotchet beats;
- ⚡ repeat the previous bar.

Occasionally *octava* markings apply to both hands (in both staves) rather than the staff over which the *8va* line is placed. From bar 70 (figure VI) to the end large notes denote instrumental writing whereas small notes are purely vocal.

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Andante (3 beats followed by 2)

45 **IV** Celesta *pp* Strings sul pont.

48 **V** Allegretto CHORUS I & II [STAND]

S.1  
I, II  
S.2  
A.

E. H. + Trp. I, Hrn I-IV  
Bsns, Trb. I-III, Timp.

Vc. Bass Ob. E. H. + Ob. II

54 1ST SOPRANO 2ND SOPRANO ALTO + Ob. I Hrn III Hrn I Alto Fl.

*pp*

58 3 4 5 6 Cl. I dolce + Hrn II + Hrn IV + Ob. I

62

7 8 9 10

S.1

Fl. I-II

VI. I

E. H. + Bns

66

11

S.1

VI. I, Fl. I

Fl. II, A. Fl.

70

VI CHORUS I

pp

S.1

I

S.2

A.

CHORUS II

pp

S.1

II

S.2

A.

VI

pp

Fl. I-II, Alto Fl., Harps (harmonics)

75

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

==

80

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

+ Bsn I

85 **VII**

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

**VII**

VI. II *6* *6* VI. II *simile* until b.88

Cl. I-III  
Harp I  
+ Harp II

Ob. I-II, E. H.,  
B. Ob., Vl. I, Trb.,  
Timp., Bsns, Vc., Db.

88

Celesta  
8<sup>va</sup>

1 2 3 4 5

Harp

8<sup>va</sup>

Fl., Ob. VI. II, Vla

Bsns

90

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

*pp*

*pp*

*pp*

(8)

(8)

VI. I  
Fl. I

8<sup>va</sup>  
Cel.

Fl. II, Alto Fl.,  
Cl. I, Harps (harmonics)



93

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

(8) VI. I Cel.

Alto Fl.

*pppp*

97

S.1  
I  
S.2  
A.

S.1  
II  
S.2  
A.

(8) A. div.

+ Harps (arpege)

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The orchestral texture in the *reductio partituræ* uses small notes to indicate both the vocal writing and, chiefly for the sake of space, the rapid figurations of instruments such as the harps and celesta. Only the Chorus is given an explicit key signature of four sharps at bar 70; the key signatures indicated in the orchestral reduction are therefore a mere convenience for the singers.