



# MAKEBA!

MAMA AFRICA SPEAKS ON MUSIC, LIFE,  
AND HOW ONE MARRIAGE (NEARLY) RUINED IT ALL

BY H JONA KLIJN

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**MAKEBA!**  
**Mama Africa Speaks on Music, Life,**  
**and How One Marriage (Nearly) Ruined It All.**

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**ACT I**

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## SETTING

The work is set at Kippies, a legendary jazz venue, part of Johannesburg's Market Theater Precinct, world-famous for staging protest theatre throughout the repressive Apartheid years.

During the same period, multiracial audiences defied segregation, packing the dimly lit club located in Johannesburg's Newtown neighborhood. Kippies offered a platform for both established artists and ones still breaking through.

Kippies was a landmark of culture.

The jazz concert venue was named after South African jazz great, Kippie Moeketsi, who, despite having played with the best during the 1950s and 1960s, was nonetheless overlooked and disregarded, dying destitute at 58, in 1983.

Over his career, Moeketsi worked with some of South Africa's great musicians: Jonas Gwangwa, Abdullah Ibrahim, Hugh Masekela, and, of course, **Miriam Makeba**.

## TIME

20:00

November 15, 1998

It is the day Makeba's husband, Kwame Ture, dies of prostate cancer in Conakry, Guinea.

## CHARACTER

CHARACTER #1

Miriam Makeba

## ACT 1

## SCENE 1

(A jazz quintet ascends a compact circular rostrum. The band, formal in tuxedos, start playing a forlorn melody, the clarinet taking the lead.

Miriam Makeba appears on stage from behind a red velvet curtain. She wears a fitted platinum satin dress, the one she wore when photographed by Jürgen Schadeberg in Sophiatown in the late 1950s. She waves at the crowd and without a word, she starts the song that launched her career in 1953.)

FULL LX WITH FOLLOWSPOT ON  
MAKEBA.

MAKEBA (singing)

**LAKUTSHON' ILANGA**

Lakutshon'ilanga (It's sunset)  
 Zakubuy'inkomo (For the cows)  
 Ndakucinga ngawe (I thought of you)  
 Lakutshon'ilanga (It's sunset)  
 Yakuvel'inyanga (When the moon rises)  
 Pshesheya kolwandle (Over the water)  
 Zakubuy'iintaka (The birds came back)  
 Lakutshon'ilanga (It's sunset)  
 Ndohamba ndikufuna (I will go and look for you)  
 Ezindlini nasezitrateni (In houses and on the streets)  
 Ezibhedlela etrongweni (In hospitals in jails)  
 Ndidide ndikufumane (Until I find you)

(The quintet continues to play "Lakutshon'ilanga" while she speaks.)

MAKEBA

I close my eyes and the past surrounds me. I am always being reminded. I look at the past and I see myself. Like it is today. The faces—so many!—are alive. I respectfully greet my grandmother once more. I laugh with my playmates at school.

I suffer again my eleven automobile accidents. I know should stop keeping count at this point, but I still do. I exult at the pleasure, and hope, of my wedding nights. I curtsy to Emperor Haile Selassie with his pet lions; to Mr. Belafonte, my Big Brother, who brought me to America.

I feel the warmth of the studio lights, so bright, and the warmth of my African sun, so much brighter. I am thankful to have such a living past. It gives me strength. And courage is what I, and all of us, must have, always.

(The quintet increases volume, indicating that she is about to sing the last verse.)

My very first record! The song is originally a Xhosa tune: "Lakutshuna Ilangu." Makhwenke Dvushe wrote this

beautiful love song, which is about a lonely man who sits before the setting sun.

Before I start singing it, I'd like to say thank you very much for turning up. I'll always remember this night. It feels so good to be home.

MAKEBA (Reciting a verse of "Lakutshon'ilanga," while the band plays the tune.)

I will go and look for you  
In houses and on the streets  
In hospitals in jails  
Until I find you

TRANSITION TO INTIMATE LX

MAKEBA

Hospitals and jails.

The Africans know what this means. Whenever one of us is missing for a time and we don't come home, the first place the family looks is the hospital or the jail. Because they sit in there and they're hoping to come out and go back home. Because at home, even during the time I was still young, when you are missing, if you just go from home, and you don't come back that evening, the first place your parents will go... they will go to your friends, of course, and ask, "Where is she (or he)?" If no one knows, they will go first to the hospital, to the mortuary, to the police stations and jails, to look for you. And they are most likely to find you in one of the three-in-jail, in the hospital or in the mortuary...

(The band winds down as  
Makeba a makes herself  
comfortable on a barstool.)

The song sells very well. They play my record on the radio. In America, a songwriter likes it and writes some English lyrics. What happened to my wonderful Xhosa song? The American version has nothing to do with the original.

The new lyrics are terrible: "You tell such lovely lies with your two lovely eyes! When I leave your

embrace, another takes my place." Everyone who hears the Xhosa version, and the American version is disappointed. They are nothing alike.

But let me start at the beginning.

(She slowly moves stage right as if to make sure she included the whole room.)

I was shocked, the first time I went home and said, "Mama you know they paid me for singing." My first payment was two pounds, 10 shillings. I don't know what the pound was to the dollar, but it wasn't much. I never thought it would be a career because I always sang, everybody sang. I come alive when I sing. It's my greatest joy. Singing was just singing. You sing because you had to sing.

(The quintet starts to play "Baby Ntsoare" while she speaks.)

I was always happiest when I was singing. We sang concerts for charity, for fun, for anything. I sang all the time. I had a cousin who was singing with a group of four boys. And in 1952 I joined--they were not professional, just singing with them around the country.

It is difficult for a young woman to be on stage. Many people in our society look at it as something bad. The old thing that women are not supposed to be on stage and show themselves takes some time to die. I heard some neighbors gossip. "So-and-so's daughter is a whore because she is on stage."

Then, in 1954, I gained professional status, with another group and they asked me to join them. I was 20 when I was introduced as the "nut brown baby." And I sang with them for three years. They sang a little bit of everything, except opera, which I can't sing. They called themselves, The Manhattan Brothers.

MAKEBA (singing)

### **BABY NTSOARE**

Baby, baby ntsoare (Baby, baby hold me)  
Ntsoare ka ditsebe (Hold me by the ears)

Hawung tsweri (When you hold me)  
 Ungtsware tata (hold me tightly)  
 Ungtisisatise une unsoene (Draw me closer to you and kiss me)  
 Ande kaosane hakefihla (And tomorrow when I arrive)  
 Ha ke kopa ung nene hape (And I ask you, give it to me again)

(The quintet continues to play  
 "Baby Ntsoare" while she speaks.)

#### MAKEBA

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen.  
 The Manhattan Brothers introduced me to many cities in  
 South Africa and Central Africa. We even sang in the  
 Belgian Congo. We had a six months' tour. When we  
 returned from the tour, I joined a revue called the  
 African Jazz and Variety and remained for 18 months.

And while doing this, we were performing at the  
 Johannesburg City Hall, which was the first time that  
 we were allowed to perform in the city and to white  
 audiences as Black Africans.

(The quintet starts to play  
 "Iphi Ndlela" while she  
 speaks.)

While we were there, an American came to South Africa.  
 His name was Lionel Rogosin from New York. He wanted  
 to make a music film that showed the life of the  
 African in South Africa living under Apartheid, which  
 is segregation. And he smuggled those films out and he  
 asked me to sing in this film, I think two songs. He  
 left again, and about a year later I got this letter  
 from him, and he asked me if I would like to come and  
 sing in his country, in America, with Harry Belafonte.  
 I jumped at the opportunity. It took me a year to get  
 there, in fact, it took 13 months to get a passport.

For the first time I had money. But I never thought  
 I'd go to America. Or Europe. No chance. When I left  
 for Venice, my mother said, "you will leave South  
 Africa. You will go on a long journey. You may never  
 come back."

But I was going away, and the second song I record in  
 Zulu, speaks to my people. This is "Iphi Ndlela."

MAKEBA (singing)

**IPHI NDLELA**

Stay well, my people  
 I am leaving  
 I am going to the lands of the white man  
 I ask you to be with me  
 To show me the way  
 We will meet and see one another  
 Upon my return.

(The quintet continues to  
 play "Iphi Ndlela.")

MAKEBA

Upon my return...  
 It was my promise.

I travel alone and on South African Airways no white person will sit next to me. I am the only Black on the plane. We left Johannesburg, and I have three seats all to myself.

You know. Once, at the end of a show, two men came to see me. I can tell right away from their Dutch looks and by the way they look at me that they are Afrikaners. The two men do not seem happy. One of them says, "We came here because we thought we'd hear music from home. Why don't you sing any 'liedjies?'"

(She exaggerates the word.)

A 'liedjie' is a white folk tune in Afrikaans. I could say to these men that I do not know Afrikaans. That would not be unusual for a native. But, as I say I am getting a little bit bolder.

"When you start singing in my language," I tell them.  
 "I will start singing in yours."

(The quintet starts to play  
 "A piece of ground" while she  
 speaks.)

It is a small thing, and maybe not worth mentioning.  
 But it reminds me that a person must respect Africa's

mysteries. The white man calls Africa the Dark Continent, not because of the color of our skin, but because he cannot understand it. But I do not have the answers either. Especially when things go wrong, and we are thrown into tragedy—at times like these I feel very much in the dark.

MAKEBA (singing)

### **A PIECE OF GROUND**

When the white man first came here from over the seas  
 He looked and he said, this is God's own country  
 He was mighty well pleased with this land that he'd found  
 And he said I will make here my own piece of ground  
 Now many's the battle he still had to fight  
 And many's the family who died in the night  
 'Cause many's the black men who lived all around  
 All of them wanting their own piece of ground  
 Then one fine day in 1883  
 Gold was discovered in good quantity  
 Now the country was rich and was richer than planned  
 And each digger wanted his own piece of land  
 White diggers were few and the gold was so deep  
 Black man was called 'cause his labor was cheap  
 With drill and with shovel he toiled underground  
 Six pennies a day to tender the ground  
 Now this land is so rich, and it seems strange to me  
 That the black man whose labor has helped it to be  
 Cannot enjoy the fruits that abound  
 Is uprooted and kicked from his own piece of land  
 Why some people say now don't you worry  
 We'll get you a nice piece of reserve territory  
 But I'll give a life that ten million can be found  
 On a miserable thirty per cent of the ground?  
 Yes, some people say now don't you worry  
 You can always find jobs in the white man's city  
 But don't stay too long and don't stay too deep  
 For you're bound to disturb the white man in his sleep  
 White man don't sleep long and don't sleep too deep  
 For your life and possessions how long will you keep?  
 'Cause I've heard a rumour that's running around  
 For the black man's demanding his own piece of ground  
 His own piece of ground

(The quintet continues to play  
 while she speaks.)

