

Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom: debuts for Mäkelä & Lozakovich (July 20)

by Daniel Hathaway



As Scandinavians, Finnish conductor Klaus Mäkelä and Swedish violinist Daniel Lozakovich should be well-accustomed to the intentional high temperatures and humidity of saunas, though they probably don't expect to encounter those while plying their craft on the concert stage.

On Saturday, July 20, they rose

above miserable weather conditions to make impressive joint debuts with The Cleveland Orchestra at Blossom.

Mäkelä, 23, led a crisp, animated account of Zoltán Kodály's *Dances of Galanta* to open the evening, stylishly shaping transitions and expressive nuances. Principal clarinet Afendi Yusuf dispatched numerous solos with radiant, colorful tone, and hornist Michael Mahew made golden moments of his time in the spotlight. Written to celebrate the 80th birthday of the Budapest Philharmonic Society, it's difficult to imagine that Kodály's dances have their origin in the tradition of *Verbunkos* — recruiting music designed to entice often illiterate young men to enter the military with promises of glory and fancy uniforms. Or perhaps not so difficult after all, considering how enticing they can be in performances like this one.

At 18, even younger than his colleague on the podium, Lozakovich brought delicacy and mature insights to his solo role in Max Bruch's early *Violin Concerto No. 1*, the work that almost single-handedly has kept the composer's name alive ever since he completed the first version of the work in 1866 at the age of 28.

The concerto begins with a free-spirited prelude featuring solo cadenzas that gave Lozakovich plenty of opportunity to share his lyrical gifts with the audience. Those

