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21 ICONS SEASON THREE (A FUTURE OF A NATION) FEATURES KYLE SHEPHERD



He says, "He allowed me to play in school bands, and at that time we were living in a place called Belhar, and he introduced me to other members from the community who were jazz enthusiasts... feeding me the music and that was important. Looking back, all those things combined really made me who I am today."

When he matriculated, Shepherd enrolled at The University of Cape Town to study jazz. During his second year he decided that if he was going to make something of himself as a South African jazz artist that he would have to focus his energy and dedicate his time to honing his craft as a musician.

Shepherd, who is also a saxophonist, Xaru (traditional mouth bow) player, vocalist and poet, enlisted at Zim Ngqawana's Zimology Institute, which led to his residency and eventual creative partnership with the late flautist and saxophonist, Ngqawana.

At the young age of 20, he 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.

He tells Van Wyk that while it is an honour to be recognised for his work that music is in his blood and the 'feeling' far outweighs the rewards, "What I enjoy most about jazz and improvisation is the gift it gives you. It allows you to be yourself."

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



http://sacreativenetwork.co.za/wp-content/uploads/2015/11/MG_7892.jpg

He explains in a conversation with 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."

Shepherd's message to aspiring musicians is a straightforward one: "It's a full-time thing ? in South Africa, we are surviving doing it but it's by no means easy and if we didn't love it, I don't think anyone would do it. In fact, I do not recommend it to anyone if you are not going to give it a hundred percent."

For the portrait 'Making It Up' which will appear digitally on the Monday after his short-film is released, Van Wyk describes the visual elements, "Shot in Shepherd'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 frame. The resulting image is one that imagines a musician and his instrument as one."

On the future of South Africa, he comments, "Opportunity that comes in the form of a silver spoon is gone which is a good thing. You just have to do the work. There are no short cuts. You've got to do the work and be committed to your craft - that's it!" he says.

Van Wyk concludes by asking the audience to share their stories on social platforms by answering the question: "What do you stand for?"

Followers are encouraged to share their personal triumphs or to nominate a member from the community who is making a profound difference.

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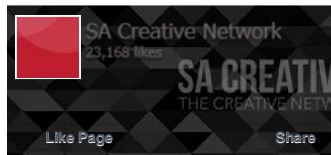
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