

# The gift of music



BackBeat

with Cornelius Thomas

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**PERFECT PRESENT:** Albert Spaargaren of the Dyani-Pukwana Jazz Foundation officially hands Abe "Kruger" Maqhula the guitar Jimmy Dlodlu bought.

A couple of weeks ago Jimmy Dlodlu played a gig in the Orient Theatre after he had graced the launch of the Dyani-Pukwana Jazz Foundation.

And then Jimmy went away.

Not quite.

On the Sunday after the gig he conducted a guitar workshop in Mdantsane.

Eager to learn from the maestro, Another Level lead guitarist Abe "Kruger" Maqhula attended. Kruger, who lives in CC Lloyd township, caught a one-way lift to Mdantsane. He would see how he'd get back, but he absolutely had to be at the workshop — which, in keeping with its mission of also offering jazz education, the Foundation had organised.

Kruger and other local guitarists enjoyed the workshop, joining in to try licks and riffs.

As the session came to an end, a local guitar connoisseur asked if Jimmy would come see his guitar collection. Yes, he would. Albert "Jazzman" Spaargaren, aka Sparkie, forthwith agreed to take Jimmy through to Bunker's Hill. Same time Kruger was looking for a ride to his four-room match-box home in CC Lloyd. Sparkie said, "Sure, just come along".

Jimmy Dlodlu immediately recognised Kruger Maqhula.

The Friday before the Orient Theatre gig, Dlodlu heard a few licks at Emzini Jazz Café which he had never heard before. He then asked the guitarist — it was Kruger — "Hi man. Can you show me how

you did that?"

The modest guitarman from CC Lloyd obliged, showing the maestro a few tricks on licks.

In Bunker's Hill Dlodlu checked out the collection of shining guitars. Tried a few.

Kruger picked up Jimmy's guitar and strummed away. There was that sound again.

Impressed, Jimmy thought, why not give the Dyani-Pukwana Jazz Foundation a boost. "Okay," Jimmy then said, "I'll donate a guitar to Kruger on behalf of the Dyani-Pukwana Foundation."

Excitement and apprehension mixed and travelled through the gathered jazzmen — had they heard the maestro right?

Spaargaren afterward spoke with Jimmy at the North Sea Jazz Festival in Holland. "Yes," said Dlodlu, "the guitar is already on its way."

When the state of the art electric-cum-acoustic Epiphone guitar arrived the second week of July, life lit up for Kruger. That first night after playing the guitar, he couldn't sleep. "I saw Jimmy's face on the walls — even in the dark."

Kruger's neighbours in the drab township benefit as he now strums away, practising daily. Another Level and its fans benefit, because now Kruger only plays the Epiphone.

"It was the first time in my life I received a gift like this. Jimmy Dlodlu is a great; he is a brother to me," the guitarman said.

Then Kruger added a telling touch. "This great thing would not have happened to me if I didn't go to that workshop."