

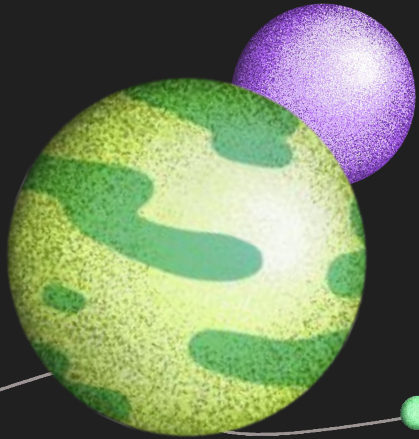
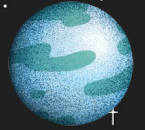


Mood Pictures within Gustav Holst's *The Planets* (1917): A Psychological Way of Composing?

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Expression (SOURCE)
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WHAT IS MY RESEARCH QUESTION?



What does Holst mean when he likens his composition to a series of “mood pictures?”*

*Richard Greene, *Holst: The Planets* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995) p. 4. “The Planets was to make its special appeal to the audience without any explanation from the composer. It was a series of ‘mood pictures,’ he was to say in a lecture some years after the piece was premiered.”

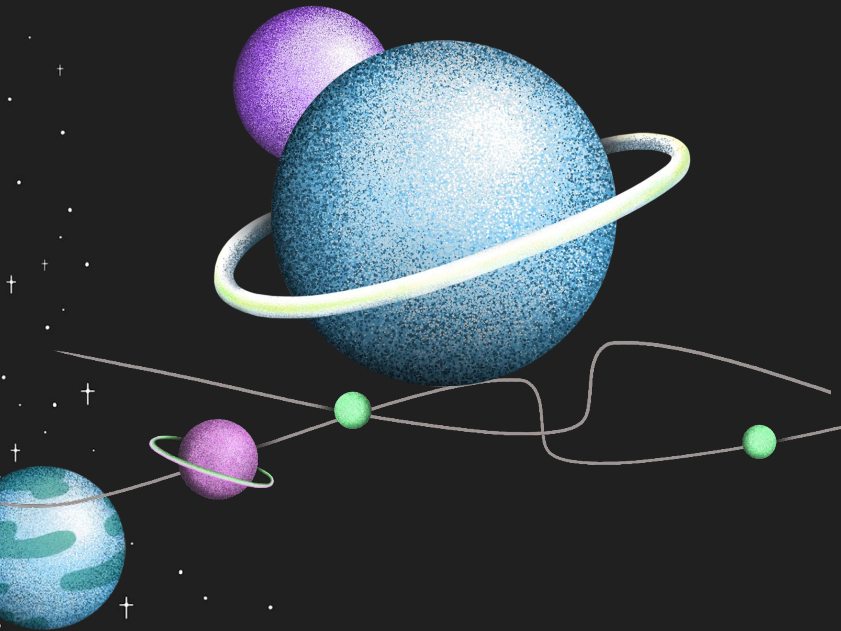
Literature Review

Two main areas of literature:

