

THINKING CRITICALLY**● A Solar System Symphony**

Because the heavens and solar system were a source of great mystery, awe, and majesty for ancient people, they developed a rich folklore history in mythology. The mythological characters associated with the planets have been carried through the centuries.

Artists and composers have found these characters to be a source of great inspiration. In 1918, Gustav Holst composed a work for orchestra that he called *The Planets*. The composition consists of the following seven movements, or parts.

- Mars, the Bringer of War
- Venus, the Bringer of Peace
- Mercury, the Winged Messenger
- Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
- Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
- Uranus, the Magician
- Neptune, the Mystic

The titles that Holst gave to the planets probably reflected the mythological or astrological characters associated with the planets. What properties of the planets themselves could also have prompted these titles?

Your Turn to Think

1. For each of the seven planets in his work, determine what property or properties of the planet could have led Holst to the title. Use any references available to you such as the Internet, encyclopedias, astronomy books, and almanacs.
 - a. Mars, the Bringer of War
 - b. Venus, the Bringer of Peace
 - c. Mercury, the Winged Messenger
 - d. Jupiter, the Bringer of Jollity
 - e. Saturn, the Bringer of Old Age
 - f. Uranus, the Magician
 - g. Neptune, the Mystic
2. Why do you think Holst omitted Pluto from his composition?