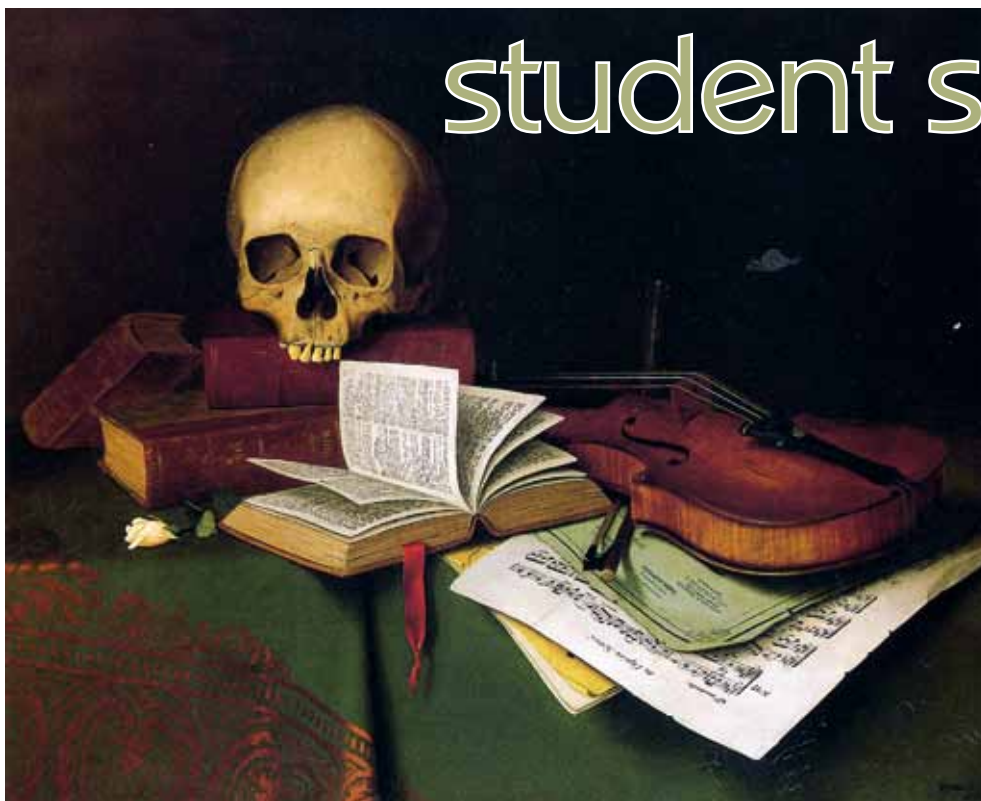


student section

Wendy Stacey



The immortal horoscope: can transits still affect our natal chart after we have died?

WHY IS IT that Elvis had a number one hit around the world decades after he had died? Why at that point in time, and why that particular song? Is there something about Harvey Milk that inspired producers to make a movie forty years after his death and which went on to become an academy award winner?

It is fascinating to discover how often it is that long after someone has died, transits to their chart can bring them back into the spotlight for one reason or another. This phenomenon is not exclusive to famous people or to people who become famous after death; it can happen to all of us.

However, what we do find with these transits to the charts of famous individuals is the influence they can have on the public and their impact on the collective. They often represent, or actually invoke, a shared collective awareness, understanding or emotion. The nature of the transits themselves, the planets involved and how they interplay with the individual's chart, provide some insight into why the collective is drawn towards it (whatever it may be) at a particular point in time.

Several of the charts explored in this article have transits to their angles. It is important to remember, when working with angles, that the exact birth time of public figures is often not known and only four minutes discrepancy in the time of the birth will move the Ascendant by as much as one degree. Also, the question of how wide the orbs should be is often controversial. For the purposes of this article, orbs of up to four degrees have been used for transits. However, any event will usually have some build-up to it, examples being that

a film is already in production before its release, a book is being written before it is published, and so on.