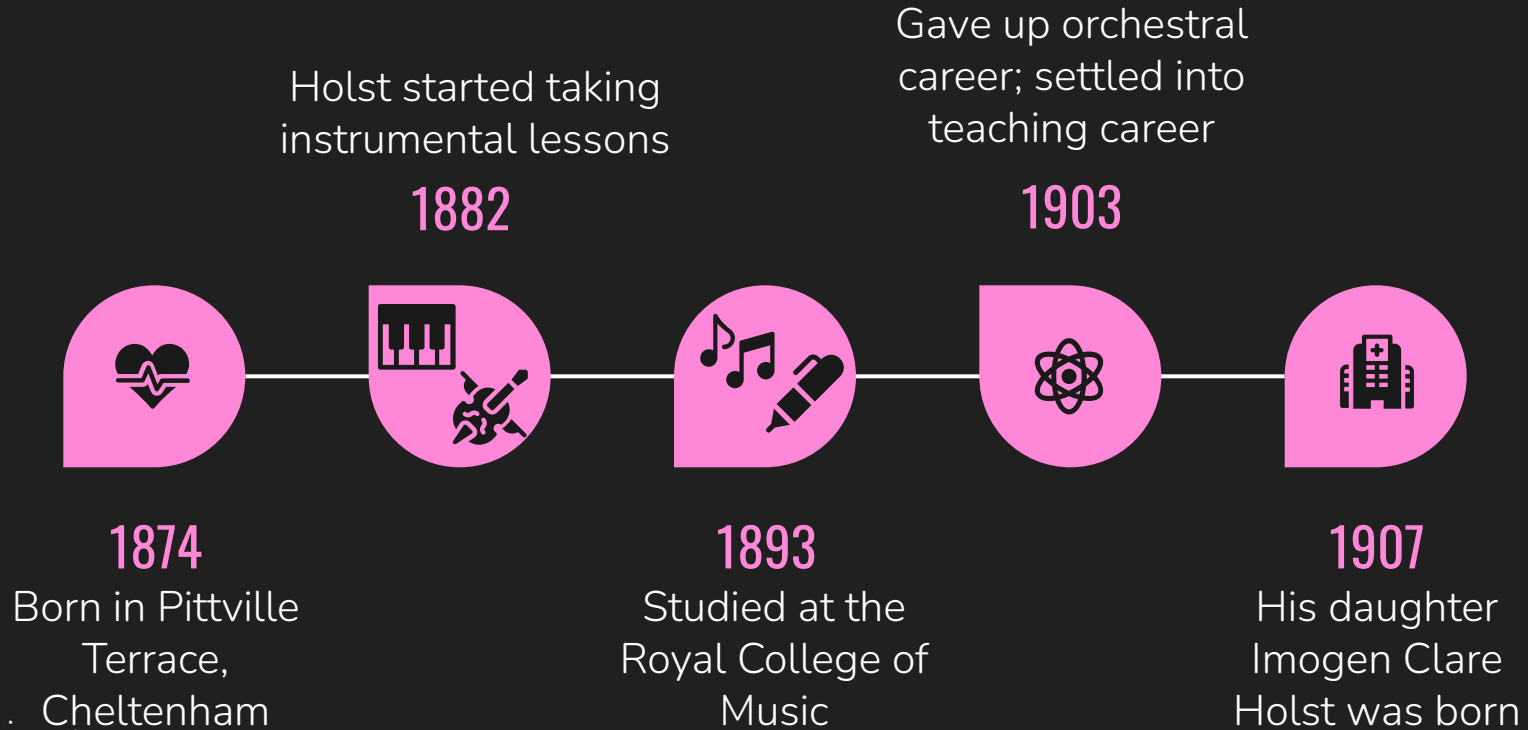
- Holst biographies and *Life and Works* sources.
- Sources on psychological and/or mood painting through music, particularly in reference to J. Joachim and C. V. Stanford.

Gap in the literature:

- Nobody has thus far discussed where Holst may have gotten the idea to compose “mood pictures”; by contextualizing Holst’s “mood pictures” in relation to Holst’s teachers, I am offering an original contribution to scholarship.



BACKGROUND



HOLST'S TEACHERS/MENTORS



JOSEPH JOACHIM

(1831-1907)

