- JOHNNY DYANI

"NO OTHER country could have Hugh Masekela, Jonas Gwanga, produced such great songs . . . and this Makhaya Ntshoko and Miriam Makeba went to the United States. Their stories despite musicians being discouraged at a labyrinth of feverish musi every turn, being denied a proper vity, both incestuous ar audience, being blocked by radio and ntially outward. Racia the record industry, being isolated as stars within a particular governmentnd tragedy are the cancers many imposed grouping and being forced into a political mould just by virtue of being an unwilling part of the structure. . . Written by Muff Anderson (in his book on South African music, Music in the Mix), this statement alone is enough

em have suffered but they've had tion but to battle on regardless and emotionally sublime music of An arbitrary beginning is The Jazz Maniacs. They were the top Jo'burg of a rationale for the emigration to

London in the mid-Sixties of the cream the spirit of Marabi, guitar and of the country's jazz musicians. First-Harry Miller, then The Blue Notes, Mike Gibbs, Gwigwi Mrwebi and Ronnie Beer. Others - Dollar Brand, Brand's Jazz Epistles, The Blue Notes, and percussion. Companies like Gallo

An historic moment — 1965 and Chris McGregor's Blue Notes make th début at the ICA, then in London's Dover Street. (L. to r.) Dudu Pukwana alto), Mongezi Feza (trumpet), Johnny Dyani (bass) and Chris McGrego



practitioners of swing, especially the "South Africa is heaven and hell . . ive-swing of the Maniacs but were much more influenced by US bebop

Parker, Gillespie and Miles. The line of influence on alto players was very clear. The Maniacs' swinging altoist Wilson Silgee was the model for the bebop-inspired Nick Movake, the first Blue Notes' altoist who, in tur taught Dudu Pukwana. Nick Moyake sadly left the Notes at their second por f call (Zurich in 1964) to return to SA nd die from cancer. He never got to s w Dudu had absorbed the vitality o e next wave of US musicians, the ies' avant-garde, thus keeping efinition of South African The Blue Notes, though, were just as

influenced by the totally indigenous kwela forms as they were by sharp swing and bebop. Though in the late Fifties, kwela came to refer to the bebopping lyricism of the "new breed", it originally referred to a very local form of music. Lemmy Special Mabiso, a brilliant swing band of the Thirties who carried penny-whistle player, was the first kwela hero. Kwela was a street-corner percussive street-jive, through into the jive with toe-tapping melodies. Soon dance-halls. The new breed - Dollar added to the solo whistle was flute, voice

by Andrew Cyrille, triggered his playing

into overdrive. His first avant-garde re-

Note to leave the fold had so much music

in him that he would need numerous

expressions to fulfill it all. Never one to

stay in London too long at a stretch,

Louis played with Lacy in Italy on Forest

And The Zoo and went to South America

Whereas Dyani felt cramped in the

wild high pitch of Lacy's jungle, Louis

excelled: basking in a rushing cascade of

In The Brotherhood of Breath, the

Osborne Trio/Quintet, Spear, Ninesense

ind Isipingo, Moholo's telepathic rela-

ionship with Miller became tighter and

ighter. Whether issuing a mock military

frum-roll, then taking on and playing

gainst Radu Malfatti's trombone in the

therhood's "Kongi's Theme"

oushing Elton Dean's "Dede Bip Bip" (on

the EDQ album) into an intense entang

ed pitch so much quicker than other

frummers, or with avalanchian powel

setting up the dynamic puzzles which

Breuker and Watts fought through in In

Conference, Louis and Harry's realm

ranged from the rock-solid to the wafer-

nin depending on the organic need of

on his own LP, Spirits Rejoice (Ogun,

77) the range of moods are vast. Both

is pushes a furious torrential rhythm

Harry Miller and Johnny Dyani play as

to the limit on "Khanya" creating fissions

in the ascent and descent of the Evans.

Wheeler, Malfatti and Parker ensemble,

keeps an even time on Feza's beautiful

emposition "You Ain't Gonna Know

le", and oversees the making of "Wed-

ng Hymns" into a choral, sad lament.

layed a lot in Europe with the likes of

es Hazevoet/Misha Mengelberg, Rudi-

r Carl and Irene Schweizer and Peter

fellow SA emigrés guitarist Russell Ber-

nin and congo player Thebe Lipere from

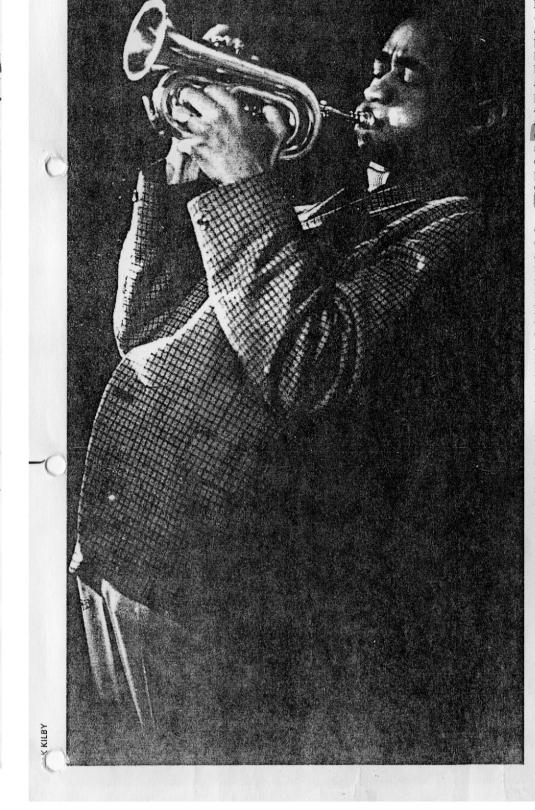
nd Keith Tippett.

Zila and also in a trio with Larry Stabbins

zmann but is currently playing wit!

Since the late Seventies Moholo has

with Lacy, Enrico Rava and Dyani.



HARRY MILLER

"Harry was a 110%-er. He loved

professional. He didn't distinguish

music - he was a complete

nade nothing. Lemmy, the king of enny-whistle blues, is an impoverished -hard drinker today. Kwela hits kept on coming and the abel grew to refer to the new moves, the ew rhythmic alliances in popular ownship music whether it be Lemmy' vhistle, Miriam Makeba's click-clack inging or the Blue Notes' blend of folk elodies, bebop references and

nd made a fortune while the musicians

Trumpeter Mongezi Feza were the first to record this local talent

He saw all styles as equals" - HAZEL MILLER After Dollar Brand's Jazz Epistles left "He's sorely missed – a rock-steady doing their own thing" n 1961, the Blue Notes led the field bassist and a great friend" - JULIE TIPPETTS

ouring all over the country. Ian Carr, in is chapter on Chris McGregor in Music itside, says, "But notoriety was ouble-edged weapon. Things were eginning to tighten up and for a mix and like the McGregor outfit there egan to be a correlation be unt of fame and the amount of re they could expect from th horities. McGregor; 'We just invi ention . . . we were coping with mplete apartheid structure which eans that you land in a place and fi her that you're all sleeping in one ice and putting someone at risk, or The decision why they, and their

egime is – with increasing

urope? One, the Blue Notes had a few

ontacts in London; two, the language;

nonymous with unlimited social and

frica circa 1963 (the same goes for now)

ukwana and Beer played in the UK wa

(wela as the Gwigwi Band. Gwigwi

Arwebi had, like fellow altoist Kippie

Moketsi, come over with the cast of the

nusical King Kong in 1965. He stayed

nly a year before moving to the US and

n the mid-Seventies died there. The LP

eautiful melodies played zestfully. It

paradox of South Africa: the unlimited

rison of apartheid. Dudu Pukwana,

evive these roots thoroughly in the

ed of the avant-garde.