Below are some examples of how transits can trigger an individual's chart to have an impact on others or the collective at some point in time.

Just before Christmas 2008, the 2008 *X-Factor* winner, Alexandra Burke, released a cover version of the song 'Hallelujah', which flew to Number 1 in the UK charts. The song, originally written by Leonard Cohen and released in 1984, has since been recorded by over 200 artists, possibly the most notable being **Jeff Buckley's** version. At the same time that Alexandra Burke's *X-Factor* version held number one place, Jeff Buckley's version reached number two in the charts, eleven years after his death (it had reached a high point in the charts earlier in 2008 as well, with American Idol using the same song for their winner). At the time that Buckley held the position of Number 2 in the UK charts, he had transiting Chiron and Neptune straddling his Descendant (although his birth time and exact position of his angles is not definite). Also, interestingly, there was a transiting Saturn (21° Virgo) opposite Uranus (18° Pisces) occurring at that moment which made a conjunction with Buckley's natal stellium of Pluto, Mars and Uranus ($20-23^\circ$ Virgo) and Buckley's natal Saturn and Chiron (21° and 22° Pisces). This transiting opposition falling in the 2nd and 8th houses made an aspect to every planet in Buckley's natal chart. It was a major financial success, and it is not surprising – with Uranus involved natively and by transit – that Buckley's Number 2 spot was reached primarily through electronic sales. Cohen rewrote the song in 1994 with stronger sexual

overtones, and Buckley's version embraced and made reference to the sexuality of the song, which can also be seen to be reflected by these transits to the 2nd and 8th houses. The song – which many consider to be one of the greatest of all time – has stirred discussion and debate in several forums due to its powerful lyrics, which contain several Biblical references. (Interestingly, Cohen also had transiting Pluto just passing his IC, opposing his Gemini MC, and transiting Jupiter exactly opposing his natal Pluto in the 10th house – perhaps signifying a revival for Cohen too.)

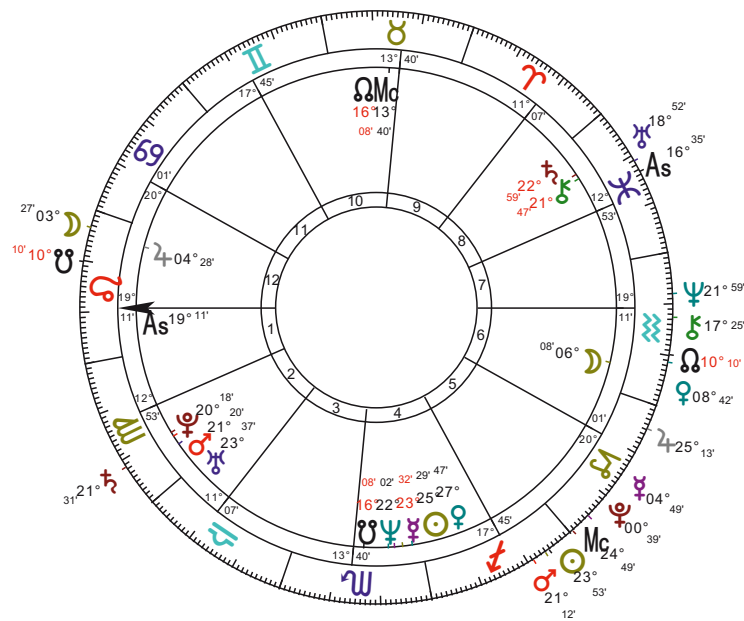
Harvey Milk – activist, politician and first openly gay person to be elected as a government official in the US – had an award-winning movie released forty years after his death, as the Saturn-Uranus opposition across 20° Virgo and 18° Pisces in November 2008 picked up his Pisces Moon (17°), which also trined his Pluto, sextiled his Chiron and squared his Jupiter. Transiting Neptune (22° Aquarius) was about to journey over his Ascendant (at 23°) and was trining his Jupiter. Transiting Pluto was approaching a trine with his natal Neptune. Although controversial at the time, it is only now that his ground-breaking reform and challenging of the status quo (Saturn/Uranus) has gained global attention. His Pisces Moon is sensitive, and here it represents not only his personal victimisation but also his selfless calling to ensure the overthrow of discriminatory policy for the benefit of wider society, which ultimately affected the lives of millions. In addition, both the natal and transiting Neptune/Pluto aspects describe the impact of his actions, which helped to alter society's perceptions forever.

