

Kyle Gann - Kyle Gann's The Planets (2010)



Book I 1 Sun 6:31 2 Moon 6:02 3 Venus 7:03 4 Mars 6:58 Book II 5 Jupiter 7:50
6 Mercury 6:05 7 Saturn 10:20

Book III

8 Uranus 7:31 9 Neptune 7:46 10 Pluto 6:59

Relâche Ensemble: Bob Burtyn - Saxophone John Dulik - Synthesizer Ruth Frazier - Viola
Chris Hanning - Percussion Chuck Holdeman - Bassoon Michele Kelly - Flute Douglas Mapp -
Bass Lloyd Shorter - Oboe Sarah Sutton - Viola

No one could be more aware than I am of the foolhardiness of competing with Gustav Holst. Asked, years ago, to write an article about my favorite orchestral warhorse, I picked his *The Planets*. My justification for writing my own such piece is this: music has not progressed since Holst, in the sense of having improved, the new superceding the old - but astrology has. The ushering in of "free will astrology" by composer-astrologer Dane Rudhyar and others in the mid 20th century has replaced the old view of astrology as implacable fate with a new one of psychological process. At the same time, through the advent of minimalism, music itself has become more capable of embodying gradual and transformational process. Where Holst had melodies suggestive of traditional planetary forces, I have processes that mirror our current understanding of how those forces operate. My *Planets* may be better, may be worse, but their *raison d'être* is that they are more suggestive of contemporary astrology than Holst's. This was sufficient reason to update.

At the same time, I have Pluto, which wasn't discovered until 13 years after Holst wrote *The Planets* - and which is still used as a crucial astrological planet, even if downgraded by the astronomers. And Holst didn't portray the Sun and Moon, which astrology refers to as planets, possibly because they seemed too personal to exert the same influences, or perhaps simply because they weren't strictly speaking, planets. But in astrology as conceived today, the Sun isn't really the Self (nor the Moon the female or receptive Self), but is rather an influence that acts upon the Self with particular characteristics, more intense, perhaps, but no less qualifiable

than Mars, Saturn, and so on. And so I have ten movements where Holst had only seven. The male planets are Sun, Mars, Jupiter, and Saturn; Mercury and Uranus are neuter; Moon, Venus, Neptune, and Pluto are female (though Pluto is related to Mars despite its Dark Mother feminine archetype). The "personal" planets (Sun, Moon, Mars, Venus, Mercury) are characterized by clear melodies and individualistic solo parts; the "transcendent" outer planets are depicted in cloudier ensemble effects. Male-planet movements are driven by active melodies, female ones often fall into a receptive musical background with no foregrounded elements. I wrote "Sun," "Moon," "Venus," and "Mars" (under the less competitive title *Astrological Studies*) in 1994 on trips to Seattle with the Relache Ensemble, as part of the Music in Motion program. I wrote "Jupiter" and "Neptune" for another performance in 2001, but Relache's endemic financial fragility made me reluctant to complete my longest work for them, at least until they seemed guaranteed to survive. Survive they have, and I am grateful to them for keeping their faith in the work. The first book was written with the help of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts. --- kylegann.com

THE PLANETS by Kyle Gann. This third release by Relâche with Meyer Media is sure to have you blasting off into the solar system with amazement! This magnum Opus of Kyle's finally comes to realization for the first time in the complete full CD recording. Explore the warmth of the Sun, the violence of Mars, the beauty of Venus, and then meditate on Neptune. Picking up where Holst left off, we go deeper into space, and the human psyche. Our solar system is a delicate balance of light and dark, gravitational pulls and energies, the feminine and masculine. All that life has to offer from birth to death and beyond, THE PLANETS will enlighten your soul with perspective and depth rarely experienced. Brilliantly performed and beautifully recorded, come explore your world today. --- meyer-media.com

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