

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau, (born May 28, 1925, Berlin, Germany—died May 18, 2012, Berg, Bavaria), German operatic baritone and preeminent singer of lieder, distinguished for his lyrical voice, commanding presence, and superb artistry.

Fischer-Dieskau studied with Georg Walter before serving in World War II and with Hermann Weissenborn afterward. In 1947 he made his concert debut in Johannes Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem* at Freiburg, and the next year his opera debut as Posa in Giuseppe Verdi's *Don Carlos* at the Städtische Oper, Berlin, where he became a leading baritone.

Fischer-Dieskau performed in principal opera houses and festivals in an exceptional range of classic and modern roles from Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's *Almaviva* and *Don Giovanni* to John the Baptist in Richard Strauss's *Salome*. His roles in the works of Richard Wagner include the Herald in *Lohengrin*, Wotan in *Das Rheingold*, and Wolfram in *Tannhäuser*. In England he won fame in a concert performance of Frederick Delius's *A Mass of Life* in 1951 and in Franz Schubert's song cycles *Die schöne Müllerin* and *Winterreise* in 1952. His first appearance in the United States was in 1955 in Cincinnati, Ohio, in a Johann Sebastian Bach cantata and Brahms's *Ein deutsches Requiem*. In 1962, at Coventry, Warwickshire, England, he performed notably in the premiere of Benjamin Britten's *A War Requiem*, and in 1965 he introduced at Aldeburgh, Suffolk, Britten's *Songs and Proverbs of William Blake*, which had been composed for him. Unexcelled as a lieder singer, he had a vast repertory. For his overall contribution to music, Fischer-Dieskau was awarded the Japan Art Association's *Praemium Imperiale* in 2002.



# MAHLER

Das Lied von der Erde



Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau  
Murray Dickie  
Philharmonia Orchestra  
Paul Kletzki

Mahler regarded this work as a symphony; the very circumstance of its not bearing a number is part of the background that certifies it as one of the most profoundly personal of all his works. It might almost have been given the same title as the Brit;ten symphony that precedes it in the present concerts: if not exactly a requiem (in that it contains no reference to liturgy or ritual), *Das Lied von der Erde* was a conscious gesture of leave-taking on Mahler's part, the first part of the final triptych of symphonies in which he said his farewell to life and which he did not live to hear performed. The premiere, conducted by his young associate and devoted disciple Bruno Walter, took place six months after his death. Walter presided over the premiere of Mahler's Ninth Symphony (composed in 1909-10) in Vienna the following June. Mahler completed his Tenth Symphony in sketch but orchestrated only two of its five movements; it was to wait much longer for a hearing, and remains a controversial item today in the several performing versions prepared by Deryck Cooke and various others.

While Mahler regarded these three works as constituting a valedictory cycle, he tried to pretend otherwise or to assure his surviving long enough to complete them all by omitting *Das Lied von der Erde* from the list of symphonies to which he assigned numbers. His wife wrote, Because Beethoven died after his Ninth Symphony and Bruckner before finishing

his Ninth . . . it was a superstition of Mahler's that no great writer of symphonies got beyond his ninth. For this reason, once he completed his Eighth Symphony, giving a number to its successor was something he wished to dodge, as Alma Mahler put it, in dread of a Ninth Symphony. . . . When later he was writing his next symphony, which he called the Ninth, he said to me. Actually, of course, it's the Tenth, because *Das Lied von der Erde* was really the Ninth. Finally, when he was composing the Tenth he said, Now the danger is past.

By that time, however, Mahler knew he was living on borrowed time, as he had known when he was composing on *Das Lied von der Erde* in the summer of 1908. Anxiety over his diseased heart had turned his life into a gloomy and desperate race to complete the works he had outlined. In July 1908, as he worked on *Das Lied*, he wrote to Bruno Walter, If I am to find my way back to myself, I have got to accept the horrors of loneliness, since you do not know what has gone on and is going on within me. It is, assuredly, no hypochondriac fear of death, as you suppose. I have long known that I have got to die. . . . Without trying to explain or describe something for which there probably are no words, I simply say that with a single fell stroke I have lost any calm and peace of mind I ever achieved. I stand vis-à-vis de rien, and now, at the end of my life, have to begin to learn to walk and stand.

# MAHLER

## Das Lied von der Erde

Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau Murray Dickie  
Philharmonia Orchestra Paul Kletzki

- I. Das Trinklied Vom Jammer Der Erde 8:42
- II. Der Einsamer Im Herbst 9:33
- III. Von Der Jugend 2:58
- IV. Von Der Schönheit 7:05
- V. Der Trunkene Im Frühling 4:20
- VI. Der Abschied 28:59
- Total Time: 1:01:37

**Recording Info: Transferred from a 15ips tape Recorded by EMI Records 1959**



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[admin@highdeftapetransfers.com](mailto:admin@highdeftapetransfers.com)  
or visit our website:  
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