



Press information:

**Gustav Mahler
(1860 – 1911):
Das Lied von der Erde**

**Janet Baker, Alto
Waldemar Kmentt, Tenor**

**Bavarian Radio
Symphony Orchestra
Rafael Kubelik, conductor**

In 1907 Mahler's life was shaken by several fateful blows: he had to give up his post as Director of the Court Opera due to mounting differences between himself and the Viennese musical world and to anti-Semitic animosities, his beloved daughter Maria Anna died harrowingly of diphtheria and he himself was diagnosed as having a serious heart ailment that made him think of his own impending death. A collection of poetry by the writer Hans Bethge exercised a special fascination upon him in this fragile state. "The Chinese Flute," a collection of 80 poems based on old Chinese sources, centres upon the themes of beauty and melancholy, excessive drunkenness and sudden consciousness of life's transitory nature. Mahler selected seven poems and created six musical pictures out of them (the "Farewell" puts two pictures together) for tenor voice, alto voice and orchestra. With "Das Lied von der Erde" (The Song of the Earth) he succeeded in a total fusion of the vocal and the symphonic. He himself called the Song of the Earth "*the most personal thing I have ever written.*"

Rafael Kubelik and the Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestra explore Mahler's expressivity to the depths here as they have already done in many symphonies issued by audite, in all of its facets and without falling into hollow pathos. Karl Schumann wrote in the *Süddeutsche Zeitung*: "*The Orchestra played like a single organism of hundred soloists, all centred round the conductor's desk.*" (2 March 1970) The soloists, Janet Baker and Waldemar Kmentt, succeed in this balancing act with bravura as well. The work is issued in a live recording made in the Herkulesaal of the Munich Residenz on 27 February 1970.

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