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- » New Releases
- » Top Searches
- » Moods
- » Instruments
- » Artist Spotlight
- » Pop Genres
- » Editors' Choice
- » Top Composers
- » Themes
- » Countries
- » Classical Reviews
- » Allmusic Blog



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- Overview
- Review
- Tracks
- Credits
- Buy

Berlioz: Symphonie Fantastique

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Review

by Blair Sanderson

Thanks to the enormous successes of the movement for historically informed performances, one often hears Hector Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* served up in authentic, early 19th century style, because more and more ensembles play the work on original instruments and follow the practices of the composer's era. This recording by François-Xavier Roth and the French chamber orchestra *Les Siècles* is an elegant presentation of the piece, one of the signal masterpieces of the Romantic era and a showcase for any ensemble, whether traditional or period. The colors of the vintage instruments are striking, and perhaps the most memorable timbre of this performance is the plangent tone of the cor anglais in the *Scène aux champs*. But the whole orchestra is vibrant with original sonorities, and Berlioz's innovative effects are just as effective in this rendition as they would be in a modern symphony orchestra. One might wish that this CD from *Musicales Actes Sud* had better audio for the occasion, because playing of such high caliber should have been reproduced on a hybrid SACD, most importantly because many competitors have releases that take full advantage of multichannel technology. But the sound is certainly excellent, and listeners will derive much pleasure from hearing this fine recording.

Featured Artist

[François-Xavier Roth](#)

Performance **★★★★★**
 Sound **★★★★★**
 Time 52:33

Label
 Musicales Actes Sud[02]

AMG Album ID
 W 257789

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Performances

Composer	Title	Year	Time
Hector Berlioz	Symphonie fantastique for orchestra ("Episode de la vie d'un Artiste...en cinq parties"), H.48 (Op. 14)	2009	52:33

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