eauty of music - laid out in the cloying

Mongezi Feza and Johnny Dyani would

bsequent years as The Blue Notes

cations Orchestra(!) which included

came a dominant voice in the Brother-

Terroade recalls that when he was

playing at the Salle Pleyel in Paris he was

ged their hue from sky-blue into the

vas pure, good-time kwela – short,

vas a nostalgic reminiscence on the

usical freedom compared to South

nd three, just about anywhere was

The first LP on which McGregor,

rhythm section was to last seven years, jazz. egues, left is obvious. How can you ntinue to try to make music when an partheid policy which more and more flects the paranoia of a minority iscrimination and brutality - hitting ou, the people? Answer: you get out ny way you can. The Blue Notes were stensibly just leaving SA to play the ntibes Festival in 1964 but they sure as ell weren't going back. They stayed on n the South of France and busked until he tourists had all gone. Then on to Curich and Geneva for the winter and, at he invitation of Ronnie Scott, came to ondon the next year. Why London ather than, say, Paris - the jazz mecca of

(Mike Westbrook's view is useful here "It was a great joy working with His point is that it's too easy and, in fact, Harry. He was so very energetic a incorrect to glorify those days at the Old player – a totally committed jazz Place; the musicians could never make a between types of music he played. musician - and one of the rare new living out of it, they received little to no exposure and, though a strong strain of breed in the Sixties fired by American music but not copying it, innovation pervaded, today's jazz is just as original but of a higher quality.) rather using it as an inspiration for Financial stability was partially attained by the Millers when, in 1966, - MIKE WESTBROOK Harry secured a place at the London College of Music. Hazel: "He was always so involved in projects that towards the end of the course he hardly had time to WHEN Harry Miller came to London in Westbrook around that time and, after attend!" 1961 he didn't know anyone except Man- the latter's first big band fell apart, Miller Harry built the rhythm with Jackson

fred Mann with whom he'd played at the along with Jackson, Surman and on Surman's first album John Surman and Orange Grove in Jo'burg. Though in- Osborne, joined the Westbrook Sextet. on Westbrook's Celebration and Metropospired by Coltrane and Coleman during At John Stevens's Little Theatre Club lis but was working with Louis on Skidearlier visits to New York (Harry worked and at the Old Place, the floating pool of more's Once Upon A Time and with Mike on the boats), the first band with whom musicians could be divided into three Osborne on Outback. It was that Louis's he got involved in London was The groupings - the Blue Notes with Ronnie inventive high-hat rush and inspired Group Sounds Five led by West Indian Beer, the Westbrook Sextet and the SME timing was the perfect foil for Harry's

drummer Don Brown and including incarnations. These aggregations would adventurous phrasing - inspired trumpeter Henry Lowther. When Don rearrange themselves time and time empathy thoroughly permeated their incommitted suicide, Alan Jackson took again over the next ten years and in so teraction. With Osborne's alto, the trio over the drums. The Miller-Jackson doing forging a new, vital, iconoclastic reached some totally sublime moments. The trio format gave them room to after which Harry would work almost "The Old Place was where Harry met manoeuvre around each other while also exclusively in tandem with Louis Moholo Chris (McGregor). But it was like old providing space for inspired flourishes. before moving to Holland. He met John friends meeting up - through they hadn't With the Brotherhood of Breath, Miller Stevens at the afternoon sessions at the known each other in SA, they knew of was more than able to cope with the Swan, Elton Dean, Nick Evans and Keith each other and having so much in com-depth and imagination of McGregor's Tippett at the Barry Summer School, and mon, having shared the same past, and Pukwana's compositions. He and John Surman and Mike Osborne at the brought an immediate empathy to their Louis provided the spritely, springy Old Peanuts Club. He also met Mike relationship" - Hazel Miller. rhythm for "The Bride" (from Chris



McGregor's Brotherhood of Breath album) "Children At Play" itself is a much more Berlin for six months. Harry worked and on the psychedelic free-form piece questioning work, ably demonstrating principally in a trio with saxophonist "Night Poem", their giant axis equals the maturity of Harry's technique and Peter Brotzmann and recorded albums even Garrison-Jones in its dexterity and the essential vision beneath it. It's as if for FMP like The Nearer The Bone, The complete freedom of movement. Harry is focussing on an experimental Sweeter The Meat (1979), Opened But Harry's musical forays led him into point around which his spray of notes Hardly Touched (1980), and Berlin Bones many odd corners. He played on a King oscillates ... as if homing in on an (recorded 1977, released 1981). Miller's

Crimson record and worked with Bob absolute . . . plucking, bowing, stroking, work with Louis in the Brotzmann Trio Downes on a score for the London wrenching the phrases from his instru- reminded many people of the type of Contemporary Dance Company. Also he ment to get him there. helped initiate (along with Hazel, the Whenever Miller led a band during the with Mike Osborne. At the end of 1977, Traceys, the Osbornes and the Surmans) mid-Seventies it was called Isipingo, so Miller moved to Holland were he worked the Lambeth New Music Society. At its named after a berry and a place in SA. with Leo Cuypers and Van Manen on Summer School, he and Mongezi Feza, But Family Affair in 1978 was their only Zeeland Suite (BvHaast). Harry stayed on who were both teaching there, led a release. The album spotlights Tippett, in Holland but continued to work on and Dudu tune in a big band made up of Moholo and Harry at their finest. Not off with Louis and Keith Tippett. music students one afternoon on only were they the Ogun stable rhythm Harry Miller's last LP was Down South Clapham Common. Apparently, it was a section but, undoubtedly, Britain's (on Vara Jazz) - one of Harry's finest stirring and unusual sight!

finest. (The same team were dazzlingly achievements. "Ikaya" possesses a whole The year 1973 was a golden one for creative on Ogun's In Conference with panorama of musical (lived) experience; Harry Miller. He played kwela-funk with Trevor Watts and Willem Breuker, Keith the deeply moving African folk base is Dudu Pukwana in Spear's In The Tippett's Ark and Elton Dean's strained through Europe's advanced, Townships, crescendo-laced free-form Ninesense.) "Family Affair" itself is a organised and effervescently alive jazz with Irene Schweizer on Ramifications; strongly melodic venture, in a way a format. "Deep Down Feelings" sees Harand - most important, for British jazz - classic pop song, the trombone theme ry letting fly, swooping in tone, time and started Ogun Records with Hazel. The memorably catchy, and Tippett res- emphasis. On "Schooldays", Harry is at Ogun catalogue speaks for itself and is trained before careering off on an atonal his favourite occupation again - offering tness to the commitment applied to romp. Miller's arrangement providing a rich inventive rhythm then freeing it, project by the Millers, engineer Keith the perfect floor for Malcolm Griffiths's opening out the tension for the ensem-Beal as well as the array of British and contorting trombone solo. "Touch Hunble's response . . . that clucking, rushing gry" contains classic Tippett, spraying babble.