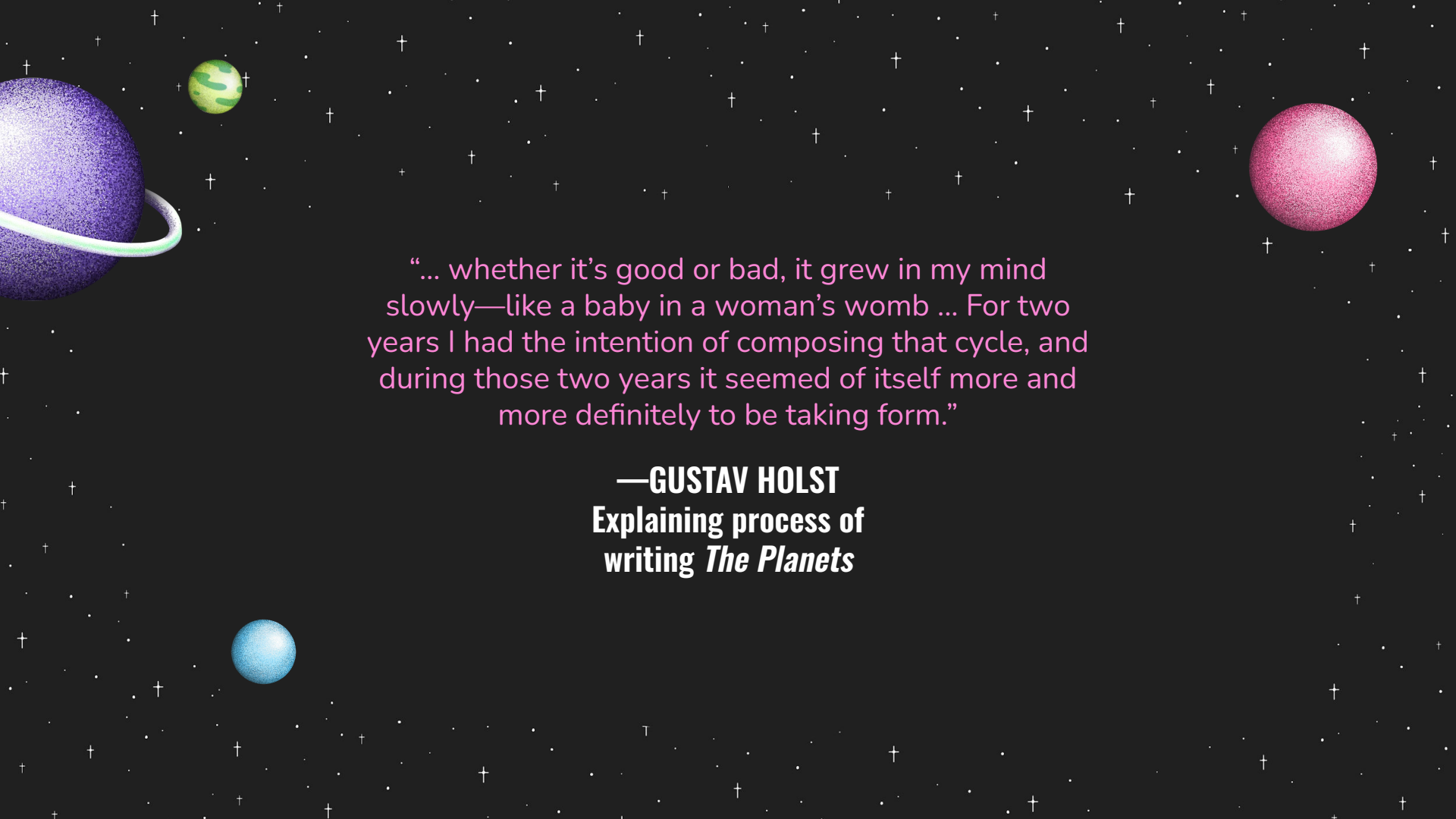
Compositions maturing like
organisms



CHARLES VILLIERS STANFORD

(1852-1924)

Wrote music including
psychological terminology



“... 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.”

—GUSTAV HOLST
Explaining process of
writing *The Planets*

MOOD PICTURES?: MORE SHOWING HOLST'S PHASES?

Movements of *The Planets* exemplify a sense of Holst's feelings and experiences from his own life

The Planets - A story/narrative of emotions and feelings that audiences were able to perceive

Similar to

Chapters in a book
Parts of a series
Etc.

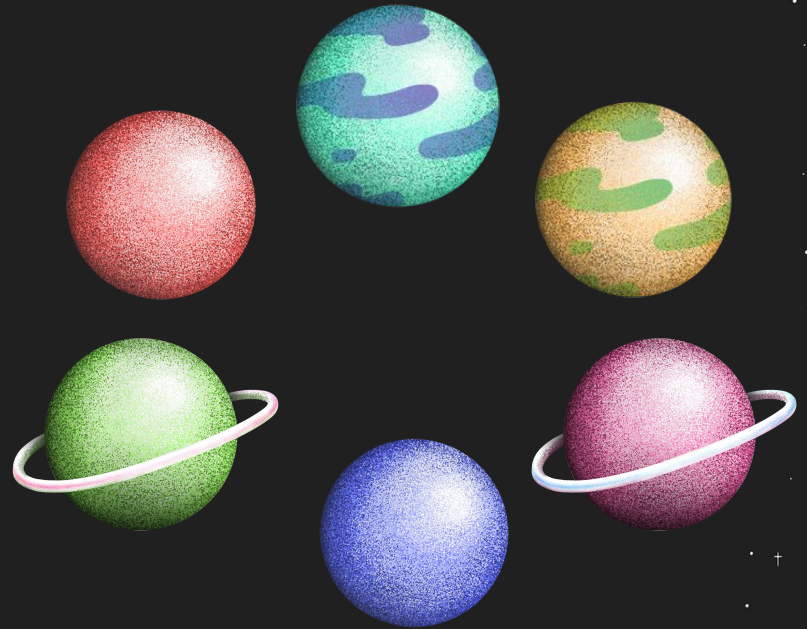


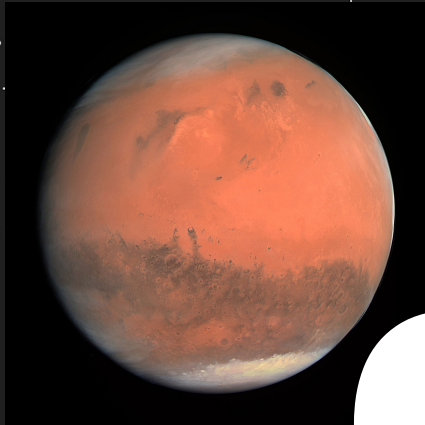
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01