## MAKEBA

Thank you very much. I met Harry Belafonte in London. Mr. Belafonte came to see me in a show, and he came backstage after. I told him that I was invited to the United States by Mr. Steve Allen to appear on his show and Mr. Max Gordon to appear in his club, the Village Vanguard in New York City. So, Belafonte said when I got there to call on him if I needed anything.

I waited for some time in England for a visa. I was experiencing strange things. Because for 27 years of my life, I always knew I couldn't go into a restaurant with white people and just sit down and eat. I knew I couldn't get on a bus with white people. I knew I wasn't supposed to be in the streets in the city after 11 at night. I just knew I couldn't go into a liquor store and buy anything because it wasn't for Blacks. So, I was walking around in England and felt hungry at each restaurant. I looked inside, there were white people sitting there. So, I'd go back to my little room where I had a two-plate stove and I cooked. I'd take a taxi because I won't take the bus.

One day I was walking, and I saw two policemen. I wondered "what am I going to do?" The policemen saw me panicking. They came to me, and they said, "Is there anything we can do for you?" I said I was lost. They asked me where I was going, and I gave them my address and they said I wasn't lost; I just needed to turn left and keep going. Then it dawned on me: I was not in South Africa anymore. Now I see myself coming and going, and you know, it makes you have a good feeling.

(The quintet winds down.)

Harry Belafonte did so much for me. When I came, I had nothing. Belafonte put things together for me. Musicians, clothes to wear on stage, and someone to write down my songs, and the band that played during the Steve Allen show.

I rehearsed for three days, and then went to Burbank to appear on the Steve Allen show. I was shaking. I remember he was very nice and held me until they struck the first note and wished me well. I didn't know anybody when I came to America. Every summer for many years, we would do the summer tour together.

MAKEBA (singing a cappella)

**MALAIKA**

Malaika, nakupenda Malaika  
 (Angel, I love you Angel)  
 Ningekuoa mali we, ningekuoa dada  
 (I would marry you, I would marry you sister)  
 Nashindwa na mali sina we  
 (I fail with property I do not have)  
 Ningekuoa Malaika  
 (I would marry you Angel)  
 Pesa zasumbua roho yangu  
 (Money is troubling my soul)  
 Nami nifanyeje, kijana mwenzio  
 (And what should I do)  
 Kidege, hukuwaza kidege  
 (Bird, you don't think bird)  
 Ningekuoa mali we, ningekuoa dada  
 (I would marry you, I would marry you sister)

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. Without Mr. Belafonte I don't know what I would have done. He was my big brother. He took care of me. Belafonte warned me. "Always be careful how you conduct yourself on stage and off because someday you will have a chance to speak on behalf of your people."

When I performed with Harry at the Southern Christian Leadership Conference in Atlanta, we were denied entrance to one of the city's elegant restaurants.

He brought the media to the restaurant and said, "What can we as Americans say to a guest like Miss Makeba? She comes from a land of oppression, only to find a situation like this."

"Oh, oh," I think. "A new country, but the same old racism. In South Africa, they call it Apartheid. Here in the South, it is called Jim Crow."

I could not get too excited or upset because I was from South Africa, which made Atlanta look like the cradle of democracy.

In America I realized I was something of a novelty. I was different. This made me realize that my strength

would be in staying true to my roots. If I sang my music from home, if I sang of the music of my roots, only then could I be someone.

Mr. Belafonte's people took me to get my hair done, which in 1959 meant straightened. The long, elegant look, like Diahann Carroll's, was the style. After, I cannot look in the mirror. I'm too afraid. When I get back to the hotel, I see what has been done to me. I cry and cry. This is not me. I put my head in hot water and I wash it and wash it. I'm not a glamor girl.

Natural hair makes you have a good feeling. It's as though Negro women are finally admitting they're proud of their heritage. A Negro woman should look natural, and that's what this new look was trying to say. Those who press their hair and buy wigs are running away from themselves.

Negro women and finally proud of their heritage. A Negro woman should look natural. Those who press their hair and buy wigs are running away from themselves. If you took them and put them under the shower, their hair would look just like mine.

#### TRANSITION TO FRONT-LIT LX

(The quintet starts to play "Click Song nr 1" while she speaks.)

This next song is also a South African song. It's a Xhosa wedding song. Everywhere we go people often ask me, how do you make that noise? It used to offend me because it's not a noise, it's my language.

I came to understand that they didn't understand that Xhosa is my language, and it's a written language. We use the same roman alphabet; the only difference is that we pronounce certain letters differently.

Such as the letter Q, we pronounce [q|] And the letter X we pronounce [k||']. And the letter C [k|'] and the letter R [r]. We have words like "uqhoqhoqho," [úk!hók!ho!k!ho] which means the Adams apple, "iqanda," [ík!a!nqǎ] which means an egg, and "ixoxo" [ík||o!k||o] which means a frog. Now. The colonizers of my country

call this song the Click Song simply because they find it rather difficult to say "ngugongqothwane."

MAKEBA (singing)

### **QONGQOTHWANE**

Igqira lendlela ngugongqothwane  
 (The witch doctor of the road is the knock-knock beetle)  
 selegabele gqi thapa ngugongqothwane  
 (He has passed by, the knock-knock beetle)

(The quintet continues to play "Click Song nr 1".)

MAKEBA

I get strength from some of the people I've known in my life. My mother, she was strong, despite ups and downs. And she kept on going to get us to school and live.

And I look back at South Africa and I see women whose children were killed right in front of them. Whose husbands were dragged to jail. Children who saw their parents arrested and humiliated in front of them and they kept going. They were strong. They had strength. And I look at them and I say, "I think I have problems." At least I'm not dodging bullets like they were at home.

I dodged a different kind of bullet out here because of all the different things that have happened to me. It was painful to be in allied territory with South African allies, you see. In these big countries, they made South Africa change because South Africa needed them as much as they needed South Africa.

And like Hugh Masekela, the jazz musician and my former husband always said, we didn't have any careers to talk about. To have a career you have to be in your own country and have the backing of the wrong people and the wrong government. So, we have just been existing in allied territory.

(The quintet winds down.)

I never thought that I would be in the United States. It was such a far-fetched thought, thinking we ever could get anywhere. And when I first went there, I was fascinated. And every time I'd meet the artists I'd admired—oh, if I heard one was performing, Duke Ellington, Count Basie, big bands—I would go and see them. I remember one day I went to Sarah Vaughan at the Waldorf-Astoria, and I didn't have an escort. And it's a big room, and you have to go in there and have dinner and all that.

I went and I said, "I'm a poor South African. I don't know anybody, but I want to go in and I hear this lady sing." And the man at the door said, "Didn't I see you on Steve Allen last night?" I said "yes." And so, he said, "Oh, you can come inside." They escorted me to a special table. And I asked Sarah Vaughn for photographs for all my friends back home.

(The quintet starts to play  
"Mayibuye.")

Nobody will know the pain of exile until you are in exile. I always wanted to leave home. I never knew they were going to stop me from coming back. Maybe, if I knew, I never would have left. It is kind of painful to be away from everything that you've ever known. No matter where you go, there are times when people show you kindness and love, and there are times when they make you know that you are with them but not of them. That's when it hurts.

The next song is a Xhosa song. It tells of the resentment of South Africa's young generation of the government in power. It is a patriotic song and one of several African folk songs important for their oral history.

MAKEBA (singing)

### **MAYIBUYE**

We true South Africans have suffered for a long time  
As a result of white people laws.  
Awake, my people.  
The time for our liberation has come.  
This land is ours.  
Remember Kings Umshoehoe, Dingaan,  
Umzilikazi, and Ngqika.

They fought for this land.  
 Awake you Africans.  
 Remember the words of King Shaka  
 Which we spoke on the arrival of white people.  
 "Do not trust the white man,  
 because he has come to take your land."  
 Oh, my father, unite my people.  
 I beg you. Let's fight for our land.  
 We have long been ruled by the Dutch.  
 We have long suffered under the rule.  
 The time for your liberation has come  
 The whole of Africa is ready to fight for our freedom.  
 You Zulu, Xhosa, Shangane, Basuto, Venda unite.  
 There is no more time for crying,  
 restore Africa now.  
 Follow the road of our forefathers  
 And fight for our land  
 Which was taken by white people.  
 We want our liberation now.  
 Beware my people  
 Awake Mandela and Sisulu,  
 Sobukwe, and you Luthuli, Tambo, Nokwe, and Resha  
 Awake you Africans.  
 Remember the words of Ngqika,  
 "Do not trust the white man,  
 because he has come to take your land."

(The quintet continues to  
 play "Mayibuye.")

#### MAKEBA

My Records had been banned since 1962. In South  
 Africa, they didn't sell them anymore. People who had  
 them just had to play them privately, and hope that  
 nobody that shouldn't hear them, heard it. I am not a  
 political singer. I don't know what the word means.  
 People think I consciously decided to tell the world  
 what was happening in South Africa. No! I was singing  
 about my life, and in South Africa we always sang  
 about what was happening to us especially the things  
 that hurt us.

I always did it my own way. When I got to America with  
 all the publicity that I got, people were interested  
 in me, where I came from, how we live, and I always  
 told the truth. I said, I lived in the township, and  
 this was how we lived. I couldn't lie.

People say I'm political but I'm not. I'm just telling the truth because when I say we are oppressed in South Africa, I'm not lying. And if my truth becomes political, there's nothing I can do about that. I know I'm a South African. I was born there. It's my land. I have no other. I know I'm a South African who cares about what goes on around me. And those are around me about my country because it's my country. I cried when I left home. I didn't intend to stay away. I was going to come back home and say I've been to Europe. I've been to America. And share that with people. I was looking forward to that.

