Beat: News

Holst’s The Planets - Edinburgh International Festival

Usher Hall

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USPA NEWS - The London Philharmonic Orchestra delivered a commanding and evocative performance of Gustav Holst’s The Planets at the Usher Hall, as part of the Edinburgh Festival. Under the baton of principal conductor Edward Gardner, the orchestra brought out the full majesty, mystery, and emotional breadth of Holst’s iconic suite.

From the thunderous march of "Mars, the Bringer of War" to the ethereal conclusion of "Neptune, the Mystic," the orchestra demonstrated remarkable precision, dynamic range, and sensitivity. The brass section, in particular, stood out for its raw power and clarity, while the strings maintained a shimmering cohesion throughout even the most complex passages.

"Venus" offered a much-needed moment of calm, played with exquisite tenderness, and "Jupiter" was a definite highlight — exuberant, regal, and warmly received by the audience. The offstage female chorus in "Neptune" created a haunting fade into silence, executed flawlessly, leaving the hall in a stunned hush.

The acoustics of the Usher Hall complemented the performance beautifully, allowing every nuance to resonate with clarity and depth. The evening was a masterclass in orchestral storytelling, and a powerful reminder of The Planets’ enduring appeal over a century after its debut.

This was a standout concert in this year’s Edinburgh Festival, and one that will linger in the memory of its audience for some time.

Edward Gardner
Conductor

Beatrice Rana
Piano

Christopher Bell
Artistic Director

Mark Evans
Associate Chorus Director

London Philharmonic Orchestra

"The enormity of the universe revealed by science cannot readily be grasped by the human brain, but the music of The Planets enables the mind to acquire some comprehension of the vastness of space where rational understanding fails" - Gustav Holst

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