By the late 1960s, **Elvis Presley's** recording career had declined. A new album, called the *1968 Comeback Special*, which was released in December of that year, revived Presley's career and soared several of his hits back to Number 1, leading to tours being booked out across the US. When Presley first sang one of the songs from the album in October 1968 – 'If I can dream' – Jupiter and Pluto were conjunct at 23° Virgo, approaching Presley's MC at 26° and opposing his Pisces IC. Transiting Uranus had also just passed

Presley's natal MC. At the time the album was released in December, Pluto was two degrees from his MC.

In August and November 2001 and May 2002, thirty-three years after the release of this album and twenty-four years after Presley's death, transiting Pluto and Saturn opposed in the sky at 12°, 13° and then 16° of Sagittarius and Gemini – the first and second of these oppositions made conjunctions to Presley's Ascendant-Descendant axis. Uranus was also making a series of conjunctions throughout this time with his natal Saturn in the third house.

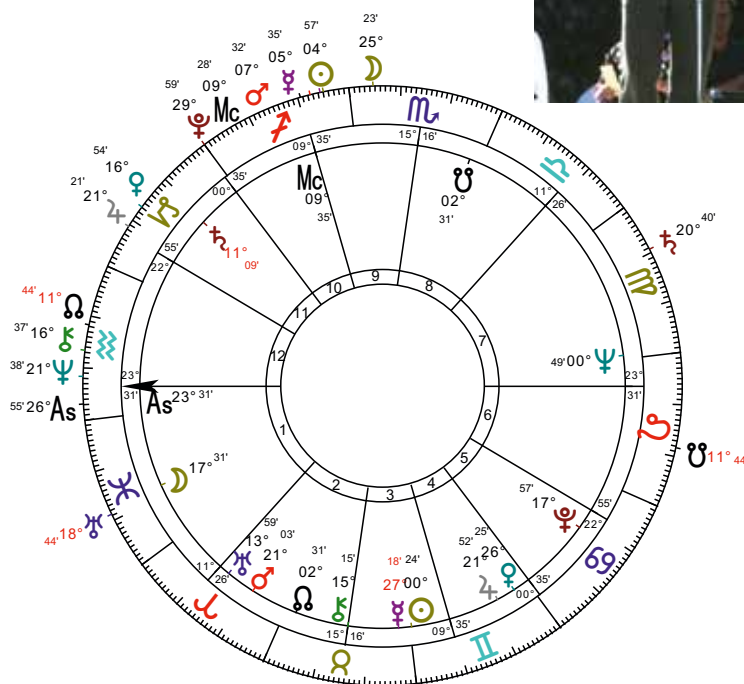
The song 'A Little Less Conversation', which was included in the 1968 comeback album at the last minute, was not the most popular song on the album at the time, but after being remixed and re-released in May of 2002 for the football World Cup it became a Number 1 hit single in over twenty countries! Interestingly, the song 'A Little Less Conversation' became a huge success for Presley when Saturn transited his Descendant in Gemini – and perhaps the transiting Pluto in Sagittarius could be seen to represent the football World Cup. When Saturn in Gemini had previously crossed Presley's Descendant in 1972, he had just released the gold-selling single 'Always on My Mind'!



