



MUSIC REVIEW

In Symphony Hall, early works from modern masters



ROBERT TORRES

Francois-Xavier Roth conducts pianist Pierre-Laurent Aimard and the BSO during Bartok's Piano Concerto No. 1 at Symphony Hall Thursday night.

By [Jeremy Eichler](#)

GLOBE STAFF JANUARY 12, 2018

Judging from the results of their recent collaborations, French conductor Francois-Xavier Roth and the BSO are clearly building a warm and productive rapport. This season Roth was granted the privilege of leading two weeks of subscription concerts. And the admiration is evidently mutual. In an interview with the BSO's Brian Bell, Roth recalled telling the BSO players, following their 2016 performances of Stravinsky's "Petrouchka," "you are the best modern . . . 'French' orchestra." He no doubt meant that the BSO still

retains in memory, from its tradition running back through Charles Munch and Pierre Monteux, the colors of the French orchestral palette, a palette Stravinsky himself had in his ears when he created “Petrouchka.”

With “Petrouchka” behind them, Roth chose to build this week’s program around another Stravinsky masterwork from the same era, “The Firebird.” Thursday night’s performance of the complete ballet was hard-hitting and almost cinematically vivid. Roth found a way to organically shape the score’s broadest arcs while also creating space for innumerable small details to speak. Woodwind and brass solos rang out with particular eloquence. And the crowd’s ovation was notably prolonged. No great powers of clairvoyance are necessary to see a Roth-led “Rite of Spring” somewhere in the BSO’s subscription future.

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