

DVD & BLU-RAY

Three major New York Metropolitan productions this month: a dazzling *Doctor Atomic* with *Gerald Finley*; *Plácido Domingo* bringing emotional depth to *Simon Boccanegra*; while *Karita Mattila* stuns in *Salome*

MUSIC DVD CHOICE

A well-conducted tour

Howard Goldstein enjoys Michael Tilson Thomas's guide to Mahler



BOHEMIAN RHAPSODIES:
Michael Tilson Thomas visits Mahler's mansion



KEEPING SCORE: MAHLER

Documentaries: 'Origins'; 'Legacy'
San Francisco SO/
Michael Tilson Thomas
SFS Media SFS0041 (NTSC system, 5.1 dts, 16:9 picture format) 224 mins (2 discs)
Available Arktivmusic.com/bbcmusic

Having completed their recorded Mahler cycle, Michael Tilson Thomas and the San Francisco Symphony celebrate the Mahler anniversary year with two documentaries in their marvellous *Keeping Score* series. *Origins* uses his First Symphony as a springboard

for an exploration of Mahler's early life and works, while *Legacy* is a survey of the composer's middle and late periods. As in previous issues, the wealth of solidly researched detail is both musically provocative and visually stimulating; I had no idea that one of the motives from

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the funeral march in the First Symphony resembles one from Donizetti's opera *Dom Sebastian*, which was played at military funerals in Mahler's time.

Tilson Thomas spends a lot of time wandering through the streets of Iglau, the Bohemian town where Mahler grew up, absorbing not only

the sounds of brass bands, but also Jewish, Austrian, and Bohemian folk music. Unlike Bernstein, who in his television essays on Mahler presented him as torn between his Jewish roots and Christian surroundings, Tilson Thomas presents Mahler as embracing both as part of a universal musical and moral outlook.

At times some of the visuals seem overly staged; is that hurdy-gurdy out in the countryside really playing 'Das Irdische Leben'? And the wider scope covered in *Legacy* makes it seem rushed at times. But overall, Tilson Thomas and his associates bring Mahler's music to life in a way that makes even the novice appreciate its astounding unity within diversity.

PERFORMANCE ★★★★★
PICTURE & SOUND ★★★★★