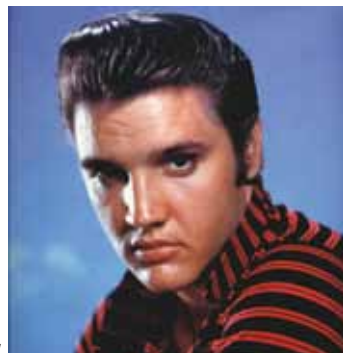
**Inner wheel - Jeff Buckley: 17 Nov 1966, 22.49, LA, USA.
Outer wheel - No 2 hit: 15 Dec 2008, noon, London, UK.**



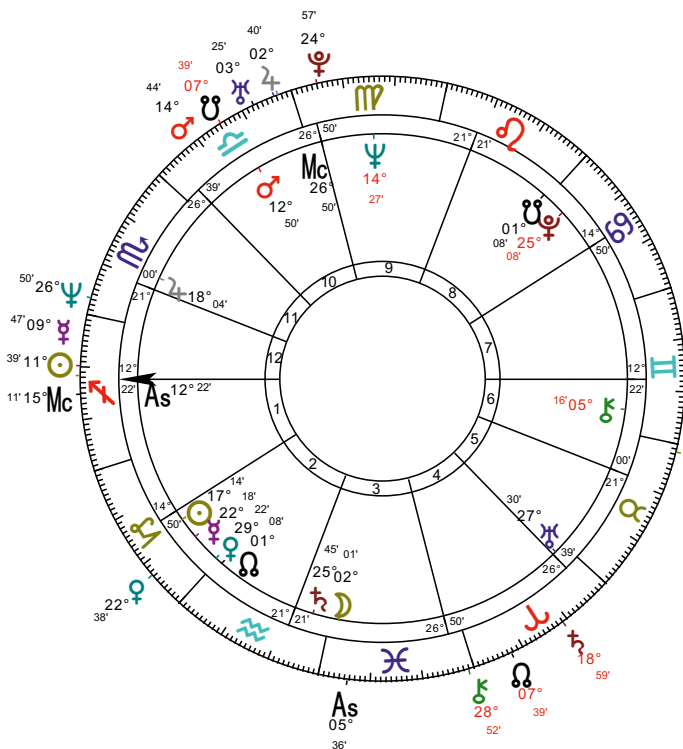
Harvey Milk



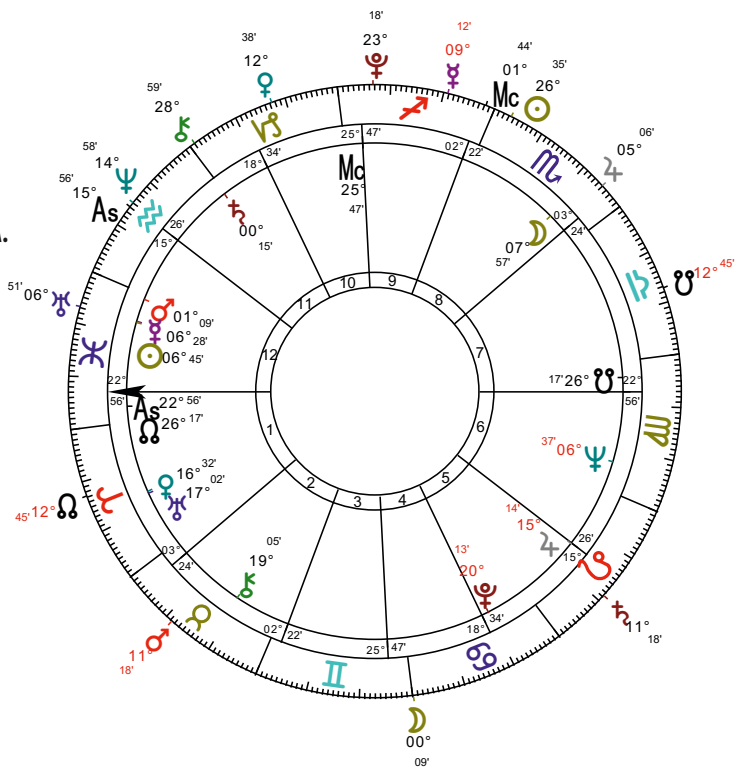
**Inner wheel - Harvey Milk: 22 May 1930, 1.30, Woodmere, NY, USA.
Outer wheel - Milk release date: 26 Nov 2008, noon, Hollywood, CA, USA.**