One of the earliest Ogun releases was notes against the grain of Osborne's On the night of 27 November, 1983, Harry's only solo LP Children At Play. passionate note-holding alto and over Harry's car crashed and he was rushed to Side One opens with "H&H" - a haunt- Evans's and Griffiths's punchy melodies. hospital along with two Dutch musiing Spanish melody starts up and is Harry had another busy year in 1977. cians. He fought for his life for 19 days sustained until shuttles of notes entwine First, he played in the Brotherhood of but died on the 16 December. Europe had the central melody. "Home Boy" is Breath Procession. Second, he started get- just lost its most inventive bassist and Hazel's favourite. It's a one-man-band ting a lot more work over in Europe one of its most devoted musicians. kwela tune with shrill flute and bass which culminated in receiving and takgliding from rhythm to solo and back. ing up the offer of artist-in-residence in

DUDU PUKWANA "Cape Town was the last place that direct me. I said Mongs, Come In! – he was into it." savs Dudu. "When I first

apartheid hit. There was a lot of was into it," says Dudu. "When I first mixing and creative exchange going on. . ." - DUDU PUKWANA

STRUGGLING jazz club, the Tunnel Saul and bassist Eric Richards. The music Tow in South-east London has been regularly is just as spirited as that golden Spear Dudu had been a hawking pro before hosting Dudu Pukwana's Zila at Sunday incarnation - In The Townships - with Mongs had become a teenager. His first lunchtime. Subsidy and appreciation of Mongezi Feza. Spear had existed before gig was in Port Elizabeth with The British jazz is at such a low ebb that that, though, when Dudu - fresh from Broadway Yanks playing piano to an Dudu, one of the country's best altoists, the turbulent intensities of the Brother- audience of marines. (Dudu plays piano can't pay his whole band; Lucky Ranku hood - had had adventurous plans to with something of an apprentice Sun Ra and Thebi Lipere have had to stand out record most of the chorus of the King touch - idiosyncratically muscular barrelfor these gigs. The future of big bands, Kong cast which included Peggy Phango house.) His first experience of the alto not to mention smaller ones, is non- and Martha Mdenge (later with Assegai came when mentor Nick Moyake let him existent when clubs can only pay six whom Dudu joined in between Spears). have a go on his. musicians. Dudu, though, is ever optimi- Townships was for Mongezi and Dudu Dudu played piano in his next band tic. "We've got used to playing wherever a celebration of the beauty of kwela The Four Yanks (it was while playing in

met Mongs at Orlando Stadium in 1963 no-one could believe his age. His sandals seemed bigger than him - but he had a trumpet! I had a talk with Chris and we lecided to take him back with us to Cape

we can. If the audience responds then its wrapped in a free-wheeling funk lining the Yanks that he met Chris McGregor) all right. If not, well, we've enjoyed and with virtuoso wild trumpet and alto but alto in the one after, The Jazz Giants. solos stitched in. Whereas Dudu had His musical education largely came ab-In the current Zila line-up is the un- written most of the Blue Notes' composi- out through meeting the vastly influenlappable West Indian trumpeter Harry tions and Chris McGregor most of the tial pianists Gideon Nxumalo and Tete Beckett (recently returned from playing B of B (telepathically, at least), Mongezi's Mbmabisa at the music workshops in with Johnny Dyani in Denmark), drum- musical vision lay behind most of the Dorkay House, Cape Town. mer Churchill Jolobe with whom Dudu songs on Townships, Flute Music and, to a Dudu: "Cape Town was the last place used to play in the late Fifties (Gideon lesser extent, Diamond Express. Express that apartheid hit. There was a lot of Kippie Moketsi were in the same would be the last LP he'd play on. mixing and creative exchange going on pand), soulful Mbaquanga singer Pinise "In Spear I wanted Mongs to sort of down at The Union Of South Africa,

could quite possibly find Dudu working in some interesting areas – working with among others, reggae musicians. Judu, time and music do not rema POPEL DE LA CONTRACTION DEL CONTRACTION DE LA CO

Chris McGregor and the Brotherhood of Breath - 1974

JULIAN BAHULA

ways to expand his musical horizons. W

which is what we called the sessions in

Dorkay House." (Hugh Masekela would,

perhaps nostalgically, come to call his

group in the mid-Sixties in LA "The

Union of SA").

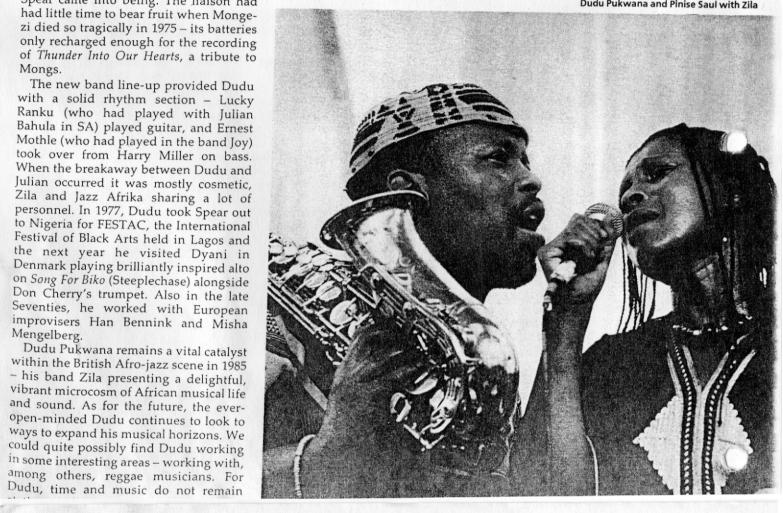
hear him play."

we were recording Very Urgent."

The Music Is and with various O

on Song For Biko (Steeplechase) al





perhaps not, forced to the front row of a

"Teddy Bear" May - couldn't resist the

In 1970, Chris McGregor was hired

along with Alexis Korner to the Bahamas

for a week by a millionaire to make the

blues album Black Woman. Talking of

olues albums . . . Blue Notes For Mongezi

cords ever. In a spontaneous magically

mmetric unity, the structure is totally

continuous playing in tribute to

in and just started playing; Moholo's

tidal torrent, Dyani ebbing and slowing

like pain and happiness, Dudu wren-

ching the guts out of melodies and

amplified telepathy. Like he has always

"Obviously things are better for

African music now than they were

four years ago. But not enough has

been done, or is being done; the

music needs a new injection, only

with that will the young musicians

themselves"

get the chance to develop their

talents. I've seen more and more

people here grow to love our music.

Now is the time for them to commit

- JULIAN BAHULA

sive there than in England."

