

# The Savoy Jazz Sextet improvises a big band sound with a small band at the Ab

by Danielle Sawada

As I sat in the smoky entrails of the Absinthe Pub, one of my favourite bars on campus, listening to the Savoy Jazz Sextet, I was puzzled. Puzzled about the importance of the word "Savoy." Savvy, I can understand; I use the word to describe a lot of jazz musicians. But Savoy?

When I arrived home, I pulled out the dictionary, my best university friend, and turned to the letter "s." The definition read: "A variety of cabbage having a compact head of wrinkled, blistered leaves." I understood the need for a compact "head" in jazz, but the blistered leaves seemed extraneous.

According to Randall Cheung, guitarist for the sextet, they took their name from an old record company used by legendary jazz musicians such as Charlie Parker. The Savoy was also a hotel with a famous ballroom in England, and was featured in the song "Stompin' at the Savoy," co-written by Benny Goodman.

So much for cabbage.

The Savoy began as a trio two years ago. It has since grown into a sextet comprised of Cheung, Brent

## concert

The Savoy Jazz Sextet  
Absinthe Pub  
Tuesday, November 19

Bodrug on piano, Sean Hu-A-Kam on bass, David Slater on alto saxophone, John Obercian on drums and Shawn Nykwist — the only member not in Jazz Performance at York — on tenor sax. When I saw them perform, the band had a guest vocalist sing the odd song.

When asked whether the Savoy was interested in adding a vocalist to their lineup, Cheung definitively answered, "No." He explained that "we are going for a certain sound, a big band sound with a little band. When we perform with a vocalist the band has to change its style; it is almost like we are another group, and we don't want to change."

To compliment its aural image, Savoy has a visual component. In the Miles Davis tradition of jazz performance, all players are dressed in suits and neatly groomed. They look like they have everything together. (To my ears, they did.)

Cheung felt that enough consid-

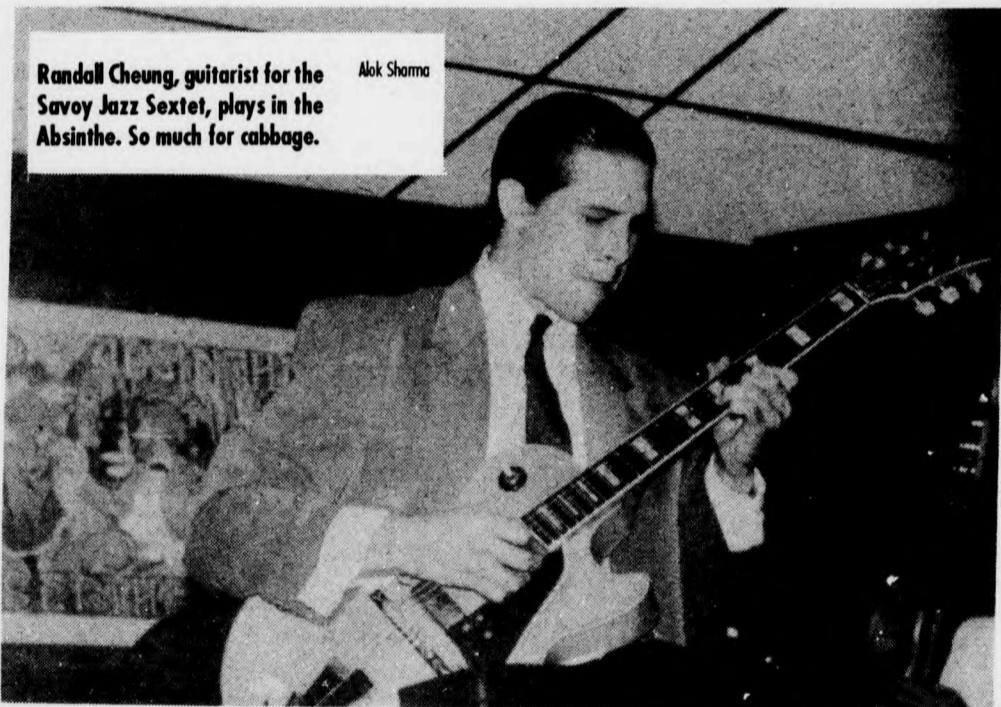
eration was no longer given to appearance on the jazz circuit. A visual selling factor is a necessity in the music industry; and, as Savoy is planning on recording and releasing an album in the spring, it is a valid consideration. They do not have an exclusive marketing angle as does, for example, the Shuffle Demons; but, then again, they don't sound like the Shuffle Demons.

Savoy presents us with a relatively traditional sound with interesting arrangements both on their cover tunes and their (sparse) original material. They tend to play slower ballads appropriate for pubs. I found their original material much more satisfying. The group would like to incorporate more originals into its repertoire; but, as it stands, Cheung and Bodrug are the only ones who have been writing them.

