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Local News

## 21 Icons features Kyle Shepard

**JOHANNESBURG** – The highly acclaimed short-film series, 21 Icons, has revealed its 12th icon for its third season – A Future of a Nation and it is none other than jazz composer and musician, Kyle Shepherd.

1 day ago

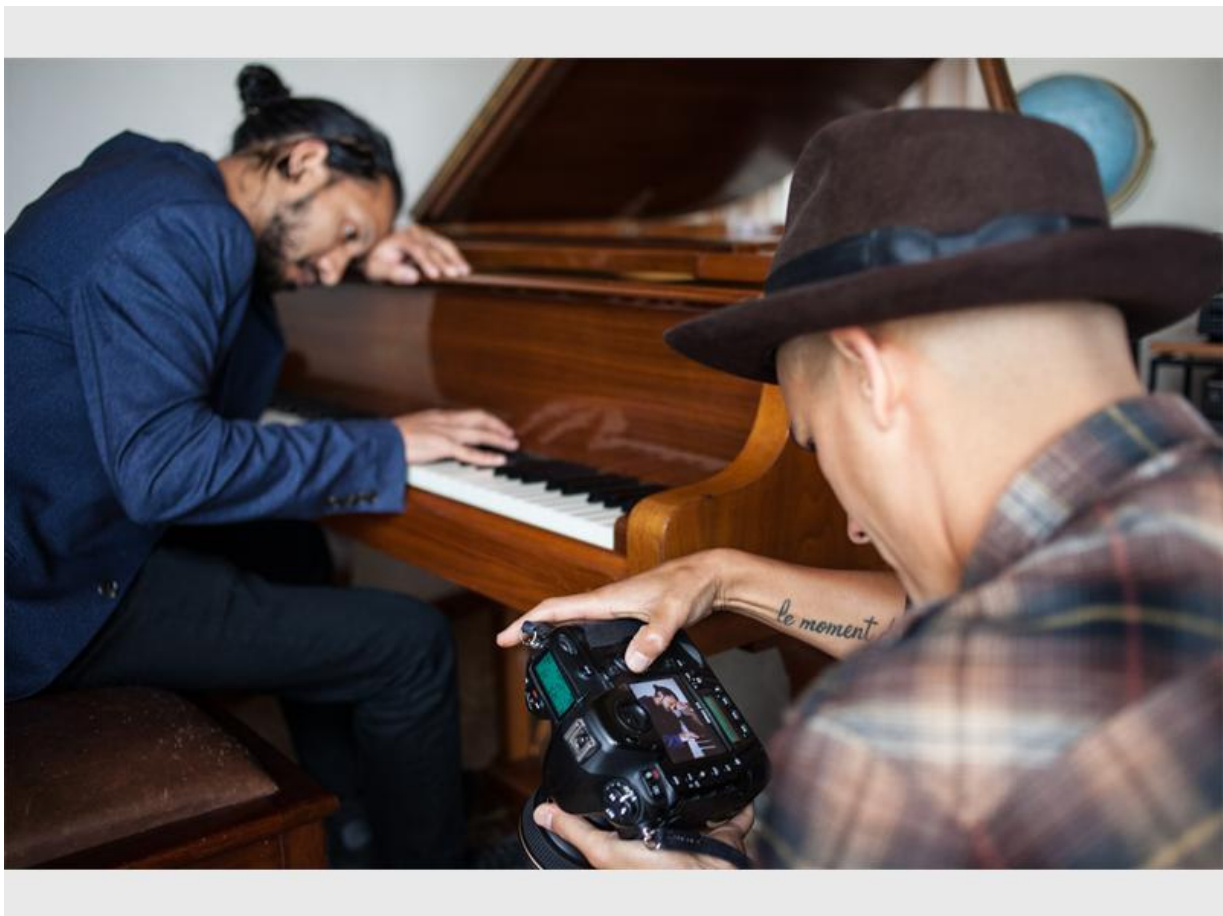


Photo: Damien Schumann THE PROCESS: Photographer Gary Van Wyk checks his shots of musician Kyle Shepherd during Shepherd's portrait shoot in his private studio in Cape Town for 21 Icons South Africa.