I never participate in in marches or anything. I've raised funds for other different groups that that asked me, but I was not a citizen to go making speeches I felt very comfortable talking about my own country.

Speaking at the General Assembly in 1963, I was scared, but I felt it was necessary. If they were asking me, there was some reason I would help liberate. I'll do it but I'm not a politician. I'm a singer.

(The quintet starts to play  
"Pata Pata.")

"Pata Pata" was a turning point because it was a hit. I didn't expect anything like that. I never sold records like that.

(The mood lightens and Makeba seems to want to make things a little playful. She allows the audience to cheer a little and clap as they recognize the tune.)

All of a sudden, people who never knew I had been in America since 1959 are asking me to be on their television shows and play at their concert halls in 1967. In discotheques, they invented a new dance called the "Pata Pata." Couples dance apart, and they then reach out and touch each other. I go to Argentina for a concert, and everywhere I travel in South America, they are singing my song!

Unfortunately, for me it's a song that doesn't have deep meaning. I would have preferred another song to be popular than "Pata Pata." But then, people choose what they want!

TRANSITION TO FRONT-LIT LX

MAKEBA (singing)

**PATA PATA**

Saguquga sathi bega nantsi Pata  
 (We turn around and say here is Pata Pata)  
 Saguquga sathi bega nantsi Pata Pata  
 Hiyo mama hiyo ma nantsi Pata Pata  
 (That woman is Pata Pata)  
 Hiyo mama hiyo ma nantsi Pata Pata  
 Pata Pata is the name of a dance we do down Johannesburg way.  
 And everybody starts to move as soon as "Pata Pata" starts to  
 play - whoo  
 Saguquga sath' - hit it!  
 Aah- saguquga sath' - nantsi - hit it!  
 Saguquga sathi bega nantsi Pata Pata)  
 Whoo, every Friday and Saturday night it's Pata Pata time  
 The dance keeps going all night long  
 Till the morning sun begins to shine - hey!

(The quintet continues to  
 play "Pata Pata.")

MAKEBA

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. I didn't understand why that one became so popular, because it's one of my most insignificant songs in that it talks about a dance. And here I have songs that I think are very serious and people remember "Pata Pata." I'm called the "Pata Pata" girl.

Initially, all my audiences were mostly white people. I don't know why. It was much later, after "Pata Pata" that I began to have more Black people come out to hear me. I don't know why only white people came at first. Maybe I was not played on black stations. Because it's not the kind of music that they play. I was played more on white stations because at that time, they didn't know where to fit me.

I was called everything--folk singer, folk jazz singer. I always find that it's so sad to put artists in cages by saying this one is a pop singer and this one is a rock singer. This one is jazz. People just sing! So, when people ask me what do you sing? I say I sing songs.

FULL LIGHTING, FOLLOW-SPOT TO  
END OF SCENE.

MAKEBA (singing)

**PATA PATA**

Saguquga sathi bega nantsi Pata Pata  
(We turn around and say here is Pata Pata)  
Hiyo mama hiyo ma nantsi Pata Pata  
(That woman is Pata Pata)  
Hiyo mama hiyo ma nantsi Pata Pata  
Pata Pata is the name of a dance we do down Johannesburg way.  
And everybody starts to move as soon as Pata Pata starts to play  
Aah- saguquga sath' - nantsi - hit it  
Whoo, every Friday and Saturday night it's Pata Pata time  
The dance keeps going all night long  
Till the morning sun begins to shine - hey!

(A phone ringing interrupts Makeba's singing of Pata Pata. She listens without a word. Her eyes wide. It is clear that she received devastating news. She puts the phone back in her pocket and closes her eyes.)

LX DOWN, SPOTLIGHT ONLY.

MAKEBA (singing a cappella)

**HUSH**

Soon, one morning  
Death comes a-creeping in the room  
Crying oh my Lord, oh my Lord what shall I do, what shall I do  
Call, call on your mother, Your mama can't do you no good  
Call on your mother  
Crying oh my Lord, oh my Lord what shall I do, what shall I do  
Hush, hush. Somebody's calling my name  
Crying oh my Lord, oh my Lord what shall I do

(Makeba is visibly upset. It's clear the phone call conveyed a death notice or extreme bad news.)

It's sad. In Africa, they say that when you're elderly, you have to be married to have respect. Each time you marry you say, "maybe this is it." And when it doesn't happen, I'm the kind of person who feels I'm not going to make anybody else miserable. And I don't want them to make me miserable. So, if it doesn't work, we part, and we're good friends. And there's no fighting. When you want to marry somebody, you follow your feelings.

Sometimes in a marriage a husband or a wife will do something terrible or so thoughtlessly cruel that it shakes that marriage to its roots. It changes the way the other person thinks about his or her mate, and years of work must go into getting the lost trust back, if it can be gotten back.

I didn't calculate or think. My marriage to Stokely Carmichael didn't change my life. It just made my career disappear! In the United States and Britain.

I don't know why people did that to me, because I just married a man I loved.

MAKEBA (singing a cappella)

**TIME**

In time we get older, in time we get mellow  
I've been through change, like anyone else  
God answers one's prayers, no matter how hard we fall.

(BLACKOUT)

COSTUME CHANGE. BAND REMAINS  
IN ORIGINAL SUIT AND TIE.

## ACT 1

## SCENE 2

(The scene opens on a dark scene. Gradually light fills the rest of the space but the color of the light and the texture of it feels mottled and pointillistic. Gradually, however, the color of the LX turns whiter, brighter, as the couple finds it harder to achieve any kind of privacy. The feeling of the scene becomes one of scrutiny.)

## MAKEBA

"We've met before, Miss Makeba," he says to me. "At Harry Belafonte's"

"Oh? I'm sorry, but I don't remember."

"I was a student, and we came to get Belafonte's advice before we went down for the march on Selma. And later I saw give a concert at Forest Hills. I've always admired your singing very much."

I thank him, and he asks me to a party at the Gbessia Hotel. I go, and he tells me about his activities in America, fighting for civil rights and what he calls "Black Power."

(She addresses the audience as if telling a story to a friend. The tone is friendly and intimate and a mile away from the career reflections and childhood memories, of earlier.)

Stokely Carmichael is considered very radical and something of a menace in the U.S. when he talks about Black power, but I don't see anything wrong with it. Why shouldn't power be Black? Here in Guinea, he tells me, he is representing Black Americans as one of the international observers at the party congress. He asks if her can come and visit me at the place where I am staying.

(The quintet starts to play "West Wind.")

I am very attracted to this tall good looking young man, but I have to say, "I don't know. I'm a guest here, and you're a guest here. It'll be difficult." But I find a friend who manages to pick up Stokely at his hotel and he comes to my guest house. We talk and get to know each other. But from there we go our separate ways, hoping that we will meet again at some other place.

MAKEBA (singing)

### WEST WIND

West Wind blow ye gentle  
 O'er the souls of yesterday  
 My sons proud and noble  
 Here within my heart they lay  
 Guard each garland to warriors claim  
 I am the soil from which they came  
 West Wind with your splendor  
 Take my brothers by the hand  
 Sunshine spread your glory  
 Unify this promised land  
 Free from exploitation and strife  
 Nothing is more precious in life  
 West Wind with your splendor  
 Take my brothers by the hand  
 Sunshine spread your glory  
 Unify this promised land  
 Unify this promised land  
 Yes, unify this promised land

(The quintet continues to play "West Wind.")

MAKEBA

From Guinea I travel to another West African nation, Liberia. Next, I go to Tanzania in East Africa. After my concert there is a surprise: Stokely shows up. "You didn't tell me you were coming here," I say. "Well, you didn't tell me you were either!"

He was touring Africa, trying to hook up the struggle of American Blacks and Africans. Stokely thought the each can help the other. Since he was busy in Africa for a few more weeks, he asked me to bring a letter

with some money for his mother back to U.S. I was happy to do it. I call up their house in the Bronx. The mother likes me right away. And I like her. None of the children call her Mama, they call her "Mae Charles."

Stokely and I start to date when he returns to the United States. I'll see him come into this house and yell, "Hey, Mae Charles! Got any food?"

When he does this, it is usually three in the morning, and Stokely has with him eight or ten of his friends from the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee. Sometimes I arrive in the morning and find them sleeping on the couch, in the halls, and on the stairs.

(The quintet segues into "Woza." The effect of the music in the background here, has an almost magical effect. One of softness and romance.)

Stokely is always giving speeches at schools and appearing on TV. I is always giving concerts, sometimes at universities, and I sing on TV. But we get together from time to time and when we do, we enjoy ourselves. Like Hugh, my last great love, Stokely is younger than I, by ten years. But this doesn't seem to bother either of us. It is as I had learned: if two people start to love each other, nothing is going to stop them.

MAKEBA (singing)

## WOZA

Woza sithandwa (Come on my dear)  
 Woza sihlale ngovuyo (Come and live happily)  
 Woza sithandwane sam (Come my love)  
 Woza sihlale ngovuyo (Come and live happily)  
 Jonga izinhlupheko zethu (Look at our troubles)  
 Oomama nanoBabe bayalila mama (Moms and Dads are crying)  
 Woza sithandwane sam (Come my love)  
 Woza sihlale ngovuyo (Come and live happily)  
 Kudala sizama ukuthi buyela kum  
 (We've been trying to get back for a long time)  
 Kodw'andazi mna kwala phi na (But I don't know where to turn)

Simbathe sithi noba sithi dud'ungowam  
 (We wear it even if it's not mine)  
 Kodwa amaxesha alikhuni woh (But times are hard)  
 Oh ndiyavuya (Oh I'm glad)  
 Xa ukhoyo (When you are there)

(The quintet continues to  
 play "Woza.")

#### MAKEBA

Time magazine calls Stokely, a "Black power monger."  
 White America seems to panic when he goes on TV or  
 gives a speech with his statement: "I say to black  
 people, you gotta get your guns!"  
 Some of my friends say to me, "I can't believe you're  
 seeing Stokely Carmichael."  
 "We love each other," I tell them. And this is true.  
 For a long time, we had been going together and no one  
 had spoken about love.

