

## Gustav Holst - The Planets (Albrecht) [2012]

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*01] Mars, the bringer of war 02] Venus, the bringer of peace 03] Mercury, the winged messenger 04] Jupiter, the bringer of jollity 05] Saturn, the bringer of old age 06] Uranus, the magician 07] Neptune, the mystic* Hansjörg Albrecht – organ

Holst's most popular composition is transcribed here for organ, which may please fans of the instrument but may or may not please fans of The Planets. The organ can't help but bring out all the grandeur and majesty of Holst's original. The power of the gods is unmistakable in the deep richness and sheer volume of the instrument's notes. "Mars" and "Jupiter" make the transfer to organ the most successfully, in those respects. The range of colors is quite broad in them, although, naturally, not as varied in timbres as that of full orchestra. And the build-up of sustained notes is a little muddying at times. "Uranus" is slightly plodding and lacking liveliness in the beginning, but then picks up steam so that the magician's power is evident. The least successful movement is "Mercury." The transcription just isn't always in a high enough register or flute-like, and Hansjörg Albrecht doesn't have the speed to convey Mercury's fleetness effectively. "Saturn" is kept in the lower registers, again making it hard to distinguish notes. The mystical nature of "Neptune" takes on more of a spookiness with the resonance of the organ. It's always interesting to hear how the capabilities of the king of instruments can be exploited and how close it can come to replicating orchestral colors, but this transcription delivers uneven results. ---Patsy Morita, Rovi

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