

The Washington Post

Monday, March 10, 2008

Around [Toronto](#), the Gryphon Trio musicians are considered maverick workaholics. Pianist Jamie Parker, cellist Roman Borys and violinist Annalee Patipatanakoon all teach at the university, play at jazz joints and tour their country tirelessly, sometimes with sopranos and lighting designers in tow. Last fall, the trio took on programming the Ottawa International Chamber Music Festival, arguably the largest chamber festival in the world.



So why is it that in the United States, the Gryphons are known as three polite Canadians who play [Mozart](#) well?

The answer has much to do with the mysteries of arts funding and the risks of programming adventurous chamber music. Friday night's concert at Wolf Trap hinted at why these versatile musicians are so renowned back home. A last-minute switch kicked Mozart off the program, replacing his Trio in B-flat with Schumann's Piano Trio No. 2, which the group debuted Tuesday in Toronto. It came off well, but the royal treat was [Beethoven's](#) "Archduke," a piece they've been playing for years.

Any decent trio can create a dialogue between instruments; the Gryphons conjure a conversation of sound. Borys and Patipatanakoon, who are married, shift flawlessly between rough-hewn bowings and sweet, straight tones, while Parker is a buoyant pianist whose fingers ring bells each time he pulls a digit off the keyboard.

A single movement from the "[Constantinople](#)," a fascinating multimedia chamber opera by the Greek-born Canadian composer Christos Hatzis, completed the program.

In a question and answer session before the second half of the concert, Borys was asked if the Gryphons would present the entire work in the States soon. (They've performed "Constantinople" 20 times, but only once in this country.) The answer was no, because the piece has extensive and expensive lighting design, and the Gryphons haven't been able to get money to put the piece on. But the section performed this weekend suggests it would be a treat.

-- **Rebecca Ritzel**