

François-Xavier Roth

Conductor

If he hasn't already got the nickname Special FX, then Roth should adopt it ... empathetic musicality and flair for colour, sometimes conjuring up such startling touches that the players look stunned.

Neil Fisher, The Times

Like the difference between a sparkling fruity champagne and an old, long stored red wine ... a seductive bouquet of strong, warm and velvety nature smells, noble woody notes and dark, full colours.

Remy Franck, Pizzicato, Ravel: Daphnis & Chloé CD

Reviews of François-Xavier Roth's regularly praised recordings in our pages all hint at one thing: there's never anything routine about his approach, the sound or the vision.

Mark Cullingford, The Gramophone

François-Xavier Roth (born Paris, 1971) is one of today's most charismatic and enterprising conductors. He has been General Music Director of the City of Cologne since 2015, leading both the Gürzenich Orchestra and the Opera. He is Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra and the first-ever Associate Artist of the Philharmonie de Paris.

With a reputation for inventive programming, his incisive approach and inspiring leadership are valued around the world. He is working with leading orchestras including the Staatskapelle Berlin, Royal Concertgebouw, Boston Symphony, Munich Philharmonic and Zurich Tonhalle. In 2018-19, he makes a return to the Berlin Philharmonic and appears with the San Francisco Symphony, Cleveland, Montreal Symphony, NDR ElbPhilharmonie and Bavarian Radio Symphony Orchestras.

In 2003, he founded Les Siècles, an innovative orchestra performing contrasting and colourful programmes on modern and period instruments, often within the same concert. With Les Siècles, he has given concerts throughout Europe and toured to China and Japan. They recreated the original sound of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in its centenary year and, subsequently, with the Pina Bausch and Dominique Brun dance companies in London, Paris, Frankfurt, Beijing, Nanjing, Shanghai and Tokyo.

After the success of their explorations of Post-Romanticism and Debussy in his centenary year, concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra March and April feature programmes of works by Ravel, Bartók and Scriabin and, in the latest of his LSO Futures series, the current sound world of Philippe Manoury, with the UK premiere of *Ring*.

In his fourth Cologne opera season, he leads new productions of Strauss' *Salome* and Offenbach's *La Grande-Duchesse de Gérolstein*, which marks the bicentenary of the composer's birth in Cologne. With the Gürzenich Orchestra, he will feature Rhenish composer, Schumann, and explore works which disrupt traditional orchestral forms and think them anew. He continues a focus on the composer Philippe Manoury, with the premiere of *Lab.Oratorium*, the third of the trilogy of works commissioned by the orchestra, which will also be played in Hamburg and Paris. He has recently taken the orchestra on tour to Turin, Budapest, Zürich and Vienna, performing Mahler's fifth symphony.

Recordings include the complete tone poems of Richard Strauss, while Principal Conductor of the SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden & Freiburg (2011-16) and, with Les Siècles, the three Stravinsky ballets (*The Rite of Spring* won German Record Critics' and Edison Klassiek Prizes). The first releases of a complete Ravel cycle for Harmonia Mundi include *Daphnis and Chloé* (Gramophone Awards Orchestral Album of the Year 2018) and *Ma mère l'Oye. Mirages*, a vocal recital with Sabine Devieille for Erato was *Victoires de la Musique Classique* Recording of the Year. Two albums commemorate Debussy's centenary (including *Jeux* and *Nocturnes*) and the 150th anniversary of Berlioz' death (*Harold en Italie* and *Les nuits d'été*). With the Gürzenich Orchestra, their recording of Mahler's Third symphony has just been released, which follows their Fifth, both works having been premiered by this orchestra.

Engagement with new audiences is an essential part of François-Xavier Roth's work. With the Festival Berlioz and Les Siècles, he founded the Jeune Orchestre Européen Hector Berlioz, a unique orchestra-academy with its own collection of period instruments. Roth and Les Siècles devised *Presto!*, a television series for France 2, attracting weekly audiences of over three million. The Gürzenich Orchestra's *Ohrenauf!* youth programme was recipient of a Junge Ohren Produktion Award. A tireless champion of contemporary music, he has been conductor of the ground-breaking LSO Panufnik Composers Scheme since 2005. Roth has premiered works by Yann Robin, Georg-Friedrich Haas, Hèctor Parra and Simon Steen-Anderson and collaborated with composers like Pierre Boulez, Wolfgang Rihm, Jörg Widmann and Helmut Lachenmann.

For his achievements as musician, conductor, music director and teacher, François-Xavier Roth was created a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.

<http://www.francoisxavierroth.com>