

GÜRZENICH ORCHESTER KÖLN

François-Xavier Roth has been Gürzenich-Kapellmeister and Music Director of the City of Cologne since 2015 and is one of the most interesting and sought-after conductors of our times. An advocate of music from every corner of the classical field, his charisma and the depth of his inner convictions are qualities that make him an invigorating asset to the international music scene. His programmes are imaginative and courageous – he takes great delight in experimenting and is passionate about discovering the unknown. Fostering the grand tradition of the Gürzenich Orchestra is a high priority for François-Xavier Roth, yet he never ceases to build bridges to contemporary music, displaying an infallible sense of quality: Numerous works by distinguished present-day composers such as Georg Friedrich Haas, Philippe Manoury and Martin Matalon have been premiered under Roth's baton. The Gürzenich Orchestra's project *Fanfares for a new Beginning* was one of François-Xavier Roth's many initiatives: during the COVID-19 pandemic, ten distinguished composers were commissioned to each write a short piece for wind instruments, thus sending a resounding gesture of confidence in times when culture had come to a halt.

His concise and straightforward approach to music and his striving for authenticity have earned François-Xavier Roth great appreciation across the world. The renowned orchestras he works with on a regular basis include the Berlin Philharmonic Orchestra, the Staatskapelle Berlin, the Concertgebouw Orchestra Amsterdam, the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra, the Symphony Orchestra of the Bayerischer Rundfunk, the Munich Philharmonic Orchestra and the Tonhalle Orchestra in Zurich. In 2017/18, he was also appointed Principal Guest Conductor of the London Symphony Orchestra as well as Associate Artist of the Philharmonie de Paris.

In 2003, Roth founded the orchestra *Les Siècles*. Together, they work on innovative and diverse programmes which, depending on the repertoire, are performed on modern or period instruments. They play concerts all across Europe as well as in China and Japan.

Promoting the next generation of musicians is of heartfelt importance to François-Xavier Roth. He is the director of the London Symphony Orchestra's *Panufnik Young Composers Scheme* which offers a platform to aspiring composers. Together with

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the Gürzenich Orchestra, he supports talented young musicians, both as part of the international project *Momentum* and by means of the Gürzenich Orchestra's Orchestra Academy which was established on his initiative.

To achieve the goal of captivating and inspiring young audiences, François-Xavier Roth has made interactive children's concerts a fixed part of his work. He supports the Gürzenich Orchestra's education programme *Ohrenauf!* which was awarded the *Junge Ohren Preis* in 2017. As the initiator of the Cologne Citizen's Orchestra, he gives amateurs the chance to work alongside professional musicians.

François-Xavier Roth has produced an extensive discography documenting his creativity. His recordings have won distinguished awards and he recently received the Honorary Award of the *Preis der Deutschen Schallplattenkritik*. His interpretation of Beethoven has been described as »dark, stirring, gripping« (*Süddeutsche Zeitung*), and his approach to Gustav Mahler has been said to be »intellectual yet never boring, and of exceptional clarity« (*Concerti Magazine*). François-Xavier Roth's CD recording of Gustav Mahler's Symphonies Nos. 3 and 5 and Robert Schumann's Symphonies Nos. 1 and 4 with the Gürzenich Orchestra was critically acclaimed: »Schumann at his best!« was the verdict of the *Frankfurter Allgemeine Zeitung*. One of the most recent releases is a CD featuring symphonic poems by Richard Strauss which was recorded together with the cellist Jean-Guihen Queyras, the current Artist in Residence at the Gürzenich Orchestra.

In honour of his achievements as a musician, conductor and teacher, François-Xavier Roth received the title *Chevalier de la Légion d'Honneur*, bestowed upon him by the president of France.