

CRIME

## **Bike-theft saga takes a turn toward the strange**

### **Third person charged is shop owner's wife, an accomplished concert pianist and a 'lovely, lovely person'**

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Toronto's stolen-bicycle saga led police into three more secluded garages crammed with bikes yesterday, and took a turn for the bizarre as an accomplished concert pianist became the third person charged in the case.

Jeanie Chung, 37, faces four counts relating to possession of drugs and stolen property police found inside the home she rents with her husband, Igor Kenk, 49, who was arrested last week at his ramshackle used-bicycle shop on Queen Street West, along with a third accused, Jean Laveau, 47. Police allege Mr. Kenk was seen directing another person to steal bicycles near the store.

Since the initial arrests last Wednesday, police have pulled more than 2,000 bicycles from Mr. Kenk's shop, five private garages he rented in the west end, and the house where he lives with Ms. Chung, on Berryman Street in the tony Yorkville area.

During their search of the house, police found marijuana and cocaine, in both crack and powdered form, and a computer that had been reported stolen from a graphic design firm. The charges against Ms. Chung, all possession-related, pertain only to those items.

A talented pianist who studied at the Juilliard School of music in New York, Ms. Chung turned herself in at a west-end police station Tuesday upon her return from Alberta. She had been conducting a piano internship and had performed two sold-out shows at the Banff Centre. She was released on a promise to appear in court tomorrow, when Mr. Kenk, still in custody, will appear for a bail hearing.

Ms. Chung's colleagues in Toronto's music community were shocked and puzzled by yesterday's news.

"That's her husband? Well, Jesus," said Edward Janus, a fellow pianist and long-time teacher at the Royal Conservatory of Music, where Ms. Chung has been working as an occasional accompanist at the Glenn Gould School.

"We knew that she's a bike enthusiast, and a guy that sold bikes would sometimes be at a concert," Mr. Janus said. "He looked like an incongruent person to me, because he was kind of a dishevelled-looking character, and he'd come on his bike as well. But who am I to say?"

Mr. Janus called Ms. Chung "one of Canada's best accompanists" and a "lovely, lovely person" who would never utter a vile word about anyone. "None of us can ever think in terms of something criminal on her part."

Boris Lysenko, another Royal Conservatory instructor who taught Ms. Chung and has known her since the early 1990s, also had no knowledge of her marriage and could not reconcile the allegations with the woman he knows.

"As a teacher, I cannot make mistakes in appreciation of people, because I see them from inside, from the mind and the soul," Mr. Lysenko said.

"She's a very serious girl. To me it looks like an accident; it's impossible."

The same word seemed to fit the scene inside a tumbledown garage in a muddy back alley on Elm Grove Avenue, one of three more that police cleared of bicycles yesterday after previous raids at Mr. Kenk's shop, home and a pair of rented garages.

Armed with a search warrant, pry bars and rubber gloves, officers uncovered a chaotic mess comprising not only bicycles, but an array of orphaned items including a dead Coke machine, a stack of roofing shingles and a female mannequin sporting an X, made of electrical tape, on each breast. Similar scenes were unfolding at addresses on High Park Boulevard and Palmerston Avenue.

"The hardest part is getting started," Detective Izzy Bernardo, a lead investigator on the case, said as he delved into the Elm Grove pile. Before long, though, a Ryder rental truck was filling up with bicycles - old, new, cheap and expensive. All were to be carted off to a police garage on Hanna Avenue, to be stored with the 1,759 already there.

Once they are sorted and catalogued, police will hold another series of public viewings. No dates have been set.

As of yesterday, 55 bikes had been returned to their owners, and of those just 18 had been reported to police as stolen, Superintendent Ruth White said. She encouraged owners of bicycles to register them with police so that they can be returned if stolen and later recovered.

Katherine Vettese, who lives on Elm Grove Avenue, said Mr. Kenk and his junk-laden pickup truck were a frequent sight in the alley behind her home.

"He would always be here with a big, huge pickup truck full of odd stuff," she said. "All the time."