

# Berlioz - Symphonie Fantastique

Conductor François Xavier Roth leads the lively Les Siècles in a live recording of Berlioz's symphony

David Cairns

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One of the thriving period-instrument orchestras that have sprung up in France, Les Siècles are a lively band and, under their chief, François Xavier Roth, give a vivid account of the symphony, recorded live at last year's Berlioz festival in La Côte St-André, the composer's birthplace, where some of the events and emotions reflected in the work were first experienced.

The connection is not merely sentimental: the performance has a raw, authentic energy, as if the location inspired the players to exceptional efforts. Recorded balance is not always good — the drums are too prominent — and, in the unresonant acoustic of the courtyard, there is a lack of weight in the tuttis. But details — the harps, the excellent woodwind — are refreshingly clear.

## THE ESSENTIALS

### Berlioz

**Album**  
Symphonie Fantastique; Les Siècles, François Xavier Roth



**Label**  
Musicales Actes Sud

**Price**  
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**CRITIC'S RATING** ★★★★★

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