Then one day Stokely says "Miriam, I love you."  
 I'm pleased. "Oh, yeah. I love you too."

I tell my friends. "It had nothing to do with  
 politics." But really, everything in my life seems to  
 involve politics. Anyone else could go home and see  
 their family but for me to do so would require  
 changing the political system of South Africa.

Any other singer could sing a love song and the  
 audience would think about lovers lost or found, and  
 feelings sad or beautiful. But when I sing a love  
 song, it is, as one critic wrote, "a metaphor for the  
 yearning of a subjugated people to be free."

Ed Sullivan introduces me on his show--and sometimes  
 he even pronounces my name right--and half the  
 audience sees me as a symbol of African nationalism,  
 protest against apartheid, and black pride. Not that I  
 mind; it's an honor to be associated with these  
 things. But when Maria Makeba falls in love with a  
 Black militant like Stokely Carmichael, people are  
 going to say more than "Oh, isn't that nice!"

(The quintet starts to play  
 "Beware Verwoerd.")

And there is gossip about our ages, because Stokely is younger than me. He was dating a girl from Washington before we met. She calls me up and curses me out. "You're old enough to be my mother!" I let her have it. Pow! "You should be ashamed that your mother could take your boyfriend away from you. It means you ain't good for nothing."

Stokely is very articulate and intelligent. He is full of passion, and his passion makes him angry, and his anger makes him say things that sounded threatening to some people. My style is so completely different from his. I can also make inflammatory statements about my country if I liked.

MAKEBA (singing)

**BEWARE, VERWOERD!**

Pasopa Nantsi ndodemnyama, Verwoerd!  
 (Beware, here is the black man, Verwoerd!)  
 Nantsi ndodemnyama, Verwoerd!  
 (Here is the black man, Verwoerd!)  
 Pasopa Nantsi ndodemnyama, Verwoerd!  
 (Beware, here is the black man, Verwoerd!)

(The quintet continues to play "Beware Verwoerd!")

MAKEBA

I sincerely believe that Blacks in South Africa are in worse shape than our brothers in America. But I don't do this because such things only make people excited and defensive. They don't listen to you. They just close their doors against you because they think you will do them harm.

I never tell Stokely what to do. I never involve myself in his politics. So, I don't really know what he was up to. But as a performer, I can make suggestions about his style.

"You have to be careful and think about the effect of the things you're saying," I tell him. "You have to build and be constructive, and bring people together, not pull them apart." Stokely listens, but he does not agree.

There is another part of his "act" that I do change.

(The quintet winds down.)

When I was growing up, we were poor. But we were clean. And we took great pride in the way we dressed and looked. Stokely and his American friends, who were not poor, dress like vagabonds. Stokely wears dirty jeans and torn jackets. He and his friends say that being dirty and wearing tattered clothes means that a person identified with the masses.

This makes me mad because it is just wrong, and it sounded patronizing. "Hey, man, I grew up with the masses. We were not proud of our poverty. We were proud when we could be clean and presentable and show that we were above our poverty."

"I dress this way to show that I'm a revolutionary."  
 "What you're doing is not revolutionary. You don't have a fight to revolution to stay in the mud. You fight to get out of the mud. If you want to stay in the mud like a pig, then you don't have to do nothing."

Stokely does not like to be called a pig. That's the name they use for the police.

"No man," I say, "you've got a dress fine." I take him shopping and buy some shirts and suits. Mae Charles, Stokely's mother, is very happy that he is dressing nicely for a change. But his fellows at SNCC are not pleased when they read in the paper that I am buying him things. They say he'd gone "counterrevolutionary."

(The quintet starts to play  
 "Dubula.")

And they are serious! Everyone is very serious in America now. And with the Vietnam War, the student protests and the riots in the ghettos, everyone is scared. Everyone is afraid that there will be a great Black uprising. The government is afraid that Stokely will be a leader in this revolt.

The FBI never leaves him alone. And because he is a native of Trinidad, which is a British colony, he is banned in all the countries of the British Commonwealth. This is 30 countries. There is concern that it might stir up the local people to riot.

Well, I think, he's got his problems, and I've got mine. But we are two sturdy people, and we are in love.

When Stokely does not propose that we get married right away, I put the suggestion in his head and then I used the arts that a woman knows to make him like the idea and think that it's his idea. If a woman wants a man, he's done for.

MAKEBA (singing)

**DUBULA!**

Ntakana ntyilo uphetheni ngemlomo (What you have in your mouth?)  
 Ndiphetamaso sana lwam (The honeybird carries sour milk)  
 Uwa sapenge ka vutwabo (It is no good for my child)  
 Dubula mfana ndini (Shoot the boy)  
 Dubula ngemfaka dolo leyo (Let us chase him away with a big bang)  
 Lumka! (Beware!)

(The quintet continues to play "Dubula.")

MAKEBA

Thank you, ladies and gentlemen. That February, we make the announcement to our friends that we will be married the following month. Many people see it as a union of two Black worlds, the old and the new.

The wedding is in New York. Stokely works in Washington at the SNCC headquarters. I'd been commuting by jet to see him. Now it was time, I decided, to move out of the hotel in New York and rent a place here. Stokely likes the idea, but I am a little mad at him. Even though the wedding is a civil ceremony and only the two of us were there, he shows up in jeans and a tattered jacket with patches on the sleeves. But he promises to look at our wedding reception in a few weeks.

President Sékoe Touré of Guinea is so pleased by our marriage, that he ordered his ambassador at the UN to throw a party for us.

(The quintet starts to play  
"Lumumba.")

All my friends and associates could see how happy I am, and they are pleased for me. So is Bob Schwaid, the tall, dark-haired white man with glasses, who is my manager. But when he phones, he sounds disturbed.

"Miriam. They're backing out."

"Backing out? Who?"

"Everybody. They're canceling your bookings right and left."

"But why?"

"I think you know why."

I married him and then all my contracts are canceled. I feel that tenseness inside. So, I think it's starting again.

I ask Mr. Schwaid, "Don't we have contracts?"

"Sure, we do. But this is show business. Their attitude is, 'Go ahead and sue.'"

Not everyone cancels my shows. Some realize that I am Miriam Makeba first and Mrs. Stokely Carmichael second. I am a singer, not a revolutionary. I keep reminding the press of this. But interviewers won't leave me alone about my husband's politics. I tell them, "Look, Stokely speaks for the family. I sing for the family."

I am happy that my biggest show of the spring goes on as scheduled. At the famous Coconut Grove in Hollywood, I was booked for a week. The crowds come and pack the house for three nights. And then we get the news that shocks everyone until we are either mute or crying. Martin Luther King had been shot. His death is a blow to all of us.

(Pause)

I think of a time in Atlanta when he came to my defense when I was banned from the restaurant there. He liked my singing, and I was so moved by his power and eloquence. I remember seeing him on TV during the march on Washington and listening to his words that helped me build my spirit when I was recovering from the cancer operation.

But there is more in store for me. I get back to the hotel room and there is a phone call from New York. It is Bonggi. She had given birth and I had a grandson.

MAKEBA (singing)

**LUMUMBA**

Look  
 Life's golden threads are growing  
 A child is springing in spirit  
 Soul and mind  
 Each day brings more joy  
 Oh Lumumba  
 That's my little boy  
 I named him after the great man (yeah)  
 Who fought for the liberty of the Congo  
 Patrice Lumumba  
 A-ha O Lumumba  
 May his spirit live on  
 In my little boy

(The quintet continues playing "Lumumba.")

MAKEBA

My daughter is well and happy. I put the phone down and collapse on the bed. And I cry. I cry out of sadness and gratitude. I fear for what is happening to our beloved leaders. I am happy that Bonggi was well. A great man was dead. A child was born. My head feels so full. I just lie down and let all the confused feelings roll over me.

(Pause)

Now that Dr. King is dead, everything shuts down. The wedding reception that the Guineans were going to give us is postponed. I tell the management of the Coconut Grove that I cannot continue, and they kindly release me from the rest of the week's contract. Stokely and I must attend Dr. King's funeral in Atlanta. I go from Los Angeles to Washington to pick up my new husband.

With the death of Dr. King, who preached nonviolence, it is as if the anger of Black Americans cannot be

expressed nonviolently anymore. All over the country, riots set the cities on fire.

In Washington, a curfew is in effect when I arrive. The taxi takes me through streets that are deserted and empty. From the townhouse that I'm renting on 16th Street, I can hear the sirens and see the lights from the fires that are consuming blocks and blocks. The news says that 15,000 troops are being sent here to restore order.

(The quintet segues from  
"Lumumba" to "Four-letter  
Words.")

On the television, there is nothing but pictures of burnings and people running. All over the country. I think, "Goodness me, what's going on?" And I'm getting scared because there is no Stokely. I get a call that he is coming. I wait and wait, but nothing. Outside the window, the fire engines, and police cars race by, and then there is an awful silence.

Way off there is gunfire. Somebody runs by fast because nobody is supposed to be on the streets. But it's not Stokely. I'm scared to death. What if the rioting and fire come this way?

Finally, Stokely knocks on the back door. I run to let him in. I'm so happy.  
"How did you get through the curfew?" Stokely only laughs. What is a curfew to him?

We go to Atlanta for Dr. King's funeral. The place is packed with people press and dignitaries from all over. I escaped the crush as soon as I can. And I take a plane to New York

MAKEBA (singing)

#### **FOUR-LETTER WORDS**

Wars, kill, guns, hate  
Hurt, harm, dead  
Ball, fire, burn  
Are four-letter words  
Beat, take, hide, stay  
Raid, flee, bled

Fear, weep, maim  
 Are four-letter words  
 Four-letter words  
 Dirty words  
 When they mean what they say  
 For better words  
 What we need is a far better way  
 Love, give, fair, just  
 Feel, help, true  
 Hope, save and care  
 Are four-letter words too  
 Love, give, fair, just  
 Heal, help, true  
 Hope, save and care  
 Are four-letter words too

(The quintet continues to play "Four-Letter Words.")

#### MAKEBA

A weekend in mid-May is set for our postponed wedding reception. One hundred and fifty guests are invited. Over 500 show up. Stokely dresses nicely for the party, in a grand boubou. I am in a grand boubou that Madame Sékoe Touré gave me when I last visited her country. Journalists, entertainers, diplomats, black activists, and all sorts of people crowd the rooms and cover the lawns.

