

THE PLANETS – AN HD ODYSSEY

Quotes from Houston Symphony UK tour

Getting to view these incredible images on the big screen is a treat. From the craters of Mercury to almost trippy heat imaging of Venus to up-close rover footage of rocks on the surface of Mars, this took me far beyond vaguely recollected structure of the solar system science lessons.... It's heady stuff. But it's also beautiful. Pairing images of planets intended to advance scientific knowledge with music written as an artistic response is a neat idea. And whether it's the almost painterly swirls on the surface of Jupiter or the stately progression through the rings of Saturn, the footage has been carefully selected to harmonise with the music – an educational documentary this ain't...

The multimedia format also seems like a winner, drawing in people who rarely attend classical concerts (ahem) as well as keeping the attention of even very young children at a family-friendly matinee performance. It's like a grown up Fantasia, with extra scientific accuracy thrown in. And why not? Even as space exploration discovers more and more about our solar system, and even as we delight in seeing further and clearer than ever before, the planets are still quite big enough for music and mythology and mystery too.

- Holly Williams, *The Independent* (London), October 18, 2010

With lift-off achieved, the film of *The Planets* proved to be an equal blend of art and science.... [T]he images were stunningly clear and often beautiful. The director, Duncan Copp, had assembled some of the best images from Nasa spacecraft and supplemented them with graphics derived from scientific data.... Mission accomplished.

- Richard Fairman, *The Financial Times*, October 18, 2010

...the images are sometimes quite breathtaking; such as when a probe penetrates the noxious atmosphere that surrounds Venus like the fuzz of a rotten orange, or ripples through the rings of Saturn like a harpist's fingers.... Stripped of the visuals, this would be a rousing account of the *Planets Suite* on its own. With them, it creates an experience that is genuinely out of this world.

- Alfred Hickling, *The Guardian* (UK), October 13, 2010

The idea of showing high-definition film of the real planets in the Solar System to the accompaniment of Holst's *The Planets* suite brought a full house, which is music to anyone's ears these days.

The film, created by Duncan Copp from images provided by NASA and the Jet Propulsion Laboratory, was awesome enough. Mars, perhaps not surprisingly, is the one where we have most footage to go on, but for every other planet given sonic form by Holst there were images and animations, with the music effectively writing the script.

Indeed, it, rather than the science, called the shots much of the time, with Venus appearing eerily beautiful despite the fact that (as we learned in the brief filmed introduction) it's probably hell down there in reality.

- Robert Beale, *City Life* (Manchester), October 12, 2010

It is, effectively, film music - given the number of Hollywood sound tracks that have either been influenced by its imaginative orchestration, or quite simply pinched the music direct - so this multimedia mix was a marriage made in heaven.

- Kenneth Walton, *The Scotsman*, October 12, 2010

As *Mars the Bringer of War* opened with its ominous march, the camera swooped in on a lacerated landscape, taking the viewer on an edge-of-seat ride through its stark valley. One was soon sucked in by the effects.... *Venus the Bringer of Peace* looked an image of tranquillity with its surface covered by swirling clouds. But, stripped away by the cameras of Magellan, was revealed a fissured and hellish place....An exhilarating experience.

- Gavin Engelbrecht, *The Northern Echo*, October 14, 2010