

Daily Bopatch  
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# Brothers go solo on piano

**A**T THE North Sea Jazz Festival in Cape Town earlier this year, a jazz expert said that: as far as the South African contingent was concerned, the event smacked of being "an affirmative action gesture".

He explained that some of the finest talents on the local jazz circuit had not been invited.

Two brothers – Tony Schilder and Ebrahim Kalil Shihab – both of whom recently released solo jazz albums, vindicate the expert's assertion with their latest works.

Playing to a selected audience in the Hout Bay home of producer Jack von Poll, Tony Schilder coaxed a masterpiece from the grand piano – *The Tempest Live Volume 3* – bringing together the sounds of several decades. The album comprises standards, Brazilian grooves and Cape jazz surprises.

His rendition of *A House is not a Home* falls like lovely autumn leaves, while *Surrey* resembles the human spirit. On these tunes the pianist skillfully syncopates melody and harmony. Others, like *The Very Thought of You*, concentrate on melody – and the result is something that's a perennial joy.

Schilder also features his own composition, *Mr Cool*, representing the essence of Tony. Further,



## BackBeat with Cornelius Thomas



**THE PHILOSOPHER: Ebrahim Kalil Shihab in a pensive mood.**

his complex pieces – *Windmills* and *My Funny Valentine* – are challenging, but masterpieces nevertheless.

Having worked a stint in Brazil, Schilder also plays a Brazilian Medley. Here he shows what can be accomplished on the bass keys. And with semi-

tones flowing smoothly, the listener gets a funky fusion of sound that is as characteristic of Schilder as it is Brazilian.

Tony had been denied by the white-owned music industry during the apartheid era, and was often detained for his activism, but on this

album not one angry note flows.

Shihab, born Tony's younger brother Chris, brings a different world on *The Tempest Live Volume 2*.

Playing Von Poll's grand, he produced three longer pieces – Irving Berlin's *How Deep is the Ocean*, George Gershwin's *Someone to Watch Over Me* and his own *My Destiny*.

"I love standards," Shihab always says, "but I have to play them my way." Giving Berlin's work an ominous feel through his emphasis on bass, and taking improvisational liberties (as is required by jazz), one hears that Shihab adores the classics, but he delivers them in his own inimitable style. The result befits any occasion – from cocktail chat to philosophers' debate.

International music critic Don Albert judged Shihab's CD "one of the finest piano albums ever to come out of South Africa". I concur.

Both albums should be collectors' items, especially for jazz and classical music lovers.

But, moreover, as it is renaissance time, everyone should own a Schilder.

The Tempest Live series is distributed by Jassics. The albums are available at local music outlets.