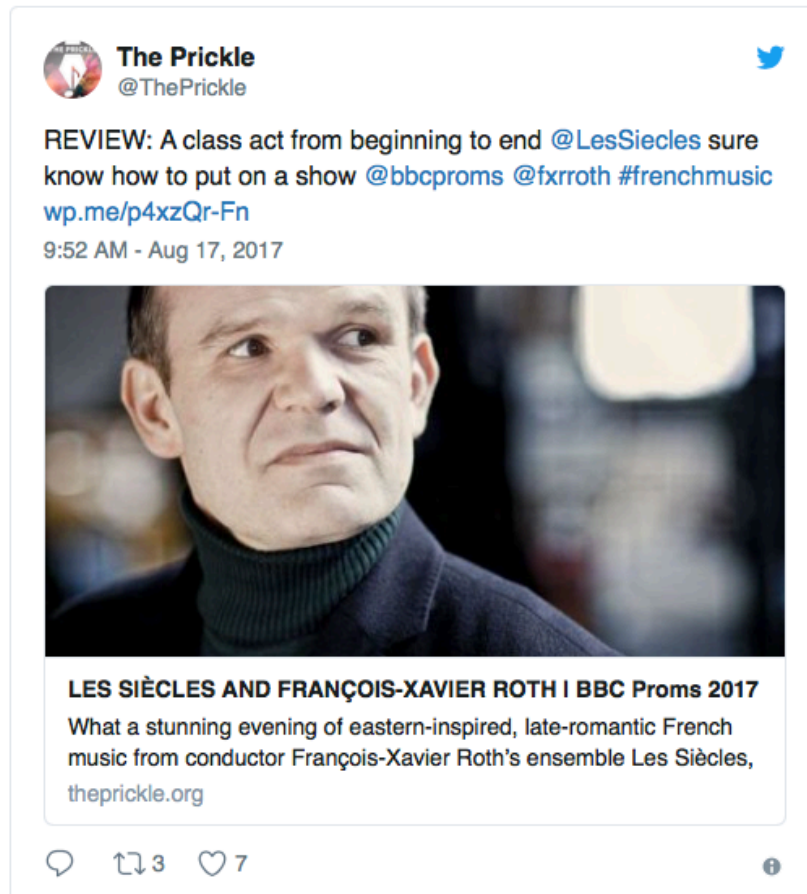


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## LES SIÈCLES AND FRANÇOIS-XAVIER ROTH | BBC PROMS 2017



What a stunning evening of eastern-inspired, late-romantic French music from conductor François-Xavier Roth's ensemble Les Siècles, now in its fifteenth year. The Royal Albert Hall was only about half-full, which seems absurd for an orchestra of this quality, but we still managed the deserved roaring ovation. Pianist Cédric Tiberghien shone most in his thrilling solo encore of Debussy's deranged *La Puerta del Vino*, drawing the most out of the menacing, schizophrenic score with brilliant technique. Franck's rousing, inventive *Les Djinns* also featured Tiberghien's rollicking and twinkling 1899 Bechstein. Saint-Saëns' "Egyptian" Piano Concerto seemed bizarrely pedestrian compared with the rest of the programme (and Saint-Saëns' other works), but Tiberghien still brought it to a rattling, virtuosic finish. Les Siècles' strings sound astonishingly crisp, and you could hear the horse hair getting ripped out of the bows in the Ballet Music suite from Delibes' *Lakmé*. The brass got their time to shine in Lalo's *Namouna* suites, including a joyous, triple-tonguing trumpet solo. Castanets and thundering, exotic timpani drew the evening to a close with Saint-Saëns' explosive Bacchanal from *Samson and Delilah*.

Conductor François-Xavier Roth then gave a brief speech about the importance of cross-cultural art (met with applause by Brexiters and Remainers alike), and launched into his son Félix Roth's utterly glorious orchestral rendition of Daft Punk's "Get Lucky", whipping through jazz and modern styles, and reinvented harmony. A class act from beginning to end, Les Siècles sure know how to put on a show. *Vive La France!*

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