Stokely's mother says she'd never seen anything like it. She and I are very good friends, but I can't bring myself to call her Mae Charles. To me, it sounds disrespectful. It's the way I was brought up. I call her "Mamo." Mrs. Carmichael is very happy that her son is married to me. I know that she must be disappointed that he could never have any children by me. But she never says a word about it.

(The quintet segues from "Four-letter Words" to "Do Unto Others.")

Stokely's term as president of SNCC come to an end. He is replaced by H. Rap Brown. For a while Stokely works as field secretary for SNCC. Then, like some of the other SNCC members, he is attracted to a new

organization, one that has its headquarters in Oakland, California.

It is called the Black Panther Party for Self-Defense. This is a very, very controversial group, and although Stokely does not become a member, the fact that he is working with them really puts the pressure on us.

The FBI, which has been following Stokely everywhere he goes for a long time, now begins to follow me too. Every day there is a car in front of the house. The car is always behind, even when I am alone. I have a feeling they must hear what we say inside the house. Because whenever I got to where I am going there were FBI men there too.

We call them our babysitters, but I am really scared. It is nerve-wracking, and it is something I never would have expected in America. This is a really nasty treatment from a country that is supposed to be free.

(The quintet starts to play  
"Khawuleza.")

My next song, "Khawuleza", is a South African song. It comes from the townships, locations, reservations, whichever. Near the cities of South Africa where all the black South Africans live. Their children shout from the streets when they see police cars coming to raid their home for one thing or another. They say, "Khawuleza Mama." Which simply means, "Hurry Mama, please, please don't let them catch you."

TRANSITION TO INTIMATE LX

MAKEBA (singing)

### **KHAWULEZA**

Nank' amapolis' azongen'endlini mama, khawuleza  
(Watch out Mother. Police will enter the house mom, hurry up)  
Jonga jonga jonga yo khawuleza mama, iyeyiye mama, khawuleza  
(Look, look, hurry, mother, yes, mother, hurry)  
Bathi jonga jonga jonga yo khawuleza mama  
(They say look look look fast mom)

(The quintet continues to  
play "Khawuleza.")

## MAKEBA

I tell Stokely that I feel as if I am in a prison. We even have the impression that someone is listening when we were making love. He says, "Never talk to them. Don't look at them."

I try to do as he said. Stokely is used to all sorts of intimidation. The US government took away his passport because he went to North Vietnam, China, Cuba, and other countries where they said he's not supposed to go. He goes anyway to these places. But he doesn't use his passport, even though it was returned to him. Instead of traveling as a US citizen, he goes as an individual.

I have my own travel problems. When I arrive on the island of Jamaica for a concert, at first, I am glad to find an airport where there are no FBI agents to trail me. The concert goes very well. In the audience is Dudley Thompson, a cabinet minister, and the government of Prime Minister Michael Manley. He knew me from a time when we were in Kenya together. But when my musicians and I go to the airport to return to the United States I am not permitted to board. I am shocked. "Why? What has happened?"

(The quintet continues to play giving the episode she is describing a somewhat surreal feel. It is an interesting counterpoint to show the relentlessness of the challenges thrown at Makeba and Carmichael. The idea here is to create a subtle hyper-reality, one that shows the futility not just of the marriage but also the systems at work in these countries.)

The agent was very cool. "You do not have a visa." For many years, I traveled on a Tanzanian passport, and because I was not a citizen of the United States, I obtained the necessary visas to go into and out of the country. But things have changed, and I tell them, "But I'm married to a US citizen."

This does no good. I send my musicians on their way, and I go to Dudley Thompson's house. He agrees to put me up and after I drop off my bags, I go to see the American ambassador. I sit and sit but the ambassador will not see me.

When I do not go away, he comes out of his office at last. But he won't talk to me. He won't even look at me. Instead, he says to his secretary in a very nasty voice, "Tell her I'm not giving her a visa." The ambassador goes back into his office and slams the door. I go to Mr. Thompson's house and call Stokely. He is furious. He says he is coming down right away.

The first thing Stokely does is contact the people he knew in the Congressional Black Caucus in Washington. They are also made angry by my treatment. He checks to see if Prime Minister Manley has lifted the ban that kept him from entering Jamaica, which is a British Commonwealth country. This has been done, so Stokely takes a plane down and meets me.

By this time the American newspapers get wind of my problem. The headlines say, 'Miriam Makeba Blocked in Jamaica.' The press stories are making an embarrassment, and the Congressional Black Caucus is putting on pressure. But the American ambassador tells Stokely, "I'm not giving her a visa." My husband just smiles. He is so cool. "Fine, I'm going to spend the whole weekend here in Jamaica."

We leave.

Stokely being in the island makes the Ambassador nervous. Many officials in America are very paranoid about him. In Maryland, where Stokely was speaking just before Dr. King was shot, the governor there, a man named Spiro Agnew, is blaming Stokely for inciting the Black people to riot in the city of Baltimore. It is as if the assassination of Dr. King had nothing to do with what the people did.

We get a call at Mr. Thompson's house. The American embassy was closed but the ambassador wants us to come over right away. He looks uncomfortable when he speaks to Stokely. "Well, you know, your wife can have a visa, and you can leave anytime you want."

Stokely just sits back and laughs. "I'm glad to hear that my wife can go back. But, you see, I've decided I want to stay. I have a lot of meetings here with the people and a lot of folks I want to see."

The ambassador looks wretched when we leave, because Stokely wouldn't go, and I get to enjoy the island for a few days until my husband is ready to go home.

(The quintet starts "Ha Po Zamani.")

My home is becoming more and more hostile. My manager, Bob Schwaid, gives me terrible news: My concerts are being canceled left and right. I learn that people are afraid that my shows will finance radical activities.

I can only shake my head. What does Stokely have to do with my singing? Cause Stokely was so outspoken a lot of people at the time cancel my shows saying they can't feed the hand that bites them. People say, "You married a radical." But I never saw Stokely kill anybody. The police during the demonstrations and riots, they are killing people.

You know, the government is rewriting history for a reason. And a government that can make up a lie like this, can lie about anything.

This next song was written for me by a colleague of mine, who made her fame in South Africa, born in Zimbabwe, Miss Dorothy Masuka.

MAKEBA (singing)

### HA PO ZAMANI

Ha po zamani, sikuya hivi, (In the past, I was not this)  
 Hapo zamani, shauri ya pombe (I'm drunk because of the blues)  
 Nindibona ndilinxila nje kungenxa yamabhulu  
 (I am a drunk because of the Afrikaner white man)  
 Nindibona ndingenakhaya nje kungenxa yabelungu  
 (I am homeless because of the whites)  
 Nindibona ndizula nje kungenxa yabelungu  
 (I am a hobo because of the whites)  
 Baleka bhulu (Run white man)  
 Sizobuya (We'll come back)  
 Sizobuy' ekhaya (we'll come back home)

(The quintet continues to play "Ha Po Zamani.")

MAKEBA

Thank you! Sometimes people say I was banned from America which is not true. It was not a ban from the government; it was a cancellation by people who felt I should not be with Stokely because he was a rebel to them.

I know that Stokely is not everybody's darling because he is very honest. And to the point. When he talks about the problems of black people in his country, his language is not careful. He says things the way they are and not too many people like that. You know, he is not a turn-the-other-cheek type.

I didn't care about that. He was somebody I loved, who loved me, and it was my life. I was very sad. What did I do? All I did was marry somebody.

(The quintet segues to "Do Unto Others.")

If my marriage to Stokely is giving me problems, his marriage to me is causing him trouble too. This may not be the time to look for another house to rent in Washington, but I do. There is a very nice place on Blagden Avenue, M.W., near the Carter Barron Amphitheater, where I have performed. I make some inquiries. The next day there is a story in the Washington Post and another in the New York Times: 'Carmichael is reported buying \$70,000 home.'

Stokely is not going to buy a house. I am the one who is looking. And am not buying, I want to rent. But the damage is done. We only looked at it, and the poor people who live there have been so harassed ever since.

There is much rivalry among the Black militants and some of Stokely's enemies jump on this. They treat it the way they did when I bought him some suits: "Look, he's no revolutionary. He's bourgeois! He's buying himself a rich man's house!" We deny the story, but it is no good. For years Stokely will be called a

hypocrite because of his imaginary purchase of a house.

America seems to be going crazy. Half the people seem to be out in the streets protesting or rioting, and the other half is at home behind closed doors, scared. The "establishment" is cracking down on the people that want to topple it, the people in the streets. And it is cracking down on those who are associated with the people in the streets.

MAKEBA (singing)

### DO UNTO OTHERS

Brothers and sisters  
 What the bible says is true  
 We must do unto others  
 As you'd have them do to you  
 You've got to do (Do unto others)  
 We are sisters and brothers  
 We must do unto others  
 As you'd have them do to you  
 Well a man can go to college (Pam, pam, pam, pamparam)  
 And still be a reckless fool (Pam, pam, pam, pamparam)  
 What good is work on the knowledge? (Pam, pam, pam, pamparam)  
 If you don't know the golden rule (Pam, pam, pam, pamparam)  
 You've got to just do (Do unto others)  
 We are sisters and brothers  
 We must do unto others  
 As you'd have them do to you

(The quintet continues to play "Do Unto Others.")

MAKEBA

The end comes for me when my recordings stop. My contract with Reprise calls for three albums a year. We had been putting them out very profitably like clockwork. I always get a call from my Artists and Repertoire man when it is time to start work on the next album. But as the summer of 1968 grows older, no phone call comes. I would have to be more than illiterate, now, if I cannot read the handwriting on the wall. I would have to be blind.

But I'm not blind. not deaf, not dumb. I think very clearly about what is happening. I have been put down or threatened all my life. It has never been easy, but I've never given up. By now I can say I know how to survive.

It is quite obvious; I haven't heard of my records on the radio. Some say my album, "Makeba," is too African, but Harry Belafonte and I won a Grammy award for an all-African album called "An Evening with Belafonte and Makeba."

(The quintet winds down.)

