

Cleveland Orchestra delivers magical night of American song with help from pianists Michael Feinstein, Jean-Yves Thibaudet (July 23)

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CUYAHOGA FALLS, Ohio -- Pianists Jean-Yves Thibaudet and Michael Feinstein joined their four hands and Feinstein's engaging vocals in a newly-minted cabaret show at Blossom on Sunday evening, July 23. "Two Pianos: Who Could Ask for Anything More?" explores well-known and rediscovered music by George Gershwin and other selections from The Great American Songbook, along with works by 20th-century classical

composers interleaved with anecdotes and engaging chit-chat.

The show, now making the rounds of summer festivals, can either be performed with just two artists on a pair of grand pianos or with a full symphony orchestra. In this case it was The Cleveland Orchestra, conducted by Keith Lockhart. Who could ask for anything more?

Better weather, maybe. The concert started 20 minutes late because of a severe storm warning which required everyone on the lawn to move into the pavilion or take shelter before the concert could begin. This gave everyone in attendance the rare opportunity to see how vast a crowd turned out and how many souls the pavilion can absorb when it must.

When the lights came up, Lockhart and the Orchestra launched the evening with an overture. Then Thibaudet and Feinstein appeared in matching attire — white dinner jackets that might have been made from Jackson Pollock drop cloths during his blue period—and Feinstein set the topic for the evening with Irving Berlin's "I love a Piano" in an arrangement that wove in quotes from Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue."

The two pianists joined the Orchestra for a set of Richard Rogers waltzes that ended with “Oh, What A Beautiful Mornin’” and segued into the great vocals of “Pure Imagination.”

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