



THE WORLD

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Chris McGregor who grew up in the Transkei. Knows the love of a herdboys because his best friends in youth have been herdboys. Has a burning zeal to work in his jazz career.

Xhosa boy Chris lauds Cape Jazz

BY DOC BIKITSHA

JOBURG.— I saw him wince when I addressed him as Mr. McGregor. He will be plain Chris to you and me next time. He is the tall gangling pianist from the Cape who came to Joburg to work on a dedicated field — jazz. Chris McGregor was born 26 years ago in Somerset West in the Cape and grew up in the Transkei.

"Do you know any Xhosa, Chris, boy?", I asked.

"I used to but now I've forgotten most of it because lots of people talk to me in English", he replied.

As a young bare-footed rustic in the undulating vales of the Transkei he used to trudge the veld with his best friend, an African lad called Boy Bikitsha. There was a bright sparkle in Chris' eyes at the mention of his friend.

Ask my Granny

Asked me if I was related to Boy. My tribal history and family tree knowledge is terrible. I'll ask my Granny.

After rattling familiar families in the Transkei, Chris told me he received his primary education at Umtata

Dudu Phokoane, Cups and Saucers and others. That was still in vital Cape Town.

Chris has a philosophy in jazz which is based on down-to-earth hard work and dedication.

Dedication

I asked him if he particularly singled out Africans to play with. He paused a bit and said he was willing to play with anybody who had the ability, drive and dedication.

He however did not disguise his love for Africans. After all, he grew up as a little White-Xhosa boy in the velds of the Transkei.

Chris is convinced that Jo-burg jazzists don't work hard. He raves about the Cane and that environment

door.

It was a serious problem. Much was going to waste in Johannesburg.

In Cape Town at any session a person would just join in anywhere and keep a terrific rhythm section.

Eli Mabuza had that in him. He had to bring that out by working hard.

"I'm here to work — there's much wasting", said Chris as he was eulogising about Cape Town jazzmen.

The interview could have gone on for most of the night had I not decided to call it quits.

Fuzz on face

Chris was very interested to find out tomorrow how I would manage writing sense on his life. I have not done it justice. I'll keep on trying.