I was not going to stick around in the US the way things were. They are not going to strangle me. I could sue Reprise for breach of contract, but what would be the use? That would just drag me down and tie me to the past. Because it is over, now. This wonderful dream come true—the little African girl who becomes a big star in America—it's all over.

I refuse to let myself cry. "No," I say, "If I must move again, I'll not forget the people here who loved my music." This part of my career is finished. But I am not finished. I pack up everything that is in the townhouse. I've done this hard work before, so many times. I am hurt; very hurt. I don't know why this has happened to me. But I always think this when the terrible things strike: Why me?

(The quintet starts to play  
"African Convention.")

Bongi has her live here with Nelson. My grandchild is an American. They would stay. I am going to Europe for a three-month concert tour. France, Switzerland, Scandinavia, and other countries. Stokely was coming with me. And after?

I have been considering President Touré's offer. When he asked me to live in Guinea during trips to his country last year, I liked the idea very much. I couldn't do it then. My obligations in America were so many. Now I only had one obligation to America: to get out.

But they want me at home in Africa. Not just Guinea,  
but other countries have asked me to come and stay.  
The diplomatic passports they have given me are their  
way of saying, "Come be with us."

So, I leave to go to Guinea with Stokely. We leave  
together.

MAKEBA (singing)

### **AFRICAN CONVENTION**

The African Convention is going to take place in the nation  
There will be delegations from one and all African stations  
We're sending invitations to people of African vibrations  
Open up all relations Come on and hear our syncopation  
Every organisation, musicians, and politicians  
Peasant and high society, the country and the city  
Come on and shake off your frustrations  
There's going to be some heavy libation  
We're gonna dance the blues away  
We're gonna stop the pain to this day  
Ma-Ma-Ma-Ma-Ma-Mandingo, Hawza, vulani  
Beating on the tom-tom  
Beat mix from the Congo  
I'll be making sweet harmony  
Well, number one on the agenda is music  
Sing your song, you mighty Zulu  
Number two on the agenda is rhythm  
Be-be-be-be-be-bebop in Dixieland  
Number three on the agenda is dancing  
Shake your body to Hamba Mama  
Well number four on the agenda love open up all relations  
The African Convention  
Do do do do do do the reggae, Jamaica, mama  
Johnny Parker, blow your horn  
Talk about the African Convention  
Ek sê daar, Letta Mbulu, sing your song  
Wena, Masekela, blow your horn  
Wena, Nina Simone, sing your song - The African Convention

(The quintet continues to play "African Convention.")

#### MAKEBA

Stokely and I are given a house in the Villa Andrée compound. We both adjust very well to life in Africa. Stokely likes it so much that for a year he doesn't want to return to the United States. He begins studying African politics with the former ruler of Ghana, Kwame Nkrumah, who has been living in Guinea since he was overthrown in a coup in 1966.

Before Stokely left America, he formed a group in Washington called the African People's Revolutionary Party. He corresponds with the home office while he is in Guinea. After a year he goes back to America. I return to the country myself, but it is only to see Bongi, my grandson, and Stokely's mother.

My manager calls me and says, "We've got some cancellations." And I say "Yes. Why?" He said some of them said "we can't feed the hand that will turn around and slap us." And I say, "Who me?"

I go to Europe. There is no point in staying if I am not going to be working, and I think I am doing the right thing. I go and I am working. I work in Europe and in other countries. I finally go back to Britain in 1985. And finally go back to United States in 1987. So, I've never had any problem working.

(The quintet segues into "Icala.")

My visits to the US are very brief, and nobody knows about them. But when Stokely goes back, there is all sorts of noise. He gets into an argument with Eldridge Cleaver, who is the Minister of Information for the Black Panther Party. The argument ends badly, and Eldridge Cleaver says he will kill Stokely. I am glad when my husband is out of America and back with me.

In May 1968, I learn how afraid the authorities are of my husband when our plane lands in France. The steps

are brought up to the door and a military man comes inside. He tells Stokely and me to remain seated. All the other passengers leave. When we finally get to go out, there are five soldiers at the bottom of the stairs waiting for us. Each one has a machine gun. Stokely says, "What's going on?" At officer tells him, "You have to be under guard until you leave France." We are escorted to a little room. I asked if I can go to the duty-free shop. They tell me no. Now I get a little angry. "But what did I do? I just want to buy some perfume."

They let me go to the duty-free shop, but I am taken there by a soldier with a machine gun. People look at me and they don't know what to think. And I a public enemy? I get so mad I forget about the perfume, go back, and wait to leave.

MAKEBA (singing)

### ICALA

Helele noseidlile kant'usedl'icala babo  
 (The ones who ate it and ate their food)  
 Noseidlile kant'usedl'icala  
 (You have eaten it and you are guilty)  
 Noseyishayile bath'usengakayosi babo  
 (And the one who struck them said they were not their master)  
 Noseyishayile bath'usengakayosi  
 (And the one who struck him is still alive)  
 Bathi ke noseyishayile bath'usengakayosi babo  
 (They say that the person who hit them is still their boss)  
 Noseyishayile bath'usengakayosHelele noseyosile  
 bath'usengakayidli babo  
 (And the one who has beaten them is still not dead)  
 Helele noseidlile kant'usedl'icala babo  
 (The ones who ate it and ate their food)  
 Noseidlile kant'usedl'icala  
 (You have eaten it and you are guilty)  
 Heh mama noseidlile kant'usedl'icala babo  
 (Heh mama who ate it and their case)  
 Noseidlile kant'usedl'icala  
 (You have eaten it and you are guilty)

(The quintet continues playing "Icala.")

MAKEBA

In 1969, a malaria epidemic sweeps Guinea, and Stokely gets it bad. I nurse him night and day and he remained he regained his health.

A few months later, a cholera epidemic hits the country. It is very serious. Everyone gets vaccinations. President Touré sends some of his cabinet ministers to Europe to get treated when they got sick.

Stokely refuses a vaccination. "I'm not a baby. I'm not going to take that."

"I'm not a baby either." I tell him. "But I'm getting a shot."

He refuses and he is hit by cholera.

Stokely gets to know Africa. It's more than just adjusting to the climate and the food. The spirit of the place must get inside you. There are things that cannot be put into words that rule life in Africa. We respect these things, even if we cannot explain them.

We know what our ancestors can do if their will is ignored. So, we pay them homage with sacrifice. We know that the spirits of the dead inhabit the "isangoma" in order to help the living. So, we seek out the tribal doctors to cure us. We know that certain animals and places are more than they seem. So, we respect them.

One day Stokely is driving me in the Volvo from my house in Dalaba to Conakry. He sees a snake in the road ahead, and he slows down.

"I'm going to run it over."

I'm afraid, and I cry out. "Oh, don't!"

"Why not?"

"Because at home, they say if a snake isn't bothering you, you leave it alone. Or something bad will happen."

"Oh, that's junk."

My mother was a traditional healer. She was an African doctor, but of course, to many people in the Western world, they don't believe we had doctors. And when the invaders of our continent came, they called them "witch doctors." Something which I always say is, you

can't be a witch and a doctor at the same time. So, to us, they are traditional healers. And we call them "isangoma" - that's the plural of "sangoma." And my mother had these powers. The healers have powers that enable them to see into the future and to see what is ailing somebody and be able to go to the veldt or to the mountains or on the riverbanks - wherever these powers send them to get the traditional medicine that they need to administer to someone who is ill.

(The quintet winds down.)

Stokely aims the car and runs over the snake. He looks back and he is happy. I just sit and sigh. We drive on. The roads in rural Guinea are full of potholes. It seems we are driving from side to side in order to avoid the potholes as much as we are driving forward. A car approaching us swerves towards us to avoid a hole, and Stokely almost hits it.

We wind up in a ditch. Neither of us speak the native language, and we are faced with four angry people that want to beat us.

"You see," I say, "You should never have run over that snake."

Stokely is angry. "I still say that's junk." He has much to learn, and things would get much worse for him until he did.

(Long pause.)

1978.

Stokely and I celebrate our tenth wedding anniversary. This will also be our last anniversary.

Unfortunately, after 10 years, the marriage just broke.

How do you feel when you divorce? Ten years is a long time to be with someone. And all of a sudden, he's gone.

I've married many times. I've never had a stable marriage. You look at my whole life. I've always been moving from one place to another. It's not easy to build anything when you move all around.

I'm sure, it's very difficult for many performers. As performers you have to be gone all the time. Your husband can't follow you everywhere. And when it doesn't happen, I'm the kind of person who feels I'm not going to make anybody else miserable. And I don't want them to make me miserable. So, if it doesn't work, we part, and we're good friends. And there's no fighting.

In Africa they say that when you're elderly, you have to be married to have respect.

(The quintet starts to play  
"To Love and Lose.")

Singing is the only way I know how to take care of myself. And I can't sing in one place. I have to go around the world, which I have. And sometimes things go wrong that way.

MAKEBA (singing)

#### **TO LOVE AND LOSE**

Here am I alone again  
 Holding my heart in a hand  
 Why was I born to love and lose?  
 I cannot understand  
 Each road I travel seems to end  
 Where love was certain to begin  
 Once more I'm faced with swallowed pride  
 And tears I cannot hide  
 It seems true love is not for me  
 No matter how I try  
 I awake to find that I am all alone  
 Without a reason why  
 Why can't this heart of mine take wing  
 And fly beyond the birds that sing?  
 Some far off place where I can choose  
 A love I'll never lose

(The quintet continues to  
play "To Love and Lose.")

MAKEBA

If I were to say it has not been an exciting and sometimes painful ten years I would be lying. But none

of the pain has been Stokely's doing. Considering all the traveling that we both do all the time that we are away from each other, and the fact that he is a good-looking man, people were amazed that he did not chase after the women in Guinea. If he did, I would not fall to pieces, because men are known to be naughty. But usually when Stokely comes home from his travels, he is so tired he sits down and reads his books. He does not have the time to go around and do those mischievous things that most men do.

So, for ten years, I do not worry. And then the ten years end. There comes another woman, a Guinean woman. Stokely does not just have an affair with her. Affairs come and go. I would have been hurt if he had done this, but it would not be the end. What happens is more serious. My husband fell in love with this woman. This love was so great that he takes chances for it, and he does things that would seem foolish for a man who has far less intelligence than Stokely has.

