

## 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 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. Les Siècles has been nominated for Gramophone Magazine's first Orchestra of the Year Award.

After the success of their explorations of Post-Romanticism and Debussy in his centenary year, concerts with the London Symphony Orchestra in November and March feature a typically wide-range of works, from Haydn through Strauss, Bartók and Scriabin and, in the latest of his LSO Futures series, to 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 will take the orchestra on tour to Turin, Zürich and Vienna, performing Mahler's fifth symphony.

He recorded the complete tone poems of Richard Strauss while Principal Conductor of the SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden & Freiburg (2011-2016). His recordings of the Stravinsky ballets, *The Firebird*, *Petrushka* and *The Rite of Spring* with Les Siècles have also been widely acclaimed; the latter being awarded a German Record Critics' Prize. They are currently recording a complete Ravel cycle for Harmonia Mundi. The first release, *Daphnis and Chloé*, was a *Gramophone* magazine Editor's Choice and CD of the month in *Rondo Magazine*. The second album, including *Ma mère l'Oye*, won a Diapason d'Or on its release in March 2018. *Mirages*, a vocal recital with Sabine Devieille for Erato, won a Diapason d'Or and was *Victoires de la Musique Classique* Recording of the Year, a *Gramophone* Editor's Choice and Sunday Times Album of the Week. His first recording with the Gürzenich Orchestra, Mahler's Fifth Symphony, premiered in Cologne by the orchestra under Mahler in 1904, was released in December 2017 to positive reviews.

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 its outset in 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 last year created a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.

<http://www.francoisxavierroth.com>