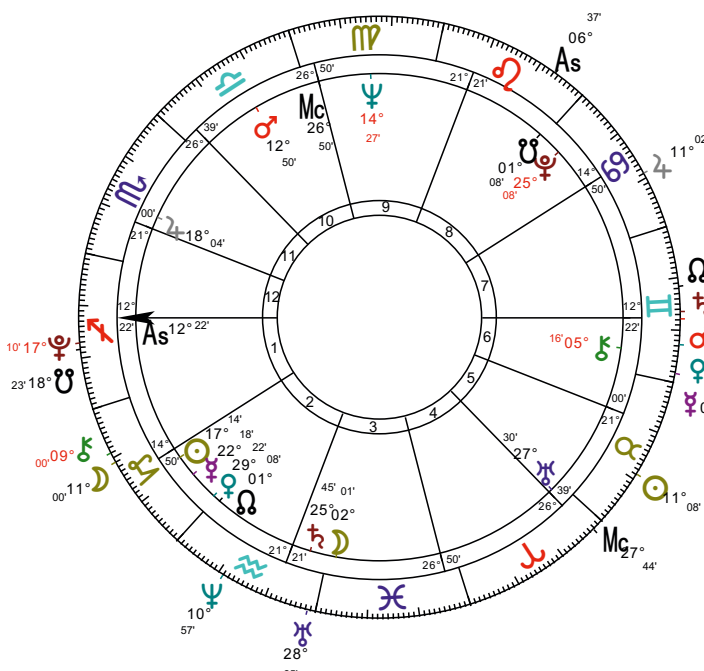
Elvis Presley



Inner wheel - Elvis Presley: 8 Jan 1935, 4.35, Tupelo, USA.
Outer wheel - 1969 comeback album: 3 Dec 1968, noon, Tupelo, USA.



Inner wheel - Johnny Cash: 26 Feb 1932, 7.30, Kingsland, AR, USA.
Outer wheel - Walk the line: 18 Nov 2005, noon, Hollywood, CA, USA.



Inner wheel - Elvis Presley natal.
Outer wheel - A little less conversation: 1 May 2002, noon, Tupelo, USA.

Johnny Cash died at the age of 71 in 2003. The Academy Award-winning movie *Walk the Line* was released on the 18th November 2005, when transiting Pluto was approaching his MC by two degrees, transiting Jupiter was conjunct his Moon, transiting Uranus was exactly on his Sun and Mercury (only a 5-minute separation from the Sun) and the transiting Saturn-Neptune opposition in the sky picked up his Jupiter. Similar to Presley, the Pluto on the MC revived a career in music that captured something on a deeper collective level. The large-scale response to the film revived Cash's popularity, two years after his death and around 40 years after his career was at its peak. *Walk the Line*, the title of both song and movie, is about Cash's journey through the underworld and back. The transiting Uranus on his Sun, and Jupiter on his Moon (both in water signs and houses), allowed a glimpse into the real and private life of the man, who was deeply compassionate but suffered greatly from

addictions and other problems in his lifetime, and who had a deep yearning for a partner he couldn't have for a long time. Also, with transiting Uranus on his Mercury, we were enlightened on the genius of his song-writing. The transiting Saturn-Uranus opposition on his natal Jupiter brought some insight into the outlaw and rule-breaker sides of his personality. Interestingly, the day that the *Walk the Line* DVD and collector's edition was released (28 February 2006), Pluto was only 15 minutes from his MC. The DVD sold three million copies on that day alone.

