



## Gustav Holst

September 21 1874 – May 25 1934

Gustav Holst was an English composer, arranger and teacher known for his evident orchestral talent. He taught music at colleges and schools until the end of his life, showing extreme knowledge in his area. He remained in Britain for all his life.

Gustav was the son of a Swedish father and English mother. In his family tree, there were three previous generations of professional musicians, so it was evident early in his life that music would be part of his destiny.

Initially, before playing the trombone, Holst had been steered to be a pianist, but a physical impairment called neuritis (nerve inflammation) in his right arm made this impossible. In addition to this impairment, Gustav had to overcome in some ways a miserable childhood. He was often neglected and had other physical ailments such as asthma and weak eyesight (which no one knew or corrected during his youth). His health actually kept him from serving in WWI many years later, much to his disappointment.

His father had other plans for Gustav, but Gustav pursued music first as a composer and studied at the Royal College of Music in London. However, he was not able to sustain a career in composition, and instead turned to a musical career on the trombone. He played professionally in multiple orchestras and eventually became a teacher to much acclaim.

Gustav served as musical director of Morley College from 1907 through 1924 and was a pioneer of musical education for women at St. Paul's Girls' School from 1905 until his death in 1934. He challenged the notion that girls should only focus on simple music and introduced Bach and many other influences. Many female students of his went on to have successful careers themselves. He also founded the Whitsun music festivals from 1916 until his death.

Late in his life, he had to make a decision on a surgery due to hemorrhagic gastritis caused by a duodenal ulcer. One option was to have minor surgery that would restrict his lifestyle or a major surgery that would offer him complete freedom but carried more risk. The surgery was successful, but his heart was too weak for the strain. He died in London on May 25th, 1934.

Gustav didn't reach international notoriety until *The Planets* right after World War I. An interesting fact - while he could not serve militarily during WWI, he was offered a role with the music section of the YMCA. However, he had to change his name from Von Holst to just Holst as many considered his legal name to be too "German sounding." He did not enjoy this fame as he was mostly a shy person and would rather focus on teaching and crafting new compositions.

He was never able to reach the same level of success as *The Planets*, but he was considered a great teacher and, due to his temperament, that seemed to make him happiest.

# Classical Pieces

Week 1 - Jupiter

Week 2 - Mars

Week 3 - Venus

Week 4 - Neptune

# Composer Study

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

Place of Birth: \_\_\_\_\_

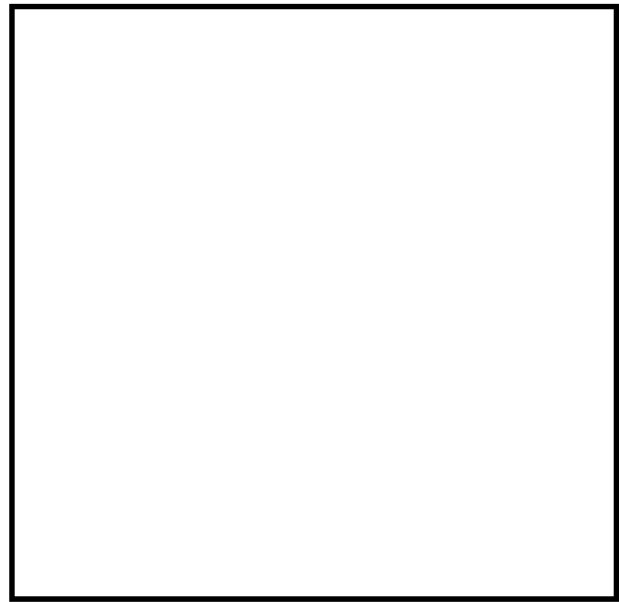
Composer Fun Facts:

---

---

---

---



Instruments Used: \_\_\_\_\_

Famous Compositions: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Further Study:

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_