It's one thing for a man to go to his mistress's place, and it's another thing for him to bring to his wife's house. For me, that makes all the difference in the seriousness of the affair, and it also shows how much the man respects his wife.

Stokely begins to take advantage of my trips out of the country. One time he takes his woman up to my home in the mountains for an entire week. He brings our young friend Ousmane to cook for them. Guinea is a Muslim country where polygamy is common, so Ousmane does not see anything wrong with a man having more than one woman.

When Stokely starts to bring her to our house, he is so out of his mind that he does not see that he is planting things. I come home and I see traces: a shoe I don't know who it belongs to. A comb. I think, "This chick, here, she does this on purpose." She is sending a message.

I do not have to ask Stokely anything. I am not a stupid woman, and I can see why he has become more distant. My first reaction is to be very charitable: I think, these two people love each other very much. I do not want to stand in anybody's way.

And then the bad part hits. I realize I lost my husband. When you love a person and you're together so long, you grow to depend on that person.

I depended on Stokely. How could he do this to me? I've sacrificed so much for our love.

The hurt is very bad for me. I have lost my man to a younger woman. I am 46. I lost him to a woman who could give him children. I am barren.

To stop the tears, I tell myself, "Goddammit it's happening. You'll hurt for a little while, but time heals all wounds." I can bully myself by talking this way all night long, but I cannot stop the hurt.

When Stokely comes, I tell him, "Get out."

He packs his things and leaves

To be suddenly separated from someone you have been close to for so long is difficult. I have to force myself to be strong.

"I'll start my life again," I said, "It'll be alright."

LIGHTS DOWN TO DARK STAGE

## ACT 1

## SCENE 3

(The final scene has a celebratory feel, colors are muted, less "show-business." Makeba comes out, posing. She wears an African gown, elaborate and hand sewn. Her look is finished with a footlong headdress.)

## MAKEBA

I call them Miriam Makeba hats! They are supposed to resemble the clay-stiffened hairdos that Zulu women wear. I make them so I'll have something nice to give my friends!

(Makeba relishes the attention and shows off the dress, its details and poses with the imposing head piece in silhouette so the audience may appreciate its shape and size. She is, however, restrained, and modest even when showing off. Hers is no drag persona. She waits for the applause to die down before she pauses. She continues in a serious tone.)

I am so happy to be home. I always wanted to come home. This is my home. My umbilical cord is buried in this soil.

The first time I was asked to testify at the United Nations General Assembly, was to tell them about the lives of Black artists in South Africa. The second time was to plead for the release of women political prisoners.

And then later, in 1976, I spoke on behalf of Guinea at the General Assembly, and I served at the United Nations headquarters in Paris. Testifying for the United Nations General Assembly the first time I was scared because I really didn't know how to speak. It's very different — speaking and singing. I'm more confident singing and speaking. I hate to hear myself talk. I sound so silly.

Your song – you learn it and memorize it. To speak – it's difficult. I prefer singing.

I always speak the truth about how we lived in South Africa. But people would not listen because I was not that well known. Speaking at the UN, with all that attention, was to say, "We have a problem."

And then critics said I was a political singer. That I mixed politics with music, like they say you shouldn't mix politics with sport.

I don't know what mean by that because there's politics in sports. They fly flags and they play national anthems. That's political. Once you fly a flag that alone is political.

I do not sing politics. I merely tell the truth. I wasn't lying when I said that we were not even allowed to vote. I wasn't lying when I said there was a straight line with blacks on one side and whites on the other. I wasn't lying when I said that under the State of Emergency thousands of people were thrown in jail. Forty percent of those were children under 18. I wasn't lying when I said they killed us every day. They shot at children. Those children had to face tanks, bullets, and tear gas. I was not lying. When I said it, it was the truth and not a lie. So, what's so political about that?

(The quintet starts to play  
"Aluta Continua.")

And I will say it because being an artist, I'm a human being first and I'm affected by those decisions. And so, I as a human being, always will talk about things that are unjust. I will talk about that.

Because being a singer doesn't mean that I don't see, or feel, or think. I can't afford that luxury of being a singer that says, "Baby baby I love you." No. I have love, but I also have suffering.

While I was in America, my mother died. And I tried to go home. But I was rudely awakened to the fact that I was banned. It was so painful. I left home legally. I didn't jump fence. I left on South African Airways

with a passport, but they wouldn't let me bury my mother.

It was very painful to be in exile and then go back home and see all the things that were happening to people. I felt so helpless, sometimes I would even feel guilty. It's painful to be banned and not able to go home. But it's also painful to not be there and be with those people and, you know, maybe even . . . throw a stone, or something. It all happened, and I was here. That was very painful.

Sometimes people would come from home, with church groups or things like that, to sing, and when they left, I'd go to the airport and wave. Then I would go back to my car and just cry. "Cry." I said. "Yeah, I know I'll go back home one day." Then this dark cloud would come and I'd say, "What am I talking about? I will probably never see home again." The most painful thing was when my mother died. I couldn't go bury her. That was painful. But hey, that's life and I cannot afford to just sit here and say nothing or do nothing.

(Pause.)

I am South African. I left part of me here. I belong here. And yet someone could tell me that I couldn't go back to my home. But I was coming back.

As long as I lived, I would come back. The only way I might not get back was if freedom came, and I was dead.

MAKEBA (singing)

### **ALUTA CONTINUA**

My people, my people open your eyes  
 And answer the call of the drum  
 Maputo, Maputo, home of the brave  
 Our nation will soon be as one  
 Frelimo, Frelimo  
 Samora Machel has won  
 And to those  
 Who have given their lives  
 Praises to thee  
 Husband and wives  
 All thy children  
 Shall reap what you sow

This continent is home  
 My brothers and sisters  
 Stand up and sing  
 Eduardo Mondlane is not gone  
 Frelimo, Frelimo  
 Your eternal flame  
 Has shown us the light of dawn  
 Mozambique aluta continua  
 In Zimbabwe, mama aluta continua  
 In Botswana, aluta continua  
 In Zambia, aluta continua  
 In Angola, aluta continua  
 In Namibia, aluta continua  
 In South Africa, aluta continua

(The quintet continues to play "Aluta Continua.")

#### MAKEBA

My people have been always saying: Please let us live like human beings. It seems as though the white people in South Africa, in the government, they just turned a deaf ear. There was nothing that our people haven't tried - through the U.N., through peaceful marches, through this and that. And everything seemed to fail, and things seemed to go worse every year.

We could have been independent sooner in South Africa if some of South Africa's best friends, who were really the superpowers, wanted us to be free. They could have put pressure on South Africa because they were the ones propping up South Africa. And it's very hard for us, because we were not just fighting a minority government in South Africa; we're fighting the whole Western world.

Sometimes I say to myself, I wonder what they would do if we were the black minority, oppressing and doing all the nasty things that are happening to us, to a white majority. I am sure that all these countries would have run to the aid of South Africa. Which, to me, becomes a very racist kind of thing.

I knew that blood was being spilled. People say, "No, you have to do it peacefully." We want peace! Nobody wants to die. But our blood was spilling every day. It was spilled by them, we spilled blood amongst

ourselves, but it's still them, because they were behind all the factions fighting within our own community as well. So, I didn't know when it would come, but it had to come.

(The quintet starts playing  
"Give Us Our Land.")

Certain things kept me going. You pick up the pieces and you carry on. Years have passed but the weight of oppression is still on our backs. It has not grown lighter. The taste of dirt flavored with hot tears and blood is still bitter. The fears of the system remain in my mind. Because things still happen. Doors are kicked in and people dragged out. Doesn't matter if you're dressed or undressed. You sit in a corner, and you watch the police take away the guilty.

British rule was different. Perhaps it was the bite and the blow what we call "egundu." The only difference is that the Dutch are very direct. They say Blacks to one side and white folk one side. The British make you think that "if you get an education, you could work yourself up to us," but you never get there.

MAKEBA (singing)

**GIVE US OUR LAND (MABAYEKE)**

Thina sizwe. Thina sizwe esintsundu (We are. A black nation)  
Sikhalela. Sikhalela izwe lethu (We Cry. For Our Country)  
Elathathwa. Elathathwa ngabamhlophe (Taken. Taken by whites)  
Mabayeke. Mabayek'umhlaba wethu. (Let them. Leave our land)  
Abantwana. Abantwana beAfrika. (Children. Children of Africa)  
Bakhalela. Bakhalela izwe labo. (They cry. For their country)

(The quintet continues  
playing "Give Us Our Land.")

MAKEBA

Growing up in South Africa, there was no awareness of America's racial difficulties. We saw these movies, and everybody was dreaming about going to America. We always had the feeling that America was going to come and free us. Once in a while it would be said that in the South there are people that are not nice, but only

in the South. When I came to America, I found that it's not only in the South.

I've never seen such ugliness like I saw in Boston and New York with busing for children. The only difference between there and South Africa was that racism was institutionalized in the Constitution. Even the law was not on our side. So really, we had nothing.

I always say the only difference between South Africa and America is very slight. South Africa admits that they are what they are. In a way, you know who you deal with. You don't have to guess.

(The quintet segues from  
"Give Us Our Land," to  
"Jikale Maweni.")

I was never exiled from the United States. That was a rumor. I lived simply because I couldn't work there anymore. There was a subtle boycott.

During the Ian Smith government, when Zimbabwe was still called Rhodesia, I was banned in Zimbabwe, I could not go to Zimbabwe. And during independence, I would have liked to be there; even when Bob Marley was singing there, I couldn't go because my name was still on the list of those who were banned.

(Pause.)

It's close.

(She points as if to indicate  
the distance to something.)

When they told me that we were going to Zimbabwe, all I could think was I'm sure something was going to happen, and we won't go. The day we left to go and catch the flight I couldn't sit down. I was walking up and down at the airport. I don't know if it was because I was scared or not.

Usually, I get myself tired the night before a flight so that I get on fasten my seatbelt. And fall asleep. But I couldn't sleep one wink when we were going to Zimbabwe.

