

KYLE SHEPHERD

Pianist, Composer, Film Composer & Band leader

BIOGRAPHY

Kyle Shepherd is arguably one of South Africa's leading progressive pianists, composers and band leaders of his generation.

Internationally recognized for his distinctive compositional style & performances, Shepherd has made a huge impression on debut as a film score composer for the critically-acclaimed film, *Noem My Skollie / Call Me Thief* - South Africa's official entry to the 2017 Academy Awards - for which he scored a nomination for the *2017 South African Film & Television Award* [SAFTA] for *Best Achievement in an Original Music Score in a Feature Film*. He was awarded the 2018 South African Humanities and Social Sciences (HSS) Award: Book, Creative Collection and Digital Contribution 2018, hosted by the National Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences (NIHSS), for 'Best Musical Composition' for his composition, 'Noem My Skollie'! Shepherd's music also features prominently in independent film-maker Nadine Cloete's documentary, *Action Kommandant*, based on the untold story of the young South African revolutionary freedom fighter, Ashley Kriel.

In March / April 2018, Shepherd's musical soundtrack was featured in Lhola Amira's multi-media arts exhibition, entitled 'Sinking: Xa Sinqamla Unxubo', at the renowned SMAC Gallery in Cape Town.

The twenty-nine-year-old virtuoso pianist who has a well-established record of celebrated performances in South Africa, Europe, Asia (including Japan, India and China), Canada and the USA, has already released seven critically acclaimed albums in his young career. In 2016, Shepherd was invited to curate the 49th SWR NEWJazz Meeting in Germany. This episode of the prestigious 2016 NEWJazz Meeting comprised four days' of rehearsals in the broadcasting studios of the Südwestrundfunk, followed by a concert tour in the SWR broadcasting area from 25 to 27 November 2016. A Double Album entitled *SWR NEWJazz Meeting 2016: Sound Portraits From Contemporary Africa* comprising the best performance tracks recorded during the concert tour, was released under the SWR Jazzhaus label in 2017! The album features Kyle Shepherd on piano & keyboard, Lionel Loueke [Benin / USA] on guitar & vocals, Mthunzi Mvubu - on saxophone, Shane Cooper on bass & Jonno Sweetman on drums & percussion.

The Original Motion Picture Soundtrack composed by Shepherd for the feature film '*Noem My Skollie / Call Me Thief*' was released in November 2016. '*Dream State*', a 21-track double album of his Trio released in 2014 garnered nominations for both the 2015 South African Music Award [SAMA] and a 2015 Metro FM Music Award in the Jazz Category. His debut solo piano offering '*Into Darkness*', recorded in Japan, was launched with a tour in the South-East Asian country in the same year [2014] and included a performance at the prestigious Tokyo Jazz Festival. Previous releases '*fineART* [2009]', '*A Portrait of Home*' [2010] & '*South African History !X*' [2014], also attracted SAMA nominations.

The award-winning pianist, recipient of both the coveted '*UNISA National Piano Competition Award* [2015] and the '*Standard Bank Young Artist of the Year*' Award [2014] in the Jazz Category was selected for the South African Broadcasting Corporation's [SABC 3] '*21 ICONS South Africa Season III*' [November 2015] for "*his ability to transcend cultural barriers by using music as an art form to communicate commonalities and differences across diverse nations. He has used his aptitude for music as a thread to embrace and harness creativity in society.*"

Shepherd regularly performs in concert as a Solo pianist, while also leading his *Trio* which features Shepherd on piano, Shane Cooper on double bass and Jonno Sweetman on drums as well as his *Quintet* with Shepherd on piano, Benjamin Jephtha on bass, Lwanda Gogwana on trumpet, Sisonke Xonti on tenor sax & Marlon Witbooi on drums.

Shepherd is also a member of the Carlo Mombelli 'Stories' Quartet, various Louis Moholo-Moholo ensembles, Kesivan & the Lights - who performed at Carnegie Hall, New York in 2014, The Benjamin Jephtha Quartet and Skyjack, a South African-Swiss collaboration which launched their debut self-entitled album in Switzerland in January 2016 and embarked on a national tour of South Africa in September 2016.

