

Gustav Holst



### **DATES**

Born in Cheltenham, England, September 21st, 1874

Died in England, May 25th, 1934

### **NATIONALITY**

British

### **STYLE/PERIOD**

Romantic 1820-1910

### **FAMOUS WORKS**

The Planets, Second Suite for Military Band in F, First Suite for Military Band in E-flat

## • BIOGRAPHY

- Gustav Holst was born into a very musical family. His father was a pianist and his mother (who died when he was 8) was a singer.
- As a child, he was taught the piano, organ, and trombone.
- He studied composition at the Royal College of Music in London (where he was a teacher later in his life). There, he met another composer: Ralph Vaughan Williams. They soon became wonderful friends.
- Holst and Vaughan Williams were known to spend many hours having deep conversations about music and life, but their music composition styles were very different.
- After he finished college, Holst played his trombone professionally. He soon found that it was difficult to earn a living as a trombonist and composer, so in 1904 he took a job as the Director of Music at the St. Paul's Girl's School in Hammersmith, a job that he held until he died!
- It was during his time as a teacher that he composed his most famous work, *The Planets*. Because he was so busy teaching his students, it took him over two years to complete the piece!
- Although he is known to this day for *The Planets*, Holst never felt that it was the best example of his compositions. Throughout his life, Holst continued to compose orchestral music, wind ensemble music, operas, chamber music, and vocal music of many different styles, and had a great interest in various kinds of literature, poetry and astrology.