

# CHRIS MCGREGOR GROUP

by *Ronald Atkins*

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**A**VANT-GARDE jazz and kwela music may seem strange bedfellows, but Chris McGregor somehow combines the two. A South African pianist, McGregor has always been identified with kwela; his groups are packed as far as possible with compatriots so that the indigenous music, at least, is played with conviction. Last night at the Old Place, Gerrard Street, WC 2, kwela provided the merest spicing to what is, these days, a pretty uncompromising free-form unit.

Their performance was much less disorganised than it has been on other occasions. The masterly interaction between solo and rhythm found in the best American groups was lacking, but the front line was strong enough to surmount this. Saxophonists Ronnie Beer and Dudu Pukwana, and Mongesi Feza, who uses one of those newly-popular pocket trumpets are, at their best, an unusually impressive team. Beer, especially, is a compelling and very underrated musician. McGregor's own playing can sound too academic but he controls the music with skill. His group now appears at the club on alternate Tuesdays.