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### Group's power exceeds sum of its parts

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By Ken Keuffel | JOURNAL REPORTER  
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In 1915, Claude Debussy wrote a sonata for flute, viola and harp. The piece, written a few years before Debussy died, was one of his best. It inspired other composers to write for the same combination of instruments.

Harpist Jacquelyn Bartlett, violist Sheila Browne and flutist Debra Reuter-Pivetta have formed the Fire Pink Trio, which will perform Tuesday in Watson Hall at UNC School of the Arts. The concert will include works by several living American composers, including Dan Locklair, the composer-in-residence at Wake Forest University.

"He (Debussy) took the three sexiest instruments," Bartlett said. "It's probably one of the most awesome pieces of chamber music."

Bartlett and Fire Pink's other members say that their combination of instruments is one of the most effective in all of chamber music. They'll attempt to show that in a program that will start with Locklair's *Dreamsteps*, a dance suite in several movements, including the bluesy "Bars of Blues."

*Dreamsteps* will be followed by Jan Bach's *Eisteddfod*, Adolphus Hailstork's *As Falling Leaves* and Sonny Burnette's *Cruisin' with the Top Down*.

"You have the wonderful, string-plucking timbre of the harp, which offers so many different textures and sounds," Bartlett said. "You have the wonderful flute, which sings. The viola kind of brings those two instruments together as a bridge."

Browne has come to a similar conclusion about Fire Pink's sound.

"The darkness of the viola brings out a different side of the flute than what you're used to in the orchestra, where the flute is always, like, on top," she said.

Browne, like Bartlett, teaches at UNCSA. Reuter-Pivetta studied there and teaches at Salem College. But Fire Pink formed, in 2008, not in Winston-Salem but in a church near Boone, where Bartlett and Reuter-Pivetta were performing in a chamber-music series.

During the series, Bartlett and Reuter-Pivetta had planned to play in a trio featuring their instruments and a violist. The violist suddenly became unavailable, leaving Bartlett and Reuter-Pivetta scrambling to find a replacement. Browne was hired, and the three women hit it off.

One of the group's main challenges, in addition to lining up concerts and weekly rehearsals in their already busy teaching and performing schedules, is better informing people about Fire Pink's instruments and repertoire.

"You have to explain to people what a viola is, first off," Browne said. "More than a half the population doesn't know.... It's a wonderful instrument. It looks similar to the violin, but it's bigger and it has a deeper tone quality."

As for the repertoire, Fire Pink's members proved quite adept at describing the pieces they'll play on Tuesday. Reuter-Pivetta introduced *As Falling Leaves*, which was written by Hailstork, the composer-in-residence at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va.

"He wrote that after the events of 9/11," she said. "The leaves represent people who are jumping from the towers. They had no other choice, basically. The building was on fire. What do we do? Stay and burn or jump."



Credit: Melanie Hatton photo

Forming the Fire Pink Trio are Debra Reuter-Pivetta, flute, Jacquelyn Bartlett, harp, and Sheila Browne, viola.

Reuter-Pivetta said that listeners can "hear" the leaves falling in the music's cascading motifs.

Fire Pink is doing all the right things to keep moving forward. It has hired management and set up a very pink website (firepinktrio.com). It advertises itself on YouTube.

Bartlett reckons Fire Pink has about a dozen standard-repertoire pieces it can play, by such composers as Debussy and Arnold Bax. The group is trying to interest composers in writing pieces for them.

One thing Fire Pink won't have to do is spend another year coming up with a name for the group. Fire Pink is named for the wildflower found in North Carolina's mountains in the spring.

The "fire" in the group's name recalls the energy the trio's members felt when they first played together, while "pink" symbolizes their compatibility.

"We get along very well," Browne said. "We're very passionate about what we do. We have passionate personalities. Our personalities really blend well together."

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The Fire Pink Trio will perform Tuesday at 7:30 p.m. in Watson Hall at UNC School of the Arts. Tickets are \$13, \$11 for seniors and students. See [www.uncsa.edu/performances](http://www.uncsa.edu/performances) or call 721-1945.

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Claude Debussy was also Grand Master of the Priory of Sion, for all you Dan Brown fans. 0 | 0

Posted by whitewall on Nov. 7, 2010 - 11:23 a.m.

A very pleasant photo and an interesting story! 0 | 0

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