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Music Faculty Ron Parks Called on to Compose Companion Pieces for Holst's Planets

Winthrop University

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Music Faculty Ron Parks Called on to Compose Companion Pieces for Holst's Planets

Quick Facts

- The Charlotte Civic Orchestra concert will begin at 3:30 p.m. Sunday, June 7, at Sharon Methodist Church in Charlotte.



CHARLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA — **English composer Gustav Holst** wrote his wildly popular orchestral suite “**The Planets**” between 1914-16. Each of the suite’s seven movements is named after a planet, but two items have always been missing: Earth and Pluto.

That’s where Winthrop University **Associate Professor of Music Ron Parks** steps in.

The **Charlotte Civic Orchestra** will perform Holst’s epic suite on Sunday, June 7, “with a twist”: Orchestra Conductor Geoff Whitehead commissioned Parks to complete the suite. He immediately accepted the challenge.

“But as soon as I hung up the phone, I wondered, ‘What am I thinking?’” Parks said. “How does one ‘finish’ Holst’s Planets? It is one of the most iconic works of the early 20th century.”

Following Holst’s lead, Parks took inspiration from mythology, particularly from the Earth/Gaia movement of the late 20th century, which proposed that earthly organic and inorganic matter comprise one living organism. His piece features an “organic pulse around which other musical components gather, eventually coalescing into harmonies.”

He approached Pluto in a more programmatic manner. After Neptune’s suite concludes, Pluto immediately starts and traces the mythological Pluto, guardian of the Underworld. It ends with a contrabassoon solo that Parks describes as “a character sketch of the grumpy, resentful Pluto guarding the entrance to the underworld.”

Parks’ two new movements will be premiered live at the performance. The concert begins at 3:30 p.m. at **Sharon United Methodist Church, 4411 Sharon Road, Charlotte, North Carolina**. For ticket information, [visit the Charlotte Civic Orchestra website](#).

For more information on the Charlotte Civic Orchestra, visit <http://www.charlottecivicorchestra.org>. To learn more about Parks’ music and career visit <http://www.ronparksmusic.com>.

[[Back to Previous Page](#)]

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