Kyle Shepherd graduated with a Masters of Music degree cum laude from the University of Stellenbosch, South African 2018.

PERFORMANCE HIGHLIGHTS

Apart from South Africa, Shepherd has also performed in Japan, USA, Germany, The Netherlands, Belgium, Switzerland, Canada, Norway, France, Denmark, India, Malaysia, China, Swaziland, Mozambique, Botswana and Zimbabwe, with notable concert appearances, either as a solo pianist or trio, quartet and other formats at Carnegie Hall (USA), Klavierhaus (USA), 2016 SWR NEWJazz Meeting (Germany) at Alte Feuerwache (Mannheim), Sudhaus (Tübingen), Tollhaus (Karlsruhe), The Bird's Eye Jazz Club (Switzerland), La Chaux-de-Fonds (Switzerland), Jazzwerkstatt Festival Bern (Switzerland), Reformierte Dorfkirche Kleinhüningen (Switzerland), Klubschule St. Gallen (Switzerland), BeFlat Jazz Club (Germany), Der Sendesaal, (Germany), Hallenbad Kultur Am Schactweg, (Germany), The Tokyo Jazz Festival (Japan), Garaman Hall (Japan), Body & Soul Jazz Club (Japan), Shikiori (Japan), Kaho Gekijo Kabuki Theatre (Japan), Théâtre des Bouffes du Nord and L'Onde Théâtre et Centre d'art as part of the Festival d'Automne à Paris (France), The Aarhus Jazz Festival (Denmark), The Cape Town International Jazz Festival (South Africa), The Joy of Jazz Festival (South Africa), The National Arts Festival, Grahamstown (South Africa), The Gaborone International Music and Culture Week Festival (Botswana), The Orbit Jazz Club (South Africa), The Wits Great Hall (South Africa), CCFM - The Centro Cultural Franco-Moçambicano (Mozambique), The Mahikeng Jazz Festival (South Africa), Harare International Festival – HIFA (Zimbabwe), The Tianjin International Jazz Festival (China), No Black Tie (Malaysia), MICA (India), B-Flat (India), The Gonsalves Mansion 'Home of Jazz' (India) and Canada's Ottawa International Jazz Festival, Victoria International Jazz Festival, Vancouver International Jazz Festival & Festival International de Jazz de Montréal.

SELECT REVIEWS

"There's a palpable connectedness they share as players, a connection that also touches attuned audiences at their live performances too. They are asking more of the music. Its corporeal and ethereal aspects are invoked into the simultaneous sound ritual." Percy Mabandu, Arts journalist and author, South Africa

"This was an impressive concert with a dramatic variety in dynamics and rhythms. I particularly appreciated the emotion and power the trio put into their performance: this was not the dry- as-dust technically perfect show I've heard from some New York players, but a joyous performance." – Alayne McGregor, Ottawa Jazz Scene, CANADA

"... a straight-ahead modern jazz piano sound, where well- crafted melodies are the vehicle to coast over the surface of tight, dynamic rhythms." - Dave Sumner, Wondering Sound [NY, USA]

"... it's in his linking of international influences with his own local traditions that his strength lies." - Peter Bacon, The Jazz Breakfast [UK]

DISCOGRAPHY

*SWR NewJazz Meeting
2016
Sound Portraits From
Contemporary Africa*

2017



The Original Motion Picture
Soundtrack composed by Shepherd
for the feature film *Noem My Skollie /
Call Me Thief*