RISING DISTRESS

Mars: The Bringer of War

ANALYSIS I: RISING DISTRESS

Section VII: Measures 27-30
Returning Rhythms

Ostinato from beginning
Supporting phrase

Gustav Holst's "Oppressive
Ordeal"

The image displays a musical score for Gustav Holst's "Oppressive Ordeal", specifically Section VII, Measures 27-30. The score is presented in a three-system format, with each system containing a grand staff (treble and bass clefs) and a separate staff for the right hand (R.H.) and left hand (L.H.).

The first system shows the beginning of the section, featuring a complex rhythmic pattern in the right hand and a supporting phrase in the left hand. The second system continues the music, with a prominent ostinato in the right hand and a supporting phrase in the left hand. The third system concludes the section, with a final measure marked "R.H." and "L.H.".

Key features of the score include:

- Section VII:** Indicated by a box labeled "VII" above the first measure of the second system.
- Measures 27-30:** The section spans four measures, with the first measure of the second system being measure 27 and the final measure of the third system being measure 30.
- Ostinato:** A rhythmic pattern is repeated in the right hand throughout the section.
- Supporting Phrase:** A phrase is repeated in the left hand throughout the section.
- Hand Labels:** "R.H." and "L.H." are used to label the right and left hands, respectively.

ANALYSIS I: RISING DISTRESS (cont.)

Section VIII: Measures
1-9

Newer but returning
rhythm (Section V)

Additions of rhythms
together - Building of
thunderous effect

“Frantic (but established)
scramble”

The image displays a musical score for Section VIII, Measures 1-9. The score is presented in a circular frame on a black background. It consists of six staves, arranged in three systems of two staves each. The top system (I) features a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The middle system (II) features a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The bottom system (I) features a treble clef staff with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The bottom system (II) features a bass clef staff with a key signature of one flat and a common time signature. The score includes various rhythmic patterns, including triplets and sixteenth notes, and dynamic markings such as pp and p . The overall texture is dense and complex, reflecting the 'thunderous effect' described in the text.

02

**MIXED
HAPPINESS**

Jupiter: The Bringer of Jollity



ANALYSIS II: MIXED HAPPINESS

Fast-paced sixteenth notes from strings
(A-C-D natural)

musical score for strings and horns, measures 5-9. The score is in 4/4 time and features fast-paced sixteenth notes in the strings and horns. The strings play a rhythmic pattern of eighth notes, while the horns play a melodic line. The tempo is marked *molto pesante*.

Measures 5-9:
6 horns (in F) with melody

Gives a majestic, cinematic kind of appeal to this movement

musical score for Jupiter, measures 5-9. The score is in 4/4 time and features a majestic, cinematic melody in the Jupiter instrument. The melody is characterized by wide intervals and a slow, expressive feel. The strings provide a supporting accompaniment.

Jupiter: Very expressive; positively open and full

ANALYSIS II: MIXED HAPPINESS (cont.)

