

## 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 is one of today's most imaginative conductors and programmers, whether in his roles as General Music Director of the City of Cologne and founder of Les Siècles, or with leading orchestras such as the London Symphony Orchestra, of which he is Principal Guest Conductor. A born communicator, he is a charismatic and persuasive advocate for classical music of every description.

In Cologne, where he has directed both the Gürzenich Orchestra and the Opera since 2015, his programming is notable for its breadth and depth, including new commissions alongside Baroque and Romantic music. Roth upholds the orchestra's pioneering heritage, which includes having given the world premieres of Mahler's Third and Fifth Symphonies, the Brahms Double Concerto, Strauss's *Don Quixote* and *Till Eulenspiegel*, and Zimmermann's *Die Soldaten*. For Cologne Opera he has led new productions of *Benvenuto Cellini*, *Le nozze di Figaro*, *Don Giovanni*, *Tannhäuser*, *Hänsel & Gretel*, *Tristan und Isolde*, *Salome*, *Faust* and *Béatrice et Bénédict*.

His sense of musical exploration led him in 2003 to found Les Siècles, which performs contrasting programmes on modern and period instruments, often within the same concert. Together, they have toured Europe, China and Japan, appearing at the Berlin Musikfest, BBC Proms and Enescu festivals. Projects have included recreating the original sound of Stravinsky's *The Rite of Spring*, in collaboration with the Pina Bausch and Dominique Brun dance companies, and performing the cycle of Beethoven's symphonies at the Palais de Versailles and around France for the composer's anniversary year, a project curtailed by the pandemic. In 2019 Les Siècles became resident orchestra of Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing, where Roth is also Artistic Director. In 2022 they embark upon their new residency at Théâtre des Champs-Élysées.

He is a champion of new music and has premiered works by Georg-Friedrich Haas and Hèctor Parra, and collaborated with composers such as Pierre Boulez, Wolfgang Rihm, Jörg Widmann, Helmut Lachenmann and Philippe Manoury. He has a leading role in the LSO's Panufnik Composers Scheme, mentoring young emerging composers.

Engagement with new audiences is an essential part of Roth's work, whether speaking from the podium or working with young people and amateurs. With the Festival Berlioz and Les Siècles, he founded the Jeune Orchestre Européen Hector Berlioz, which has its own collection of period instruments and last year performed *Les Troyens à Carthage* in Berlioz's birthplace. In Cologne he has initiated a community orchestra and his *Ohrenauf!* youth programme was recipient of a Junge Ohren Produktion Award. His television series *Presto!* attracted weekly audiences of over three million in France.

His prolific discography includes the complete tone poems of Richard Strauss, Stravinsky ballets, Ravel and Berlioz cycles, Bruckner, Mahler and Schumann symphonies, and albums commemorating Debussy's centenary. He was awarded the German Record Critics' Honorary Prize 2020, the youngest conductor ever to receive it. For his achievements as musician, conductor, music director and teacher, François-Xavier Roth was made a Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur.

### **Appointments**

General Music Director, City of Cologne (2015–present); Principal Guest Conductor of London Symphony Orchestra (2017–present); Founder and Artistic Director of Les Siècles; Artistic Director of Atelier Lyrique de Tourcoing (2019–present)

### **Guest conducting appearances (2022-23)**

Berlin Philharmonic, Ensemble Intercontemporain, Presences Festival, Staatsoper Berlin, Bayerische Staatsoper

### **Opera productions (2022-23)**

Berlioz: *Les Troyens*, Wagner: *Lohengrin*, Debussy: *Pelléas et Mélisande*, Stravinsky: *Le Rossignol*, Poulenc: *Les Mamelles de Tirésias*, Wagner: *Der fliegende Holländer*, Arnaud Petit: *La Bête dans la Jungle*, Strauss: *Salome*

### **Recent awards**

Chevalier of the Légion d'honneur (2017); German Record Critics' Honorary Prize (2020).

**With Les Siècles:** Franco Abbiati Record Critics' Award - IV edition 2022, Edison Klassiek Prize 2022; Presto Music Recording of the Year 2020; German Record Critics' Prize 2016, Gramophone Awards Orchestral Album of the Year 2018; Victoires de la Musique Classique Recording of the Year 2018

## **Recent recording releases**

Mahler: Symphony no.4 with Les Siècles (Harmonia Mundi)  
Ravel: Piano Concertos and Melodies with Les Siècles (Harmonia Mundi)  
Debussy: Pelléas et Mélisande with Les Siècles (Harmonia Mundi)  
Bruckner: Symphony no.7 with Gürzenich Orchestra (Myrios Classics)  
Saint-Saëns: Symphony no.3 and Piano Concerto no. 4 with Les Siècles (Harmonia Mundi)  
Strauss: Don Quixote and Til Eulenspiegel with Gürzenich Orchestra (Harmonia Mundi)  
Schumann: Symphonies nos.1 and 4 with Gürzenich Orchestra (Myrios Classics)  
Beethoven: Symphony no.3 and Méhul: Overture, Les Amazones (Harmonia Mundi)  
Beethoven: Symphony no.5 and Gossec Symphony in 17 Parts (Harmonia Mundi)  
Debussy/Ravel with London Symphony Orchestra (LSO Live)  
Mussorgsky/Ravel with Les Siècles (Harmonia Mundi)  
Saint-Saëns: Le Timbre d'argent with Les Siècles (Palazzetto Bru Zane)  
Panufnik Legacies III with London Symphony Orchestra (LSO Live)