

SA jazz pianist dies

CHRIS McGregor, one of South Africa's foremost jazz pianists, died in France on Saturday morning without having fulfilled his wish of returning home.

McGregor died peacefully in his sleep at his home.

In 1964 he left the country with his band, the *Blue Notes*, which consisted of himself, Dudu Pukwana, Louis Moholo, Nikele Moyake, Johnny Dyani, and Mongezi Feza.

They were on the road from 1959 to 1964 and had been playing in townships in defiance of the Group Areas Act and the Separate Amenities Act. He and his band eventually left the country.

Mr McGregor returned to South Africa briefly in 1987 when he came to claim the Carling Circle of Jazz Festival

award and played with Winston Mankunku and Barney Rakulane.

He also made a short visit in the 1970's when he played at festivals in Port Elizabeth and Soweto.

In Europe, he and the band played at the Antibes Jazz Festival in the south of France and later started busking on the streets of Nice.

They were gradually offered more gigs in Europe and Britain and finally established themselves at Ronnie Scott's Club in London.

When three of the band's members died in exile — Moyake, Feza and Dyani — the *Blue Notes* disbanded.

Mr McGregor performed solo for a few months before he formed a band called the Brotherhood of Breath. — SAPA