Vincent Van Gogh sold only one painting in his lifetime. It was not until over a decade after his death that his work started to be recognised. Perhaps this was due to a transiting Uranus-Pluto opposition in Sagittarius-Gemini that closely picked up his Moon

conjunct Jupiter in Sagittarius in the 6th house by one degree, while transiting Saturn crossed his Descendant. Don McLean's legendary song 'Vincent (Starry Starry Night)' was released in October 1971 and went to Number 1 in the charts around the world. In the song, McLean empathises with Van Gogh's mental health and suffering and expresses huge admiration for his work. McLean makes several references in the song to not being understood or accepted by others. Van Gogh had died 118 years previously, and at the time the song was released there was a transiting Uranus in Libra opposite Chiron in Aries, and Chiron was making a series of conjunctions to Van Gogh's Sun, describing the pain and suffering Van Gogh endured mostly through his relationships with others (physically, emotionally and psychologically) as well as his unparalleled fame for his talent.



Van Gogh self-portrait, 1887

Emily Dickinson published only about ten of her eighteen hundred poems while she was alive. She is renowned for living and working reclusively. Although her birth time is not definite, the birth time was noted by the physician who delivered Dickinson to be 5:00 am on the 10 December 1830. She died in 1886. Using this chart, we see that when her book of *Complete Poems* was published in 1955, and her lifetime's work was made available to the public, Pluto came within 3° of her natal MC, which yet again not only signifies a revival but



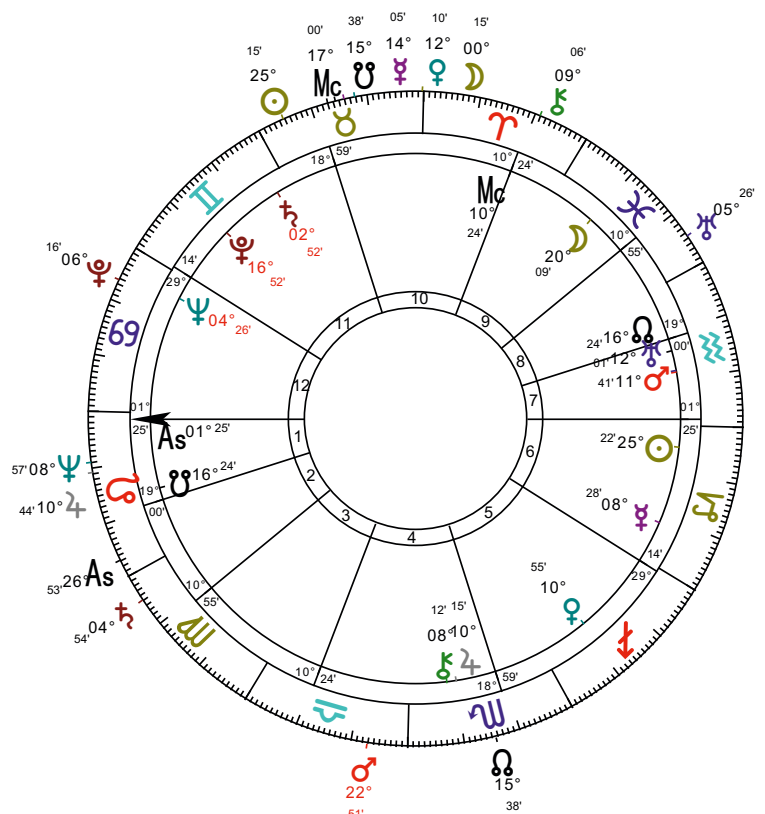
also reveals the totality of Dickinson's work from her darkest secrets to her most hidden treasures. Transiting Saturn was also crossing her Ascendant, which raised her profile and social standing. Neptune, in the two years previous, had made a series of conjunctions (and exact stations) to her Libran Moon (which natively sextiles her Mercury and squares her Jupiter-Neptune), and perhaps reflects her insight and magic of writing and a renewed personal appeal to a new audience.