After returning from the US, Julian

pear but little came of it partly because

rican music desperately needed con-

d promotion or else it wouldn't get a

ce to develop here, so he split his

gies, formed the company Tsafrika

the band lazz Afrika. "I saw that by

moving around and playing regularly in

ring a jazz band, Jazz Afrika not

i Feza's death shook everyone up

ng while. Julian could see that

eamed up with Dudu to form Jabula/

AcGregor a channel, a circuit for this

Mongs – each musician arrived, plugged

mprovisation. Three and a half hours

uite simply one of the greatest jazz

call to open her valves during a particu

of B gig by her fanatical husband Chris

cophonic passage issuing a to:

ent of sick over the feet of the venerable (

ONGEZI FEZA: 1945-1975

- HARRY BECKETT

A touch of genius – an exhilarating "He sounded as a flame dances musical presence. On stage, Mongs The beauty of forms in joyful was like an eagle, always soaring" movement - KEITH TIPPETT "He never had to bother about

Expressing clearly the clear light within" finding space in the ensemble – he - CHRIS MCGREGOR led it! . . . he always had space. He

aught me a lot about playing in a "There's nothing like Mongezi – he was a phenomenal player. He was so acutely aware of everything

going on around him" - HAZEL MILLER

DIMINUTIVE in stature, Feza played in 1967) it was on to London and the Old For Xaba (Sonet), Temiz's loose, spatial trumpet like a giant. Sheer power and Place for those nights in 1965-66. Playing drumming and Dyani's self-hypnotising velocity weren't his trademarks - but in Montmartre in 1966 swerved Chris expression on bass and voice gave Feza ost everything else was. Wiry and McGregor's musical direction dramati- greater freedom than ever, an opportuntht physically, his music exuded cally and Mongs caught his drift early on. ity to soar without restraint. "Dear Afrirength, fortitude and vision. He pos- Whereas Chris handled the composition ca" and "Witchdoctors Son" show him at sessed the technical mastery of col- and overall structure, Mongs adminis- his most inspiringly immersed. leagues Beckett, Marc Charig, Henry tered and characterised the horn ensem- The range of his technique was stag-Lowther and Dave DeFries, the nostalgic ble ideas (though Mike Osborne and gering - from "Dear Africa's" intimate yricism of fellow emigré Masekela, the Evan Parker were reputedly the Brother- message to the quicksilver command on astronomy of Cherry and the spiky cheek hood's greatest soloists). the Brotherhood's "Tungi's Song" -The extraordinary Very Urgent LP had Mongezi was both able to let go and Whether slotting into Spear's rent hall/ preceded the Brotherhood of Breath's pitch his vision high while remaining

azz club kwela-funk, or the early Blue recordings and displays Mongs's inimit- earthed and in complete synchronicity Notes' jive bebop, or as the Brotherhood able short, sharp, bristling, prodding with the collective nuance around him. ensemble's fiercest voice, Mongs's presence aided and abetted telepathic unity. piano. On the first B of B album his Pukwana's Diamond Express LP. Mongs Originating from Queenstown in trumpet was chirpy and neat on had a breakdown and was sent to a South Africa, Feza was eight when he got "Andromeda", his flute languidly flut- mental hospital which had no heating. his first trumpet and only sixteen when tery on "Night Poem" and his command He contracted double pneumonia, lay he played with, among others, Ronnie as head ensemble-caller loud and clear on unattended and died soon after. He was Beer. Two years later in 1963 he was with f"The Bride".

the Blue Notes for their award-winning | The kwela in his playing infused the The passing of Mongezi left an empticoncert at SA's National Jazz Festival. "free-form" to the point where they ness in the music that grows more After their forays in France and Switzer- merged - Mongs making of township, painful as the years pass. land (Feza would be returning to Zurich | Gillespie-inspired trumpeting an adv-

only thirty years old.

anced all-roundness imbued with sharp

brilliance. Whether harmonising with

Pukwana or shaking up a speedy blues

solo his roots were his unique dignity;

the moving beauty of "Sonia", the blues

flute of "Flute Music" and the humorous

bite of "Mad High" gave him an oppor-

ole's parameters. But he was so much in

tunity to compose away from the ensem

demand that his own band Bantu Society

which included newly arrived SA emigré

Zila) never really took off.

drummer Churchill Jolobe (now with

The time he spent in Denmark in 1972

working with Johnny Dyani and Turkish

percussionist Okay Temiz was, perhaps,

his most creative phase of all. On Music

Mongezi Feza and Dudu Pukwana with Spear



THE RESIDENCE OF THE PROPERTY OF THE PROPERTY

LOUIS MOHOLO

"People tend to interpret the force "Louis is such a musical person. We never competitive, was electric; the gigs in my music as pure aggression. played with Harry [Miller] in the at Montmartre, where McGregor was Obviously my music reflects my life same rhythm section for ten years overwhelmed by Cecil Taylor and Louis and the times in which we live - not and whenever we were on stage I to mention the divine hell-hole of knew it was going to be strong. But cording Respects with Roswell Rudd and there was something very special John Tchicai indicated that the first Blue Southern Africa – and, so, aggression has an important part to between Louis and Harry" play. But there are many other things that I'm saying that I need to be heard. Just as the 'free' is not all aggression, so the 'freedom' is not all anarchy"

LOUIS MOHOLO

THOUGH Makhaya Ntshoko, who Dudu When he met Chris McGregor at the shades of percussive touch and time. Pukwana calls the Max Roach of African Orlando Stadium in Cape Town in 1963 His playing with Mike Osborne on jazz drummers, stepped into Elvin Jo- he was already in at least his third Outback (1970), saw him perfectly swing nes's seat in the Pepper Adams band in professional band. First, Mr Early Mabu- through the brilliant altoist's various 1975, it was Louis Moholo who best za's; then, The Cordettes; and, last before moods - from restraint to wild, flaying embodied Jones's flamboyant style. Like the Blue Notes, Ronnie Beer's Swinging knots of sounds. With Stan Tracey's Jones he is as much at home holding a City Six. Moholo's percussion in com- Tentacles "his fast urgent feel was the light, dexterous time as he is in roaring plete empathy with Miller's bass would different rhythmic approach required" high-hat displays and polyrhythmic underpin every group/big band record- (Stevens), and with the various presnare rolls. Moholo is adept in the ess- ing McGregor would make until Yes Brotherhood groups - "Moholo's drumence of free-form drum work - he can Please. In 1966 his technique blossomed. ming throughout was fantastically invenstretch rhythm into the almost-to- Down at The Old Place, the rapport tive demonstrating his considerable senvanishing-point time-terrain. between Louis and John Stevens, though sitivity and feeling for dynamics as well

Louis Moholo with Nana Tsiboe and Nii Moi Aquaye



RONNIE BEER



Ronnie Beer with Chris McGregor in 1969

JOHNNY DYANI

RONNIE BEER joined the Blue Notes in Urgent LP, Beer played more often with part of a three-tenor front-line sharing London in 1965 after the collapse of his fellow South African the drummer Sel- the spotlight with Beer and the American successful Cape Town kwela bebopping wyn Lissack in his band which included Paul Jeffrey. After twelve years on tenor outfit, The Swinging City Six. He was the for a time Mongezi Feza and Harry switching didn't come easily to Ronnie regular tenor in most of the McGregor Miller. But a shortage of gigs offered to Beer but the dictates of the competitive group's big band incarnations until 1970 Selwyn caused Ronnie to grow cynical of Parisian session world, and its position and played on Gwigwi Mrwebi's Kwela the London scene (great jazz was being as the jazz gig parlour of Europe, rein 1965 with Dudu and Jamaican bassist shrugged off by Philistinism and only quired that of him. Perhaps that is why Coleridge Goode. Soon after the Very the most committed and talented could he and his wife moved back to SA.