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The 28-year-old from Cape Town is the son of Mechell Shepherd, a violinist who played for renowned jazz legend, Abdullah Ibrahim. Kyle was selected to be part of 21 Icons because of his ability to transcend cultural barriers by using music as an art form to communicate commonalities and differences across diverse nations.

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“Jazz represents freedom. It also represents a wonderful kind of democracy with a band when there’s two or three more people on an equal footing coming together to make music work,” he said.

He attributes the connection between people and music to the idea that everyone plays an equal part in the formulation of jazz – the composer, the player/s and the audience – all contribute to making the music what it is.

At the tender age of 20, Shepherd released his debut album, FineART, which earned him two Sama nominations – one for Best Traditional Jazz Album and the other in the Best Newcomer category. Since his debut in 2007, he has released four albums and received numerous awards and nominations for his music.

In 2014, he was awarded the Standard Bank Young Artist Award, an acknowledgment that industry experts felt was long overdue, and this year he received the Newton Memorial Music Scholarship to study his master’s at Stellenbosch University.

He explained to principal photographer for 21 Icons, Gary Van Wyk, that pursuing a musical career is not an easy choice, “If I didn’t love what I did, I would have never put up with the difficulties that go into a career in music. Especially jazz... it’s by no means easy... there are economic difficulties and structural difficulties in terms of the infrastructure of the music scene as a whole in South Africa. There are no venues to play and we have to ‘make’ places to perform.”

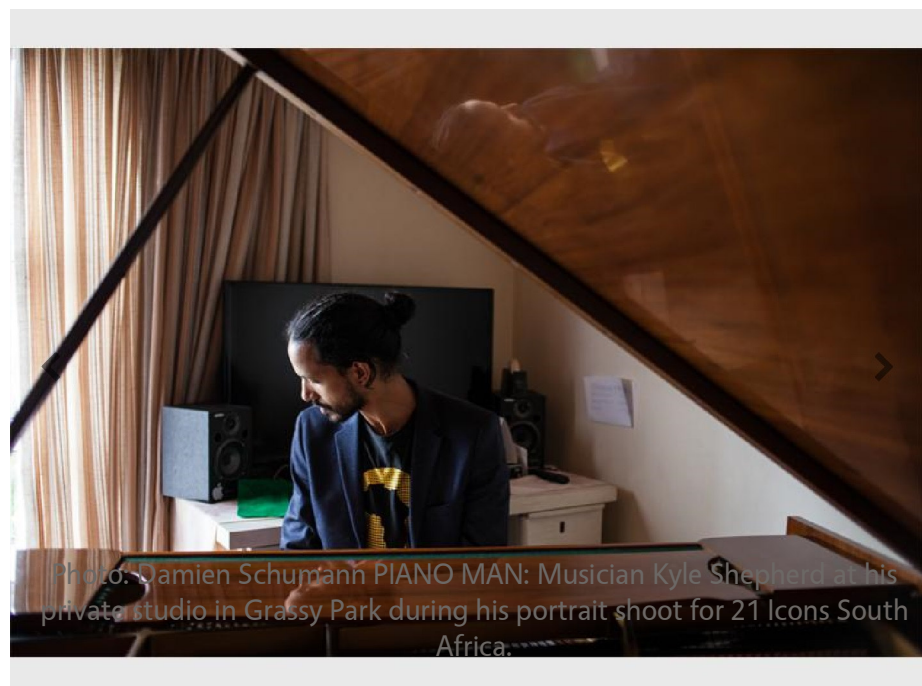
**[See Kyle Shepherd short film preview:](#)**



Van Wyk explained the process behind Shepherd's portrait, which is titled, Making It Up. "Shot in Shepard's studio at his grandmother's home in Cape Town's Grassy Park, Kyle is pictured playing the Grand Piano that he uses when composing his music. Seated before the instrument – his eyes shut – his reflection in the polished wood is caught in the frame. The resulting image is one that imagines a musician and his instrument as one."

Kyle Shepherd's three-minute film will be aired on SABC 3 on 22 November 2015 at 7.27pm, with a repeat the next day at 5.57pm on the same channel.

Details: [www.21icons.com](http://www.21icons.com)



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