

Critic's choice

by KEVIN HENRIQUES

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Jazz of a severely different brand is played by that exciting Anglo-South African group, the Brotherhood of Breath. When I reviewed their album *Brotherhood* on these pages in October 1972 I mentioned that they had managed to convey their usual volatile enthusiasm and joy despite the sterile recording-studio atmosphere. Now comes an album recorded live in Switzerland and which reproduces even more faithfully the dynamic tension they create at concerts and in clubs.

Once again most of the compositions are by the leader, Chris McGregor. Happily most are in the African idiom which, in my view, is their real metier—their excursions into the land of "creative improvised European music" and all the pretentious screeching it entails have always seemed to me misguided when they have so much that is different and indeed unmatched to offer. The unique thing that has always been going for the McGregor band has been the combination of African rhythms and feelings into the big band format. In this area they have no equal, nor even challenge.

"Kongi's Theme" for instance, is a fair example of the best of the Brotherhood. A marching theme redolent of Africa, it has a catchy repetitiveness not unusual in African music. Against this sound is a raucous solo close to the mike by trombonist Radu Maifatti. The effect is irresistible. "Tungi's Song" has a touch of West African highlife and West Indian calypso. Mongezi Feza solos on trumpet and there are sure to be arguments over the worth of the gurgles he makes.

However, I don't want to give the impression that the band concentrates on way-out, "difficult" music. Nothing of the sort. Admittedly there are moments when the band goes off into territory it should avoid and on this album there are some moments of pointless chaos, especially on McGregor's "Do It." But the overall energy the 11 men generate cannot offend any open-eared listener. Just enjoy the throbbing sounds.