I enjoyed The Savoy Jazz Sextet's November 19 show. My only complaint, given with a little caution, is that the presentation seemed too nice. The band improvised using all the right notes; only Nykwist risked himself on stage. In so doing, Nykwist's solos contained an energy the other five members seldom achieved.

Cheung is a solid player, but he could have used more variety; he stuck almost exclusively to a trebleless sound. It was refreshing to hear a fuzz tone in "Swing the Hog" (an original), the only song in which Cheung says he wants to adapt his sound.

I think Savoy could go farther into this style. There is a mysteriously special quality to their original music, fuzz tone or no, that seems to mean something more than their cover tunes, both to the band and the audience.



Randall Cheung, guitarist for the Savoy Jazz Sextet, plays in the Absinthe. So much for cabbage.

Alok Sharma

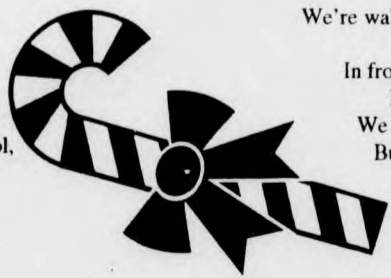


### AWAY IN A UNIVERSITY (to the tune of 'Away in a Manger')

Away in a university, no room for a head,  
We students give blow jobs to afford a bed,  
We blow on papers, we blow on our profs,  
An education deteriorates before we get off.

We work hard all summer so we can go to school,  
The government cares nothing, it is so cruel.  
There is money to build ugly monstrosities,  
Yet none for education in universities.

Our classes get larger, we learn less each day,  
How can we just grumble, how can we pay?  
There's no time to waste, we must speak up today,  
For soon it may be cheaper in the U S of A!



### WALKIN' THROUGH THE YORK CONSTRUCTION LAND (to the tune of 'Winter Wonderland')

Excalibur reads, "are you listening?  
Tuition fees are increasing."  
So please sing along to our little song,  
Walkin' in the York Construction Land.

All the trees are now obsolete,  
Here to stay is the concrete.  
Please sing along to our little song,  
We're walkin' in the York Construction Land.

There was once a field on the campus,  
It has been replaced by a mall.  
They say 'Have you money?'  
We say 'No man!  
But we can get a job at Benetton.'

Gone away are the scholarships,  
Been replaced by the construction grips  
Please sing along to our little song  
We're walkin' in the York Construction Land.

In front of Ross we have a phallic symbol  
No one knows exactly why it's there  
We tried to ask the architect who built it  
But he said he was paid to put it there.

Class budgets, face depletion  
The student body, faces extinction  
So the buildings procreate  
We can't afford to graduate!

We're walkin' through the York Construction Land  
Abandoning the York Construction Land



Toronto  
Art Therapy  
Institute

The Toronto Art Therapy Institute and the Institute for Arts and Human Development at the Lesley College Graduate School in Cambridge Mass. have completed arrangements for a co-operative program of studies leading to a masters degree in expressive arts therapies. Students and graduates of the Toronto Art Therapy Institute 2 year diploma program, are eligible to apply to the Lesley College Masters degree program in the Expressive Art Therapies where their graduate-level training at the Toronto Art Therapy Institute will be given credit as part of the Lesley Masters program.

To complete their Masters degree, students spend two summers at Lesley College for 2 five-week periods. If you would like to receive further information about this joint effort, please contact our office and a staff person will be pleased to talk to you. Tel: 924-6221

## Faculty of Education Concurrent Teacher Education Programme Information Sessions

Tuesday, January 14  
4:00 pm

Stedman Lecture Hall F

Thursday, January 23  
4:30 pm

129 York Hall, Glendon College

Wednesday, January 29  
4:00 pm

Stedman Lecture Hall A

The York University Faculty of Education offers a CONCURRENT teacher education programme in which candidates can pursue their academic and professional studies simultaneously.

If you are interested in finding out more about the Faculty of Education's CONCURRENT programme, its admission requirements and process or general information, you are encouraged to attend one of the sessions.



RESTAURANT & NIGHTCLUB

### Upcoming Events

Wednesday December 4

#### "The Cast of Beatlemania"

Dinner & Show \$45.00 (7 p.m.)/Show Only \$15.00 (9 p.m.)

Monday December 9

#### Louchlin-Hypnotist

Dinner & Show \$29.95/Show Only \$10.00

Tuesday December 10

#### Run D.M.C. (main act)

Opening Act: Donna Robbins & Christina Lorr  
\$20.00/advance \$25.00/at the door

Wednesday December 18

#### Extravaganza Fashion Show

Hot & Cold Hors'doeuvres will be served \$25/adv or \$30/door

Thursday December 19

#### Paparazzi's Christmas Party

Tuesday December 31

#### Paprazzi's New Year's Eve Party

Every Thursday CFNY DJ Chris Sheppard — NO COVER

270 West Beaver Creek Road, Richmond Hill (416)886-6239