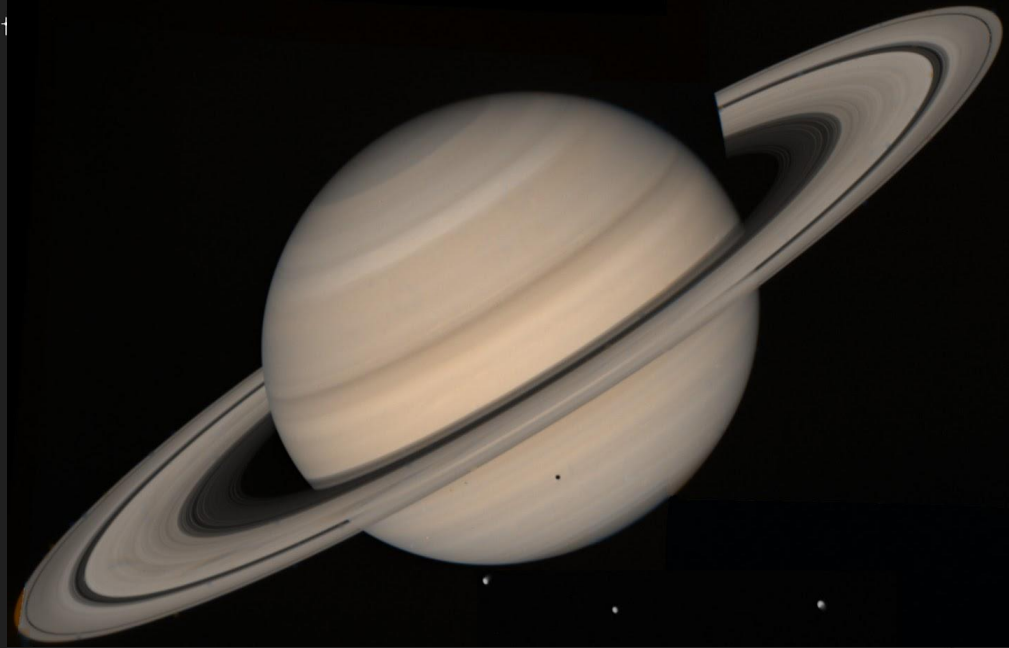
- Iconic melody at the Andante maestoso that builds from the start
- Timbre has significant and victorious feel to it, yet key of section has contrast to beginning
- “Flourish” in Holst’s life in later life compared to early life

The image displays a musical score for a piece titled "Andante maestoso" in 3/4 time. The score is presented in two systems, labeled I and II. Each system consists of two staves: a treble clef staff and a bass clef staff. The key signature is three flats (B-flat, E-flat, A-flat). The tempo marking "Andante maestoso" is written above each system, accompanied by a metronome marking of 40. The music features a prominent, melodic line in the treble clef staff, which is characterized by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, often grouped with slurs. The bass clef staff provides a harmonic accompaniment with chords and single notes. The overall mood is grand and majestic, consistent with the "maestoso" tempo marking.

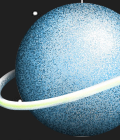


03

SORROWFUL
GROWTH



Saturn: The Bringer of Old Age



ANALYSIS III: SORROWFUL GROWTH



Adagio

p (like harp harmonics) *simile*

This musical score shows the beginning of a piece in 4/4 time. The tempo is marked 'Adagio'. The music is in a minor key, indicated by a flat sign on the F. The first staff is a treble clef, and the second is a bass clef. The music consists of a series of half-diminished seventh chords (Bdim7 and Adim7) that oscillate between the two staves. The first staff has a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking and a 'simile' marking. The second staff has a 'simile' marking.



simile

This musical score shows the continuation of the piece. The first staff is a treble clef, and the second is a bass clef. The music consists of a series of half-diminished seventh chords (Bdim7 and Adim7) that oscillate between the two staves. The first staff has a 'simile' marking. The second staff has a 'p' (piano) dynamic marking.

A

Beginning: Bdim to Adim - similar to a pendulum on a clock*

B

Gradual rise in pitches being played (and speed) going back and forth as piece goes on

C

Hoist: Misery/Agony of time passing by, giving harsh effect and somberness

D

Allude to his life and health? (experiences as a child and getting older)

