



SOLANO WINDS *presents*
SUBLIME SUITES: CELEBRATING GUSTAV HOLST
OCTOBER 11 | 7:30 PM | VACAVILLE PERFORMING ARTS THEATRE
TICKETS AVAILABLE AT SOLANOWINDS.ORG



PROGRAM NOTES – OCTOBER 2024

A Moorside Suite

A Moorside Suite is a masterpiece of Holst's maturity. Written in 1928, six years before his death, it achieves a synthesis of his creative talent as a composer with the strong folk-song influences of 20 years earlier. The title of the work alludes to a country setting but does not describe an exact location, and this is mirrored in the musical material. The folk-song influence is apparent but not overt.

The work was originally for brass band, commissioned for the National Brass Band Championships held at the Crystal Palace, London, England. Denis Wright was a musical scholar, and the transcription was carried out either during Holst's lifetime or shortly after his death in 1934. The score was not published until 1983, and has been re-edited by Geoffrey Brand. Interestingly, Holst himself always intended the work to be transcribed for 'Military Band' and a first movement and some bars of the second movement exist in manuscript in the British Library.

First Suite in Eb for Military Band

The "First Suite in E-flat major for Military Band" (Op. 28, No. 1) is a cornerstone in the concert band repertoire. This piece, along with its sister piece, "Second Suite in F for Military Band", was written by the prominent British composer Gustav Holst. Aside from these two suites, *Hammersmith* and *A Moorside Suite* were his only band works. The *First Suite*, as it is informally called, was written for a full military band in 1909. During this time of band music, the repertoire was almost exclusively transcriptions from orchestral works. Holst's First and Second Suites are two of the very few works for concert bands that have been transcribed for orchestra.

The First Suite has three movements, each with its own character and form. The complete composition is based upon a 8-measure melody reminiscent of English folk song; however, the tune is original to Holst.

Most notably, the theme statement that initiates the first movement is developed throughout each movement. Its variations range in style from lyrical to playfully rhythmic to ornamentally embellished.

The Planets – IV. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity

"The Planets", composed for orchestra in 1915, is a suite of seven tone poems, each describing symbolically a different planet. The work has insistent odd meters of five and seven beats, thick streams of parallel triads, and an opulent instrumentation. The entire suite was first performed for a private audience in 1918 and in public, without *Venus* and *Neptune*, in 1919. *Jupiter – The Bringer of Jollity* is introduced by a genial, syncopated dance, appropriately so since a happy and festive mood is maintained throughout this movement. Holst's love of English folk song and dance is readily demonstrated here. The middle section presents a surprising contrast – a majestic flowing melody in 3/4 meter which Holst later used for a patriotic song



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Boléro

Commissioned by Ida Rubenstein in 1928, Boléro received its premiere at the Paris Opera House in November of 1928. Based simply on the repetition of a two themes in unvarying rhythm, remaining in the key of C Major almost to the very end, and growing in a constant crescendo throughout, it took the world by storm, making Maurice Ravel's music known even to the masses who cared little about "serious" music. After the success of Boléro, Ravel became the most popular musical figure in France, repeatedly invited to appear as guest conductor of his works and receiving enthusiastic acclaim in spite of his lack of skill as a conductor.

The Planets – I. Mars, the Bringer of War

Ralph Vaughn Williams described the music of Gustav Holst as "uncompromisingly direct... (it) reaches into the unknown but never loses touch with humanity. Most wind band musicians consider his works for military (wind) band as the cornerstone of 20th-century concert band literature.

"The Planets", composed for orchestra in 1915, is a suite of seven tone poems, each describing symbolically a different planet. The work has insistent odd meters of five and seven beats, thick streams of parallel triads, and an opulent instrumentation. The entire suite was first performed for a private audience in 1918 and in public, with "Venus" and "Neptune", in 1919. "Mars – the Bringer of War" was complete in the composer's mind in the early summer of 1914, when the First World War was but an emerging threat. The work is dominated by a relentless hammering out of a 5/4 rhythm which suggests the relentless destruction of war. The opposition of harmony and rhythm is skillfully used to produce a startling aural and emotional effect. This movement was transcribed for band by the composer in 1924.

Suite from The Star Wars Epic, Part Two

The Star Wars movie phenomenon has captured the imaginations of generations of movie fans worldwide. Beginning in 1977 with the release of Episode IV: A New Hope, the vision of George Lucas, combined with the music of John Williams, has resulted in the most successful series of films and the most recognized soundtrack in history.

Robert W. Smith has drawn upon the imagination of John Williams and George Lucas to create this Suite, which includes music from all six movie episodes. Part Two contains music from the first three films to be released, Episodes IV-VI. The work is dedicated to John Williams, whose life's work and musical legacy will endure for centuries to come.