2016



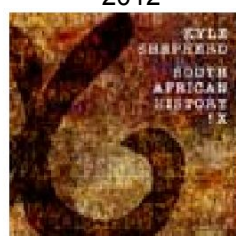
Dream State
2014



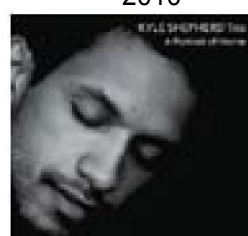
Into Darkness
2014



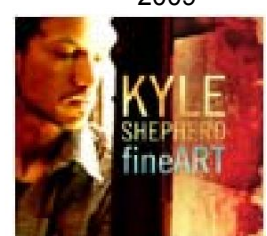
South African History IX
2012



A Portrait of Home
2010



fineART
2009



OTHER SELECT WORKS / FEATURES IN FILM / THEATRE / ART

- *Sinking: Xa Sinqamla Unxubo`* by Lhola Amira - a multi-media arts installation exhibited at the renowned SMAC Gallery in Cape Town [2018]. *Soundtrack composed & produced by Kyle Shepherd*
- *Noem My Skollie / Call Me Thief* [2016] - *Film Score Composed by Kyle Shepherd*

Produced by David Max Brown and Moshidi Motshegwa (Maxi-D Productions), *Noem My Skollie / Call me Thief*, was written by John W. Fredericks and directed by Daryne Joshua. Released in September 2016, the film was South Africa's official entry to the 2017 Annual Academy Awards for Best Foreign Language Film and is also a nominee for the 2017 *South African Film & Television Awards* [SAFTA] for *Best Film*.

- *Action Kommandant* [2016] - *Featuring several music tracks by Kyle Shepherd:*

A documentary produced and directed by Nadine Cloete. *Action Kommandant* is based on the untold story of the young South African revolutionary freedom fighter, Ashley Kriel.

- *Skyjack* [2016], a self entitled Album by the South African - Swiss collaboration band featuring Kyle Shepherd [ZA] on piano, Marc Stucki [CH], on tenor saxophone, Andreas Tschopp [CH] on trombone, Shane Cooper [ZA] on double bass and Kesivan Naidoo [ZA] on drums – released in Switzerland in January 2016;
- *Xamissa, Place of Sweet Water* [2013] – festival-commissioned music project composed by Kyle Shepherd & performed at Festival d'Automne à Paris;
- *Four Corners* [2014] - *Featuring Bobbejaan / Minstrels Go to Court by Kyle Shepherd*

A feature film, directed by Ian Gabriel & produced by Giant Films & Moonlighting Films, it was South Africa's official entry to the 2014 Annual Academy Awards in the category for Best Foreign Language Film.

- *The Uprising of Hangberg* [2011] - *Featuring Original Music by Kyle Shepherd*

A documentary film by Dylan Valley & Aryan Kaganof.

- *Mama Goema: The Cape Town Beat in Five Movements* [2011] - *Featured music by & interview with Kyle Shepherd*

A documentary film, produced, filmed and directed by Angela Ramirez, Sara de Gouveia & Calum MacNaughton, *Mama Goema* explores the music & sound of Cape Town and its historical influences.

- *The Exhibition of Vandalism* [2010] - *Featuring music / sound improvisational performances by Kyle Shepherd & the late Zim Ngqawana*

A documentary film, documenting a healing ceremony performed by Zim Ngqawana and Kyle Shepherd in the ravaged body of the Zimology Institute for higher learning in January 2010. The film was directed, filmed and edited by Aryan Kaganof of the African Noise Foundation.

- *AFRIKAAPS* [2010] - *Featuring Kyle Shepherd in music performances composed in collaboration with Jitsvinger, Blaq Pearl, Emile Jansen and Shane Cooper for the musical theatre production, Afrikaaps.*

A documentary film by Dylan Valley based on the musical theatre production *Afrikaaps*, a Glasshouse / The Baxter Theatre production, directed by Catherine Henegan.

- *AFRIKAAPS* [2010] - *Featuring Kyle Shepherd in music performances composed in collaboration with Jitsvinger, Blaq Pearl, Emile Jansen and Shane Cooper.*

an Award-winning, musical theatre production directed by Catherine Henegan & produced by The Glasshouse / The Baxter Theatre;

- 'Die Buitestaanders' – *featuring music by Kyle Shepherd* a music production by Mareli Stolp & Magdalene Minnaar.

CONTACT INFORMATION

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