



Not the best picture, but one of the best moments of this year's Lake George Music Festival. Conductor Roger Kalia at the close of Dvorak's "New World" Symphony, last piece on the last of two weeks of programming. **Writer Cathy DeDe notes:** "Roger's smile says it all. Responding to overwhelming emotion and enthusiasm from both audience and players, they encored the last few moments of the piece. It was a triumph." *Chronicle photo/Cathy DeDe*

Heady season for LG Music Fest; their take (and mine)

Chronicle Managing Editor Cathy DeDe writes: Lake George Music Festival directors Alexander Lombard and Barbora Kolarova deem this year's eighth season, which ran August 12 to 24, "a success," with something in the vicinity of 2,000 people attending (not counting free concerts). There's also room to grow, Mr. Lombard adds, with "plenty of seats" still to fill at most venues.

"Artistically, both the audience and the musicians liked the programs and pieces," Ms. Kolarova said.

"We like pushing the boundaries," Mr. Lombard adds, pointing to some of the new music by the likes of unique quartet Loadbang, for example.

"If everyone did what their forefathers did, we'd still be playing church music or banging on drums in caves," he adds. "When Beethoven's Third Symphony came out, remember, it was new."

Okay, now my take:

Roger Kalia, the Festival Music Director who'd already returned home to California by Monday when I met with Alex and Barbora, emerges to my ear as the festival's secret weapon.

His enthusiasm and positivism, at least from my vantage as an observer, is unbounded. His leadership, impressive.

Together with Ms. Kolarova's always-interesting programming, and Mr. Lombard's stewardship: Nothing's ever guaran-

teed, but this is a recipe for good.

Notable, at the close of the Sounds of Our Time outdoor concert in Shepard Park that featured guest modern flute-cello-bass ensemble Project Trio from Brooklyn — how thrilled Mr. Kalia obviously was.

He has envisioned an unboundaried venue where popular music meets classical — and here, he has the wherewithal to realize that vision, to overwhelmingly engaging ends. How could he not be thrilled?

More of the same on the Dvorak New World Symphony, in a full-festival orchestra performance that closed the season.

Mr. Kalia did beautiful things with that much-beloved piece. His reading as conductor is strong and powerful, evoking its most muscular and evocative beauty, and filling the hall, Lake George High School.

Again, this was most clearly thrilling for him, as well as for the audience and the musicians. Lucky, lucky all of us. Music-making should always be such juicy pleasure. (Even classical music making; Hah!)

What's next? The 2019 festival runs from August 11 to 23. They aim to include more non-white, non-male works, they say — though organically, Mr. Lombard says.

Ms. Kolarova has two violin concerts here this fall: September 29 at the Strand Theater, Hudson Falls, and October 13 at The Park in Glens Falls. She said she will again perform the Pascal LeBoeuf piece commissioned expressly for her.

Interestingly, she said, the commission contract came with two stipulations from its young, Grammy-nominated composer.

First, the piece must always be on a program with at least one work that was written by a non-white or non-male composer. Second, whenever Ms. Kolarova performs it, she must wear a different pair of shoes.

Fine, and a little frivolous: Maybe that's not such a bad way to make your music.