Pekka Kuusisto, who received an invitation to return to London, played a Swedish folk song in Lahti

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Violin wizard Pekka Kuusisto’s folk music coups continued in Lahti on Sunday in visiting Minnesota Orchestra’s concert.

Kuusisto played Prokofiev’s First Violin Concerto in a virtuoso manner. He honored Minnesota’s and Midwest’s Nordic immigration history by playing an old Swedish folk song Vi sålde våra hemman [We sold our home]. It tells about the sentiments of emigrants and their longing for the home country.

Kuusisto treated the beautiful melody with tenderness and emotion, the orchestra hummed in the background and conductor Osmo Vänskä warbled along with his clarinet.

The audience was almost as taken as with Kuusisto’s super-popular encore in London two weeks ago. There he played the Karelian folk song Minun kultani kaunis on [My darling is pretty].

During concert intermission Kuusisto told that he has received a huge amount of feedback from the humoristic act he pulled in London.

“I’ve been asked to join all kinds of talk shows and community singing events.”

It bothers him a bit that the encore has taken attention away from the main works of the concert. In London he interpreted Tchaikovsky’s Violin concert in a new, creative way.

Pekka Kuusisto also mentioned in Lahti that he has been invited to return to the London Proms next year.

“There was some talk about that even before this summer’s gig, but the newly gathered attention has strengthened the plan. I will play something relating to the celebration of Finland’s 100 years of independence.”