



Chris McGregor, as seen by Bruce Arnott in 1957.

Chris who persuaded me to change to fine art.

"As a student in the later '50s and early '60s Chris single-mindedly developed his interest in jazz (a great eclectic tradition), to his own artistic growth and the displeasure of the late Professor Eric Chisholm, then Director of the C.O.M. In so doing, Chris compromised a promising academic career, even though his brilliance was universally acknowledged by his teachers, especially Arnold van Wyk.

"Round about 1959/60 the grotty little Ambassador's Jazz Club in Woodstock was the venue for jam sessions attended by a small group of aficionados who followed the McGregor trail. Here he played with, or alongside, the likes of Dollar Brand and Beattie Benjamin, and many others whose names now escape me. But these included the off-duty black jazzmen from the King Kong Hotel which, with the inimitable Miriam Makhoba, was then rocking the late and unlamented Camps Bay Civic Centre.

"Chris subsequently formed and led South Africa's first 'mixed' jazz group, which won a South African Breweries award that took them abroad, where they remained (jointly and severally) in cultural exile. At this time Chris McGregor's work was acknowledged and

encouraged by the late, great Duke Ellington, and he also played at Ronnie Scott's in London.

"I am no musicologist, but I believe that Chris was working towards a synthesis of South African black traditional and township music and the wonderfully evolved black American contribution to jazz. It is particularly sad that he could not return to the transformed and healed South Africa we all hope for. He was wise, funny, brilliant, multi-talented and warm; and we needed him back here to attend to the ravaged South African psyche in his own idiosyncratic way, and by means of the cultural bridges embedded in his art form."

Jazz musician

Earlier this year Andrew Christopher Radford "Chris" McGregor (College of Music 1956-60) died abroad, where he had made his home and his name as a jazz musician after leaving South Africa in the early 1960s. Former fellow student Associate Professor Bruce Arnott, director of the Michaelis School of Fine Art, paid this tribute to him.

"Chris McGregor was one of my closest friends from the time (1956) when we suffered (or tried to ignore) the puerile indignities heaped on us as 'new men' at College House. He was studying at the College of Music and I had been accepted as a student of medicine. It was