



Gustav Mahler – *Das Lied von der Erde*

Das Lied von der Erde ("The Song of the Earth") instead marks the first stage of the poignant farewell to the life and music of Gustav Mahler, which will continue with the Symphony no. 9 and the draft of the Tenth Symphony. During the summer of 1907 Mahler received as a gift an anthology of Chinese lyrics translated into German entitled *The Chinese flute*. The contrast between the gloomy pessimism and the love for earthly things that characterizes the poem collection is in perfect harmony with the composer's mood in that sad period of his life. The inspiration is and so Mahler chooses seven lyrics to cover with music in what he plays as an alto, tenor and large orchestra', even if the form of the composition actually escapes a precise and unambiguous definition. In *Das Lied von der Erde*, in fact, Mahler goes beyond the boundaries between genres to the point of joining the world of the Lied and that of the Symphony in a new musical and spiritual dimension. If it is published in six lieder, *Das Lied von der Erde* is divided into two macro sections: the first made up of five lieder and the second by the last lied - *Der Abschied* - which combines two lyrics of the collection and which alone, with its almost six hundred bars, balances the first half of the work. The two macro sections, apparently independent, are actually connected by a dense series of references and analogies in a game of mirrors between life, death and rebirth that is reflected in the folds of the music: the second and sixth canto, for example for example, they are pervaded by the presentiment of death and frame the three central movements that deal with more lively themes (youth, beauty and the exaltation aroused by wine and spring). And so also spring, which is denied to the drunkard of the fifth lied, returns at the end of the cycle, but this time with the promise of a new life, far from earthly pains.