HELSEN TO THE THE THE TANK OF THE TANK OF

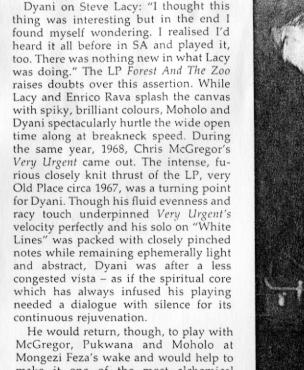
should just play music, because the himself as a singer well before he minute we open our mouths we tell played bass" - DUDU PUKWANA

JOHNNY DYANI had played on Brother- talking about in SA, they are losing their ings. In 1969 he worked with the Sponhood Of Breath's *Procession* in 1977 but way and letting themselves be influenced taneous Music Ensemble and in 1971 he'd moved right away from the large by Americans [Ayler and Coleman pre- with the Musicians Co-op. This meant big-band structure. From the early sumably] and that's why I find it difficult that he rubbed shoulders and sparred Seventies, when he moved from London to play with them." o Copenhagen, his commitment has There is no doubt that Dyani "must Kenny Wheeler and Tony Oxley etc. In been to smaller units - from his duet find freedom at all times" and that Paris, he jammed with Archie Shepp's with Clifford Jarvis African Bass, his playing in close intimate dialogues is his Big Band which included luminaries as brilliant trio with Okay Temiz and métier. "Only Abdullah Ibrahim and disparate as Frank Zappa, fellow Blue Mongezi Feza on Sonet's Music For Xaba Makhaya Ntshoko are being true to Note Mongezi, Coltrane anchor Philly Joe and with numerous quartets and quin- themselves" Dyani has said on SA emig- Jones and Revolutionary Ensemble-r Le tets. He is the one Blue Note to have rémusicians. "They are the ones working Roi Jenkins. But his first unavowedly spoken out strongly on the direction in for Africa. With them there is a real avant-garde outing was on the trail with which his fellow musicians have gone. In exchange – as with Don (Cherry) – we Steve Lacy in South America. Money got cians are not doing what they were communicate. I just feel we shouldn't funds to get home.

"I feel we shouldn't speak, we "Johnny loved to sing. He saw

speak, we should just play music, because the minute we open our mouths we tell lies." Before leaving for Denmark and working with John Tchicai and Don Cherry, Dyani's five years based in London re-

volved around both large group and "free-form" sextet and quartet groupwith Stevens, Evan Parker, Derek Bailey, 1970 he said: "Chris McGregor's musi-don't seem to need to talk, we just short and McGregor had to wire them



racy touch underpinned Very Urgent's velocity perfectly and his solo on "White Lines" was packed with closely pinched notes while remaining ephemerally light and abstract. Dvani was after a less congested vista - as if the spiritual core which has always infused his playing needed a dialogue with silence for its continuous rejuvenation. He would return, though, to play with McGregor, Pukwana and Moholo at Mongezi Feza's wake and would help to make it one of the most alchemical musical interactions ever. In various ways, Johnny Dyani has realised his particular vision. One, hi work with Abdullah Ibrahim on Good News In Africa, with Abdullah and Don Cherry on The Journey, with John Tchicai on Witchdoctors Son, with David Murray on Interboogieology, and with Joseph Jarman on Black Paladins has witnessed him singling out (or vice versa) those musicians who, too, receive inspiration through a dialogue not only with each other but with silence, silence both as a vital musical notation and as a spiritual necessity. A second way is via singing. There's no doubt, though, that his singing often jars with the music's equibalance as on Music For Xaba when Monge-

zi's full, brilliant cry is often blunted by

Johnny's outbursts.

On the other hand, his vocal contribu-

Johnny Dyani tion on Blue Notes For Mongezi is positive and uplifting - he even incites Pukwana and McGregor to express their sadness and anger vocally. A third way Dyani continues to stamp is identity on to music is by leading his own groups – the quartet, which plays on

ng For Biko (Cherry, Pukwana and

Mtshoko), is the most stunning. I "Jo'burg-New York" Dyani triumphantly weds tight, intermeshing intensity with a spatial feel and an openness to atmos phere and accent. And, in his most recenwork with Swedish musicians on Born Inder The Heat and with Denmark's Pierre Dorge in The New Jungle Orchesra, one of jazz's most reflexive, direct ionful and innovative bassists continues o move from strength to strength Dyani's greatest achievement has been to aintain creative adaptability without osing sight of his music's vision - "The Heaven and Hell that is South Africa." In so doing, Dyani has wedded kwela to the 'New Music" of Coltrane's US, Steven's UK and Tchicai's Europe.

CHRIS McGREGOR "The British jazz scene was so lucky "Jazz inspired Xhosa tribesmen

that The Blue Notes settled in jamming with a conservatory London. They gave an trained pianist' immeasurable amount to all of us. — STEVE LAKE (ON THE BLUE NOTES) Chris McGregor – a truly great composer, pianist and writer"



CHRIS McGREGOR'S Brotherhood of Breath was about his fifth big band but, up to 1970, the only one to have made a "It's a real indictment that after five years in this country McGregor has had

rapport the duo had had while playing

just one opportunity to record (his group's Very Urgent). His music demands to be heard." - Richard Williams. The first and second big bands were wela beboppers with a classical tinge. The second, in 1962, included on saxes Dudu Pukwana, Ronnie Beer, Chris Columbus Ngoukana and Nick Moyake. The third and fourth were the Old Place aggregations including the likes of John Surman, Dave Holland (who was just about to join Chris on a regular footing when Miles Davis engaged him), Mike Gibbs, Henry Lowther and Mike

The Blue Notes knocked around the Côte D'Azur after playing the Antibes Festival in 1964. "We were the best busking band ... the bread we made hen I've only recently started to equal." Chris McGregor, 1970. When Albert Ayler came to London in 1966 he slept in Chris's pad . . . it seems

In 1966, the McGregor Sextet concentrated on uncompromising experiments n the Ayler/Shepp vein. The tremendous energy was there and also the essence of that musical school . . . the funk seen through a glass darkly"... On the Brotherhood: "The band is a roaring, turbulent affair which indulges in Mingus-like acceleration and de-

timely feel had the audience dancir outing, laughing and blowing wildli ight Poem" by Chris McGregor is one of the most deliciously undulating pieces of music ever. Rich sways of pace and violent stabs of colour - an alchemic al product which contains Cherry's Retivity Suite, Westbrook's Metropolis, Sun Ra's cosmos, even Ellington! The B of B's "Joyful Noises" is one of the great pianistic events of our time - "The piano is my favourite drum," says

Anecdote - Keith Tippett: "It all started," said a husky Mr Tippett, "When I was scuffling about Bristol at the tender age of eighteen. I'd heard of the Old Plac and when I arrived for the first time the Blue Notes were playing. I was quite transfixed, simply moved more than I member before or since. I spent the Anecdote - Evie May: When six

nonths pregnant, Evie - perhaps, or

"At one time eighteen musicians were vailing together under their spell v the rhythmic impetus, fire and good-Jazz Afrika: (l. to r.) Dave Chambers, Peter Segone and Julian Bahula

up musical ideas for me."

