

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. Since 2015, he has been General Music Director of the City of Cologne, leading both the Gürzenich Orchestra and the Opera. This season, he takes up the position of Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra.

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 Berlin Philharmonic and Staatskapelle, Royal Concertgebouw, Boston Symphony, Munich Philharmonic and Zurich Tonhalle.

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 in France, Italy, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, England and Japan. They recreated the original sound of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring* in its centenary year at the BBC Proms and Alte Oper, Frankfurt and, subsequently, with the Pina Bausch and Dominique Brun dance companies.

After the success of their two-season series *After Romanticism*, Roth and the London Symphony Orchestra embark on an exploration of Debussy, his influences and his legacy, marking the 100th anniversary of the composer's death with concerts in January and March.

His third Cologne opera season features new productions of Wagner's *Tannhäuser* and *Die Soldaten* by Bernd Alois Zimmermann, marking the centenary of the composer's birth in Cologne. With the Gürzenich Orchestra, he continues a focus on the composer Philippe Manoury, from whom the orchestra has commissioned a trilogy of works, the second of which, a Flute Concerto, will receive its premiere with Emmanuel Pahud.

As Principal Conductor of the SWR Sinfonieorchester Baden-Baden & Freiburg (2011-2016), Roth recorded the complete tone poems of Richard Strauss. 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 have embarked on 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*. They have also recently released *Mirages*, a vocal recital with Sabine Devieille for Erato, winner of a Diapason d'Or and *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.

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 received a Junge Ohren Produktion Award in February 2017.

A tireless champion of contemporary music, he is conductor of the ground-breaking LSO Panufnik Composers Scheme. Roth has premiered works by Yann Robin, Georg-Friedrich Haas 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 on Bastille Day 2017. In January 2018, he was appointed the first-ever Associate Artist of the Philharmonie de Paris.

<http://www.francoisxavierroth.com>