The whereabouts of composer **Johann Sebastian Bach's** grave was not known after his death in 1750, due to a war at the time. It was found 144 years later, and he was reburied in 1894, as a transiting stellium of Jupiter (discovery), Neptune (suffering and mourning) and Pluto (excavation) in Gemini (his coffin was found under another coffin) exactly opposed his natal Mars (war) in Sagittarius (he was buried in a churchyard) and formed a t-square with his natal Saturn (grave) in Virgo (earth) at the apex. Six years later, in 1900, the full

edition of Bach's works was released as transiting Jupiter and Uranus exactly conjoined his natal Mars and squared his natal Saturn, which points to the recognition (Saturn) of a long-awaited release of his true genius and talents (Jupiter-Uranus), which were ahead of his time. Additionally, transiting Pluto squared his natal Mercury and trined his natal Jupiter, a wonderful transit for having a lifetime's works brought to the public eye, even though it was 150 years after his death.

Joan of Arc's birth date and time are not definite, but Lois Rodden believed she was born on 6 January 1413 at 17:00 LMT in Domxmy la Pucelle, France. She was a devout Catholic from a peasant family who claimed to be guided by God to help lead the French army during the Hundred Years War. She is said to have had divine visions and heard voices. She was captured and executed by the English and was burnt at the stake at the age of nineteen. She is one of the most studied people of the Middle Ages.

Twenty-four years after her death, on the 7th July 1456, Pope Callixtus found her innocent and declared her a martyr. On this day of redemption for her, the transiting stellium of Chiron, Pluto and Uranus in Leo opposed her natal Mars and Uranus (in the 7th house) and created a t-square as they both squared her natal Chiron-Jupiter in Scorpio in her 4th house. This represents a powerful battle for truth and recognition of intense suffering and wrongdoing, but also shows that she was a heroine and a fighter who willingly sacrificed her life for her country. Transiting Jupiter had conjoined her natal Neptune exactly one month earlier, and transiting Saturn was making a series of oppositions to her natal Saturn. She also had Neptune approaching her IC. As the public revered her innocence and divinity, they were also reminded of the weight placed upon Joan of Arc, and the guilt surrounding her execution.



Inner wheel - Joan of Arc: 6 Jan 1413 (NS), 17.00, Domremy la Pucelle, France.
Outer wheel - Canonisation: 16 May 1920, noon, Domremy la Pucelle, France.

Joan of Arc was *beatified* (meaning 'blessed' and acceded to heaven) in 1909 – the year when a series of transiting Uranus-Neptune oppositions was occurring in Cancer and Capricorn – and when transiting Saturn went over Joan of Arc's MC. Joan of Arc was beatified directly after a new law in 1905 separating the Church from the State in France – which occurred at the time of her chart's second Pluto return. At this time, her achievements were acknowledged again throughout France, and this was the third of the four steps towards canonisation.



On the 16th May 1920, over 400 years after her birth, and during a transiting Saturn-Uranus opposition, Joan of Arc was canonised by the Vatican and declared a Saint. At the time, Chiron, the wounded healer, was just over 1° from her natal MC, emphasising the personal wound but also one felt by a nation. Also, transiting Pluto was conjunct her natal Neptune in Cancer in the 12th house (and opposed her Mercury in the 6th), as her transformation to sainthood had arrived.

Each of these people has had transits trigger their natal chart, often long after they have died. These examples demonstrate how the continuous orbits of the planets can influence us and bring awareness into our lives.

Birth data sources: Astrodatbank

All charts use Placidus houses

Vincent Van Gogh: 30 March 1853, 11:00 LMT, Zundert, Netherlands.

Emily Dickinson: 10 December 1830, 04:40 LMT, Amherst MA, USA.

Johann Sebastian Bach: 31 March 1685, 05:45 LMT, Eisenach, Germany.

Main painting: Mortality and Immortality - William Michael Harnett, 1876

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