whose sole area is African music. Indeed, Julian playing Molombo drums. In the music regularly available." most of the exciting new bands - African mid-Sixties, they had been extremely Jazz Afrika have, for about three years, Connection, Highlife International and popular and, though Julian left soon been an impressive pool of musicians -District Six to name a few - have Julian to after, Tabane still calls his band Molom- some resident and some just passing thank for exposure. Friday nights at the bo. 100 Club are the only regular live African Julian's first London band was Jabula. Lucky Ranku play with Zila, while younmusic events (besides the Africa Centre) "In Jabula we captured Molombo's tradiger recruits like trumpeter Claude Deppa though more and more locations are tional drum rhythms, added a bit of rock and the brilliant Brand-esque pianist hosting one-offs. In short, Julian has and a bit of fun. Pinise Saul who came Mervyn Africa are getting the breaks been centrifugal to the expansion of over with the cast of the musical *lpi* they deserve. African music's popularity in London. Tombi was our singer, Lucky, who I We should salute Julian Bahula for his When he arrived in the mid-Seventies played with in SA, played guitar and unswerving efforts in helping to bring

London, it would give me both time to JULIAN BAHULA is the only promoter on flute, Philip Tabane on guitar with promote, put out records and make live

through. Some like Churchill Jolobe and

enjoyed it. In South Africa no black Europe, Cuba, Nigeria and the States. the British music scene. His reward has groups played rock music and it opened Our manager suggested we stayed on in been an unprecedented increase in in-America but I felt that not only would it terest, particularly from young audiences Before that, in the early Sixties in SA, take longer to gain recognition there but wherein, perhaps, the future of the music ne had formed Molombo with Abe Cindi that the apartheid system was more lies.

JOHNNY DYANI had left the UK early in the Seventies to live in Denmark and Ronnie Beer had returned temporarily to South Africa. McGregor moved to France in the mid-Seventies and Harry Miller to Holland in 1977. Louis Moholo has been living out of suitcases for many years It isn't that it's surprising that these musicians have turned their backs on London, it's more that they found enough work and support to keep them here at all. Along with the rest of the musicians attached to the Incus/SMF related camps they have been subjected to the "increasing dereliction" of the jaz. music industry, the audiences and critic not to mention the gaping lack of any sort of viable government subsidy. It wonder that they didn't just up and go to Paris, New York or Scandinavia long

The answer lies in the self-supp structure of their smaller, intimate social/musical circle and its interrelationship with the larger "New Music" community wherein insecurity and confidence-boosting required of its inhabitants total mutual support. Musical survival for the emigrés' was reliant upon them staying together in the the lived experience of the emigré. For privateness with the New Jazz same place for some time. "What can't the larger community, the present

With Assagai: Assagai (Vertigo), 1971: Assa- For Xaba (Sonet), 1973.

With Johnny Dyani and Okay Temiz: Music CHRIS McGREGOR

of technical mastery. triggers the alienation which is so often welded intense, often sad, often joyful community's shared spontaneity of be pronounced enough is the closeness, existed almost sacrosanctly; if the New expression. That is why they made, and the empathy between Harry and all the Music was about one thing in particular continued to make, such great music and

With Steve Lacy: Forest And The Zoo (ESP),

With Mongezi Feza and Okay Temiz: Music

With Clifford Jarvis: African Bass (Italy),

Witchdoctors Son (Steeplechase), 1978.

Song For Biko (Steeplechase), 1979.

Born Under The Heat (Dragon), 1983.

Blue Notes: The African Sound (Gallo), 1963

(deleted); Blue Notes For Mongezi (Ogun)

976; Blue Notes In Concert (Ogun), 1978.

Mbizo (Steeplechase), 1982.

(Caroline/Virgin), 1977 (deleted).

JOHNNY DYANI

other South Africans" - Hazel Miller. it was about honesty - how you felt in why their music is so special, so unique. SELECTED DISCOGRAPHY

HARRY MILLER With John Surman: John Surman (Deram), gai Zimbabwe (Vertigo), 1972 (deleted). With Dollar Brand: Good News From Africa 1968 (deleted). With Spear (inc. Mongezi Feza and Harry (Enja), 1973. With Mike Westbrook Concert Band: Miller): In The Townships (Caroline/Virgin), Celebration (Deram), 1967; Metropolis (RCA), 1973 (deleted); Spear (inc. Mongezi): Flute Journey (Enja), 1977. 1971 (both deleted). With Alan Skidmore and Louis Moholo: Once With Zila: Diamond Express (Freedom), 1978 Upon A Time (Deram), 1969 (deleted). (deleted); Zila Sounds (Juka), 1981. With Mike Osborne and Louis Moholo: Outback (Turtle), 1970 (deleted); Border Crossing MONGEZI FEZA (Ogun), 1974; All Night Long (Ogun), 1975. With Selwyn Lissack and Harry Miller: Facets Africa (Steeplechase), 1984. With Irene Schweizer: Ramifications (Ogun),

WHY HERE?

and Dudu struggles on.

With Ninesense inc. Louis Moholo: Oh! For Xaba (Sonet), 1973. The Edge (Ogun), 1976. Isipingo inc. Louis Moholo: Family Affair Quintet inc. Louis Moholo: In Conference

Film (Ogun), 1978. With Leo Cuypers: Zeeland Suite (BvHaast), Berlin Bones (FMP), 1981. Quintet: Down South (Vara Jazz), 1983.

With Ronnie Beer and Chris McGregor in leted).

With New York Art Quartet: Respects (Amer- Brotherhood Of Breath: Chris McGregor's ican), 1965 (deleted). With Keith Tippett: Frames For An Imaginary Road (Ogun), 1977 (out of print).

Music (Caroline/Virgin), 1974 (deleted).

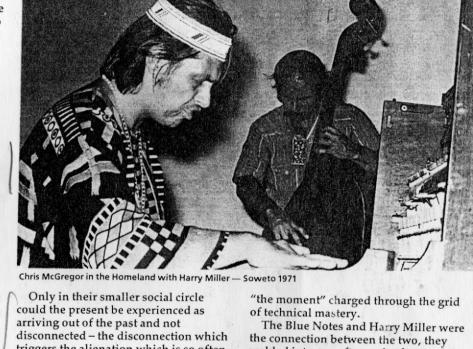
Of The Universe (Goody), 1968 (deleted).

RONNIE BEER With Sunny Murray: Angels And Devils (BYG), 1969 (deleted).

(deleted).

Brotherhood Of Breath (Neon), 1971 (de-With Elton Dean: They All Be On The Old leted); Brotherhood (RCA), 1972 (deleted); Spirits Rejoice (Ogun), 1977 (out of print). (Ogun), 1978; Yes Please (In & Out), 1982. hris McGregor: Piano Song Vols 1 & 2 (Musica), 1976; In His Good Time (Ogun), 1977 (out of print).

JULIAN BAHULA With Alan Silva: Seasons (BYG), 1970 (de- Jabula: Let Us Be Free (Pläne), 1977; African Soul (Pläne), 1979. Gwigwi's Band: Kwela (Dobells 77), 1966 With Kenneth Terroade: Blessing (BYG), 1969 Jabula/Spear: Thunder Into Our Hearts



I An African Way Of Swing

above Chicago, a small aircraft i

pointing to a big blob on the radar He plots a course, then taps a dial on the instrument panel. "Give me a shout when that thing reaches 236." The plane begins to turn.

"Are we high enough?" mutters copilot Nick White. I shrug my shoulders. Suddenly the dials go haywire. The cloud breaks and we can see the ground rushing up towards us. To my surprise, it appears to be turning cartwheels.