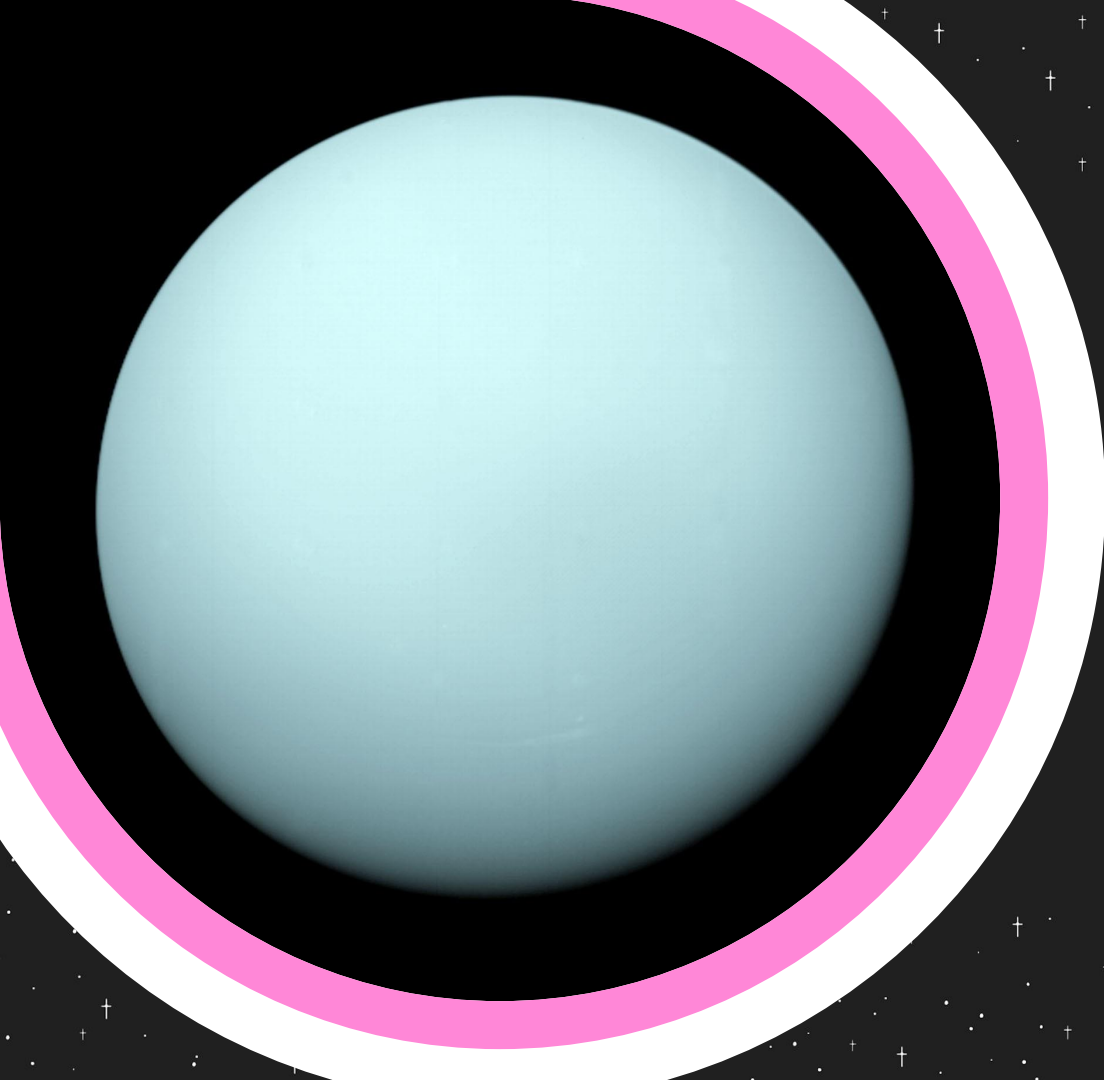
*Alex Burns, 'Gustav Holst: The Planets' (Classicalalexburns) V. Saturn - The Bringer of Old Age. "The opening bars of Saturn are often referred to as a ticking clock. With the harmonic ostinato (the harmonic intervals being of two half-diminished seventh chords - Bdim7 and Adim7) and the oscillating chord changes between the flutes and harps creates a dark image for the listener."

ANALYSIS III: SORROWFUL GROWTH (cont.)

- Section VI - Moment of ease and resolve from the climatic, disturbing music
- Representation of Holst?
 - Experienced hardship with health, but learned to acknowledge the time he had and what he did

Movement was a way to describe the act of moving forward

The image displays a musical score for Section VI, 'Moment of ease and resolve from the climatic, disturbing music'. The score is presented in two systems, each with a grand staff (treble and bass clefs). The music features a complex texture with multiple voices and instruments, including a prominent bass line. The notation includes various rhythmic values, accidentals, and dynamic markings. The first system concludes with the instruction 'tra bassa.....'. The second system begins with a fermata over a note, followed by the instruction 'loco'.



04

**PASSIVE
MISCHIEF**

Uranus: The Magician



CONCLUSIONS

01

Understand how past experts who created 'mood pictures' contributed to Holst's diversity and creativity with *The Planets*

02


Looked into memorable as well as eye-catching moments of this orchestral suite and what gives them each unique characteristics

03

Observed how these different harmonic, motivic, and structural aspects give a personal and mental picture of Holst as an individual

04

Respond to the way that a newer composer, like myself, notice some ideas in *The Planets* and think about how it's effective or could be more effective if changed



RESOURCES

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