

STAR Jazz LP for collectors 11.12.63

African sound is unique

By RICHARD McNEILL

WHEN CHRIS McGREGOR and his band wound up a two-night stand in Johannesburg in September, it seemed that one of the most memorable sounds in South African jazz might be lost in the rafters of the Playhouse Theatre.

The history of big bands in this country is a long and negative one—and the Chris McGregor outfit, like all others not prepared to compromise commercially, has not survived in its 15-member formation.

blend and crisp delivery regardless of the tempo.

I found trumpet passages faulty in the final choruses of some cuts, but this gives rise to only passing disappointment in a record which is surely a trail-blazer.

Happily, however, the larger

band has been preserved on a long-playing record ("The African Sound," Gallotone) which has captured the spirit of the Playhouse concerts.

THE ONLY ONE

The disc is every bit as unique as the live shows. To my knowledge, it is the only generally released long-player featuring original South African jazz compositions played by a wholly South African big band.

Indeed, I do not know of any other local record with a multi-racial line-up.

"The African Sound" is thus immediately a collector's item of particular interest to the jazz fan; for the jazz student it spells out clearly the character and direction of South African jazz towards its own territorial identity—a vigorous, lively, good-humoured swing which you will not find anywhere on earth, North America not excepted.

EASY BRAND

There are six tracks on the record—two compositions each by McGregor, Cape Town pianist Dollar Brand, now in voluntary exile from this country, and the irrepressible Kippie Moeketsi, whose alto and clarinet solos are the highlights of the record.

Most impressive feature is the section work, which has an easy