"What's happening?" I ask, alarmed. The word "CRASH" flashes before my "Oh dear!" McGregor gives a deep

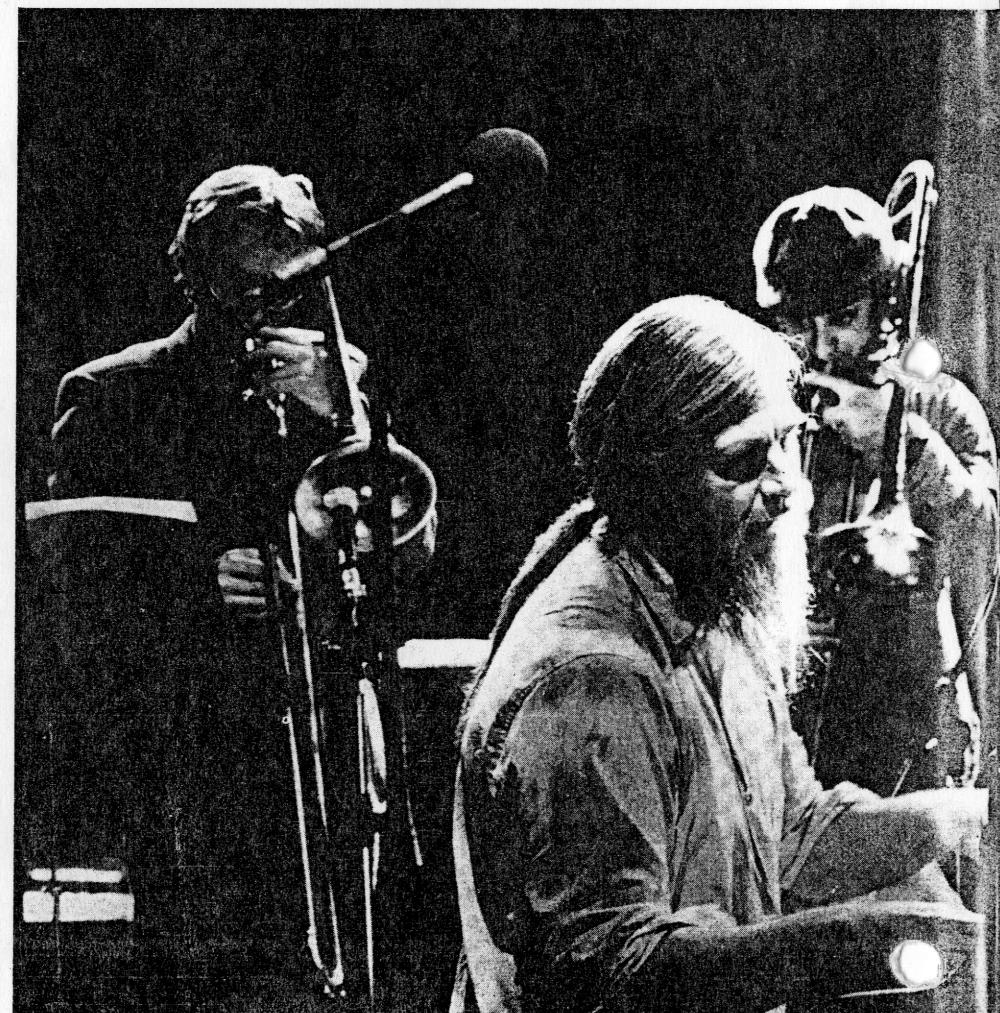
throaty chuckle. "We're dead, that's what's happening."

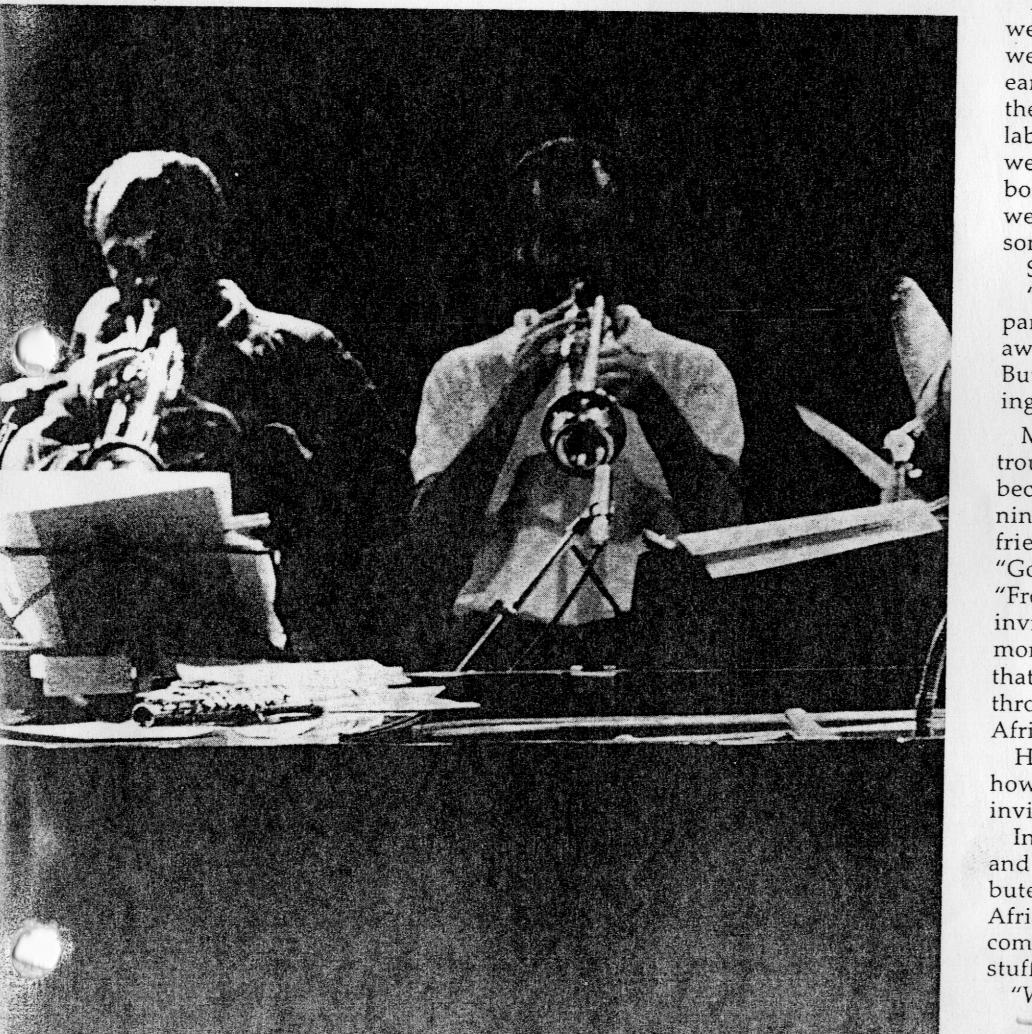
It's not often I begin an interview by plummeting out of the skies into an early grave, even if it is only on a flight simulator - prize toy in the flat McGregor is, er, crashing in during a brief visit to London – but a cup of tea quickly revives us. Then we're off on a different trip, one that starts half a century ago in South Africa's Transkei province, takes us through Cape Town, Antibes, Zurich and London, where the arrival of McGregor and his fellow Blue Notes (Dudu Pukwana, Mongesi Feza, Johnny Dyani, Louis Moholo) stirred up such ferment in the mid-Sixties, then whisks us off again around Europe and back to Africa with hang on to your hat - the wonderful, tumultuous McGregor big band, Brotherhood Of Breath.

