

Jazzed about the dress code

Gypsophilia combine glitz with a great sound

DENIS ARMSTRONG
Sun Media

Ross Burns loves Django Reinhardt, and not just because, like the gypsy guitar icon, he likes to play the guitar-based jazz of the 1930s and 1940s.

But also because he likes the delightfully social contradiction of high style and reckless abandon.

Meet Gypsophilia, the Canadian seven-piece jazz band known as much for its theatrics and on-stage antics as its fun-loving virtuosity and devotion to the French guitar legend Reinhardt.

"It's music that's all dressed up and ready to go out, rather than turn on the TV and go to bed," Ross says from Halifax, where the band played a high school gradu-

ation dance the night before.

"We're all about the details and the finery of the music. It brings out the performer in all of us. If we look sharp, we play sharp, so we'll try to outdress each other."

It might sound like band members Alec Frith, Nick Wilkinson and Burns on guitars, Sageev Oore on violin and keyboards, Matt Myer on trumpet, Adam Fine on bass and Gina Burgess on violin spend as much time on their wardrobe as they do on their music. But Gypsophilia transcends that kind of stylish categorization, and beneath the threads

is a band of jazz virtuosos who also incorporate elements of klezmer, funk, reggae, tango and even game show music on the band's

second album *Sa-ba-da-OW!*, which hits the stores this week.

Sa-ba-da-OW! sounds like something Homer Simpson might yell after he's stubbed his toe, but it's actually a percussive punctuation

mark translated into scat and the final word on the band's energized sense of style as well as its love of hip jazz.

The band members met in 2004 at the Atlantic Jazz Festival at a tribute concert to Reinhardt. They had such a good time play-

ing together, they decided to do it again, and again, until eventually in 2007, they released their surprisingly popular debut recording *Minor Hope*.

Later that year, they wrote and recorded the original score for the film *The Lullaby of Mike Bossy*.

"We're a more mainstream sound than a lot of jazz bands. A lot of jazz is as static as a statue. People stop everything so they can listen to it and ponder. We're not so intellectual. We're more available to listeners than some jazz, and it helps that we're young and want to have fun.

"We're a pretty flexible bunch of musicians who like a wide variety of music. We're energetic and high-spirited without being too specific. We like the sense of occasion you get from Reinhardt's music."

denis.armstrong@sunmedia.ca

Scene setter

Gypsophilia

■ **Where:** Confederation Park

■ **When:** Today, 7 p.m.