The Brotherhood, renowned for their whooping, zonking, free-form swing,

South African pianist and band-leader CHRIS McGREGOR drops out of the sky to tell Graham Lock about his roots in African village music and outline new plans for his legendary

bunch of huffers and puffers, Brotherhood Of Breath.





then we pretended we were a gang of labourers with a captain. We had some well-rehearsed routines: I became the boss and these were my boys and we were on our way to fulfil a contract somewhere."

So you never got into serious trouble? "Only minor scrapes. Especially compared to people I knew who were locked away for 180 days and variously tortured. But usually we were not actually break-

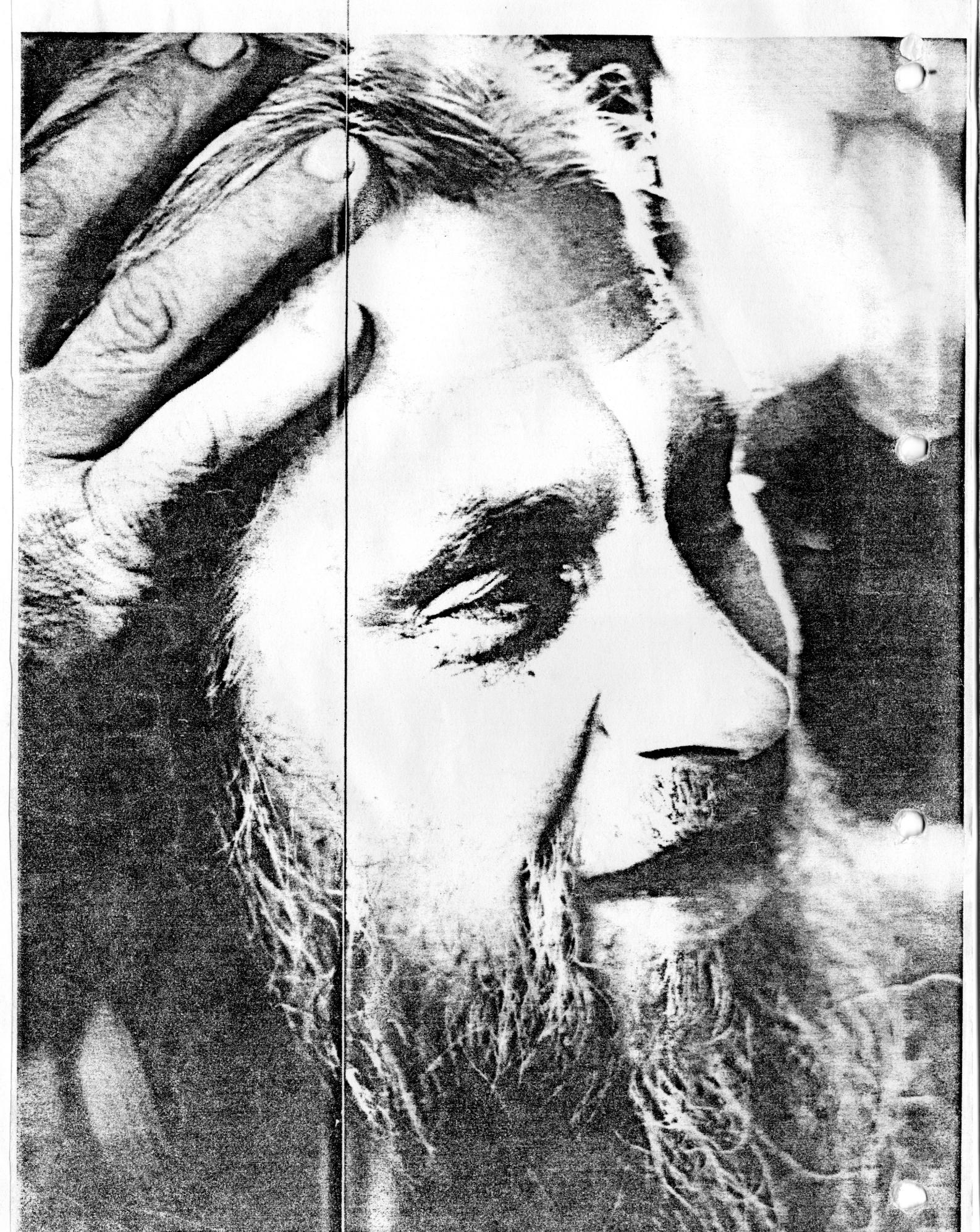
trouble goes back to the time he first became aware of apartheid, at the age of "Good morning" to an elderly black man. "From then on I adopted a kind of invisibility policy. I just wasn't there any more when things got shitty. I suppose that could fairly well describe how I went through most of my years in South

He smiles ruefully. "But it's amazing how visible you can get through being

In fact, it was The Blue Notes' success, and subsequent notoriety, which contributed to their decision to leave South Africa. They were, says McGregor, becoming the focus for a lot of "strange

"We excited people, and when those

Chris McGregor — 1984



don't really know, you don't make con-

He frowns. "It was to do with African ities of things happening on a lot of ly from the feeling of the moves that have ferent levels rhythmically. There was a been established "So the key isn't improvisation, yet the ether in a way they no longer seem to ." he pauses. "Perhaps it would be fluid, dynamic, creative, and in my music sier if I said why I'm not that much I'm looking for something like that. So, ir associated now with what you'd call free

thing again. Since that time I feel much now, because we no longer have those more African, I really have to see it from community traditions but we still need Perplexed, he tugs at his beard, then as the structures don't become stricshrugs. "I don't know how to sav it any tures."

Although The Blue Notes galvanised SINCE CHRIS McGregor went to live in the British jazz scene, it was McGregor's the French countryside several years ago, 1970 big band Brotherhead Of Breath Britain has seen less of Brotherhood Of who really shook the foundations with Breath. But, despite the economic and their gleeful and exuberant approach to logistic problems of running the band

feeling for areas you want to explore."

Which were? I press him.

"It's...," he pauses again, then bursts out laughing. "Ah, I don't know what I'm in groups. And I find I can accept the music there's a lot of polyrhythmic structuring to create, ture that's quite, er, a lot more advanced like, a kind of instant tradition, instant than most of what you find in the West." reference points, then that's OK – as long

people do things together that they know. direct it: except at great risk. If you try, What is that? It's not a composition but going through the motions and that's the know the moves. Yet it's not all prear- worst pain ever. That's like . . . when people say they'd rather die, I believe ranged, you have people interpreting the them. It's like denying the well-springs individual flights will always come clear-

Hmm? Guardian angels? But I'm halfpersuaded by the passion of McGregor's belief. He frowns, still thinking it

"I know there's a problem in that some people who are used to seeing things in a very, er, distinct way may find it hard to know what it is that's pushing them. I meaningful in essence. Creativity is but don't quite know what to say about that." He absently rolls a strand of beard that's something else, that's what between thumb and forefinger. "I guess rotherhood Of Breath is about, creating coming and follow it through." He looks up and laughs. "Really, that's

all. That is musician's work. It's a great When I think back there's nothing regret, nothing that seems to me to have been wrong or off-key. "You have to be fifty years old to

realise, though," he chuckles deeply. "That's maybe the one thing there is to

regret, that we get too soon old and too

A perfect sign-off line, from the master