We talked, all of us, especially the South Africans, there was so much noise on my flight when it was arrived. It was almost like being home. I had no idea how many people were there until I went up on stage and looked out and saw these people, black and white, so tight and the stadium just swaying to the music. And I said to myself, why not just next door? It was a sad moment. But it was also beautiful. What was more beautiful, was that 3000 People came from South Africa to see that show. And they all came to express something to us that they will be able to come home someday.

It was only when we landed, and I stepped on the ground that I finally told myself that it was true that I really was here once more How long has it been? 30 years. When I got off the plane, I said, "I'm really in Zimbabwe!"

And I looked around, I listened, and I heard people talk in a language I can't understand. I don't speak Shona, but I do understand a few words, and of course Ndebele is quite a lot like Zulu, and I was just so happy.

And then, when we performed and I came out on that stage and looked into the audience and saw all kinds of people, black, white, Indians and whoever, just swaying together. And when I did talk, I said: "I'm so happy to be home, I can't even explain how happy I am."

And then I said, "I hope that someday, we in South Africa will have a chance to invite Paul Simon to a free South Africa." And people just screamed. And all people, white and black, everyone was so happy. And it made me happy, and sad in a way, that I was so close to home and yet so far. And I said to myself: "Why can't we be like this in South Africa? Why can't people just be like that. Why can't I go home and sing to all the people together, in any stadium, be it in Soweto, in the middle of Johannesburg..."

MAKEBA (singing)

**JIKALE MAWENI (RETREAT SONG)**

Intonga zamakwenkwe (The sticks of the young men)  
 Zophukel'emlanjeni wo hom (Are broken at the river)  
 Xa kubethw'intonga ya-hmm (There's stick fighting on!)

Amadod' ayoyika (Even grown men are afraid)  
 Ukubheka emlandweni wo hom (To go down to the river)  
 Xa kubethw'intonga ya-hmm (There's stick fighting on!)  
 O Jikele maweni ndiyahamba (Turn back at the cliffs; I'm going)  
 Axhents'amakhwenkwe (The young men are dancing)  
 Axhentsa kwabamandi (Dancing at the mine)

(The quintet continues with  
 "Jikale Maweni.")

#### MAKEBA

Paul Simon convinced me that he didn't want to perform in South Africa. I was very comfortable with that. His show was officially accepted in Zimbabwe, one of the most direct critics of South Africa. Those who criticize Simon show didn't even take time to come and see it, and those who've seen it can be my witness, there was a lot said in that show against Apartheid.

Give us any platform and we'll take it. A platform that these poor black artists would never have had, had he not decided to record with then and bring them with him. The artists got their royalties. So many people got to go to our continent and record, or film people, and come and make money and never look back. I should have renewed my contract with Coca Cola. There was so much Coca Cola sold in Africa and I was the darling of Africa.

There's a new generation coming out with some very strong statements because they are the product of 1976 in the student uprising, and they are saying to us "here we are, and we are telling you, our story."

They're much stronger than we were because they are the ones that police shot at. They see some ugliness, these children.

(The quintet winds down.)

I wish I hadn't been born in a country like South Africa. I'd rather have done the things regular people do instead of fighting. But I would go back someday. I knew it.

LX TURNS SOFTER.

Time has been funny to me.

(Pause.)

I was an 'old' woman in terms of my Xhosa tribal culture when I was 36, when I became a grandmother for the first time. My city friends asked me, "Why do you let your daughter's children call you 'granny'? It makes you sound old!" I told them, "But I am their granny!" But even today I feel young, and the make-up technicians keep me looking youthful!

(The quintet starts playing  
"Soweto Blues.")

I kept my culture. I kept the music of my routes through my music, I became this voice, and the image of Africa, and the people without even realizing. Once there was a group of young white South Africans outside a hotel in London who gave me a gift.

They said they hope to see us all back home soon. That was my dream to the day when we can bring a show like this here to Johannesburg and have everyone black and white. Able to attend.

MAKEBA (singing)

### **SOWETO BLUES**

The children got a letter from the master  
It said no more Xhosa, Sotho, no more Zulu  
Refusing to comply they sent an answer  
That's when the policemen came to the rescue  
Well children were flying, bullets, dying  
Oh, the mothers screaming and crying  
The fathers were working in the cities  
The evening news brought out all the publicity  
Just a little atrocity  
Deep in the city  
There was a full moon on the golden city  
Knocking at the door was the man without pity  
Accusing everyone of conspiracy  
Tightening the curfew charging people with walking  
Hmm the border is where he was waiting  
Waiting for the children  
Frightened and running

A handful got away but all the others  
 Are in the jail without any publicity  
 Soweto blues (Oh they are killing our children)  
 Soweto blues (Without any publicity)  
 Soweto blues (Hmm they are finishing our nation)  
 Soweto blues (While calling it black on black)  
 Soweto blues (While everybody knows they are behind it)  
 Soweto blues

(The quintet continues  
 playing "Soweto Blues.")

#### MAKEBA

I came to South Africa in June 1990. They gave me six days. I went to greet the youth who were commemorating the Soweto uprising, which was June 16. When I was presented, the whole stadium just stood up. Kids who are not even born when I left home all calling out mama. Africa. And yet my music was banned.

I looked into my country, and I saw so many women picking up the pieces and keeping on. They gave me that strength because yes, I have had my problems, but I'm not dodging bullets. They are right there. They see their children fall. They see their husbands dragged away. In some cases, it is the mothers who are arrested, in other cases the children. And yet they still had the strength to go on and on. The children, they shot them and kill them.

When they go and bury their friends, they carry those coffins, but they don't sing church music anymore, they sing liberation songs and they run as they carry the coffins. And they come and they shoot them there and they still go on again. So why not me? They give me the strength to go on. They gave me the strength to come home. Yes. I knew I would. If I lived long enough.

I always stayed in touch with home. Because while I was away physically, I was always home in my mind, surrounding myself with South Africans and making it my business to know what's going on. After 28 years, you feel maybe people have forgotten you. But I got letters from home, they sent books to Mama Makeba, and it made me happy to know that was doing right, that I hadn't done wrong to my people.

(The quintet segues from playing "Soweto Blues," to "Thank You Mama.")

I've always wanted to come home. Home is home. No matter how hard or how ugly it may be, one's home is one's home.

Of course, I couldn't... but when President Mandela was released, you know, the whole world was waiting in front of their televisions. And I was one of them. I was in Brussels. When I saw him walk out. I cannot tell you how I felt. I just went on my knees.

And then Mandela made a call that I should come back home, and I went home for good. I've been crying all those years. I want to go home that I could go--that I must go. Mentally I never really left home. I left home physically but not mentally. Whether Apartheid was dead or not. I wanted to go home but I know it's not dead yet. Not yet.

Sometimes I wondered what I was doing playing so many jazz festivals, but people said, "Well, you're the mother of jazz. You just come from there." So, I guess I don't know why people would make music in cages. I did jazz festivals, concert halls, folk festivals. If I like a song, I sing it. If this is world music, where does the other music come from, Mars?

When I came home for the first time, I went straight to my mother's grave, and I sat on it, and I talked to her. I felt like I was sitting on my mother's lap. And I talked to her, and I told her how sorry I was that I was not here to see her to have a resting place. And I felt very good. It was the beginning of the healing of that wound.

MAKEBA (singing)

**THANK YOU, MAMA**

Leading the struggle with nothing in your hands  
 Can bring confusion in the family  
 I miss those days of jubilation  
 Weh, mama yeah (conviviality)  
 Leading the struggle with nothing in your hands

Can bring confusion in the family (Family)  
 I miss those days of jubilation  
 We mama yeah (conviviality)  
 Days of happiness (Days of happiness)  
 When families sat round the fire  
 Those were the days of stability  
 I wanna thank you mama (Thank you)  
 Thank you, mama, for everything that you have done for me  
 It was my responsibility  
 Since I was a little girl  
 When I was laying on your back  
 Taking me to church  
 Weh, mama I wanna thank you

#### MAKEBA

(Makeba again takes on the same tone as in the Carmichael scene, one of softness and even resignation to the fact.)

I do not know what I would have been, if not a singer.  
 I guess I would have been a maid.  
 That's how I started. I was a maid. I was a nanny.  
 Looking after little white kids. You love them. You  
 hold them against you. They feel your warmth. And yet,  
 when they grow up, they hate you.

It's very strange. I don't know how those people  
 think. I wish some spirit could get hold of them  
 someday and show them just how easy it would be to  
 live if they would just be human for one minute.  
 My spirit comes from the people. From my people. From  
 my mother. The children, that people at home, they  
 live from day to day.

Your children leave, go to school. You're not sure if  
 you're going to see them again. And yet, they're not  
 backing up, not backing up.  
 I would be very presumptuous to think that my little  
 voice or my songs changed apartheid.

But what my songs did, and what all of us did was try  
 to raise the consciousness of people that joined us in  
 our cry for freedom, and our cry against Apartheid. I  
 think the more voices we had, the better.

(The quintet winds down.)

I am not a diplomat, I am a singer, but sometimes it is the artists who can speak to all the people through their art. I couldn't afford not to hope. If that hope ever stops, I'll just lie down and die.

What am I proud of? I guess I can say I'm proud of the fact that I left home but I was still at home. I never forgot my home and my people because I easily could have said, "Hey, world, I'm a star," and left. But I didn't do that. I could never do that. And that I'm proud of.

My hope for my country and my people was freedom. Freedom was coming. I watched the children and I said, "Yeah, we're going to make it."

Because they were the future citizens of my country. They were strong and they were young, but they were old because they were forced to be old before their time. When I looked at them, they were strong, and it gave me more strength.

And I knew that we were going to make it.

I cannot express how I feel tonight. It is so gratifying to see all of you here, to say goodbye to the little old lady.

(The quintet starts "Pata Pata" again.)

I look at an ant, and see myself: a native South African, endowed by nature with a strength much greater than my size so I might cope with the weight of a racism that crushed my spirit. I look at a bird and I see myself: a native South African, soaring above the injustices of apartheid on wings of pride, the pride of a beautiful people.

I look at a stream and I see myself: a native South African, flowing irresistibly over hard obstacles until they become smooth and, one day, disappear — flowing towards an origin that has been forgotten toward an end that will never be.

TRANSITION TO FRONT-LIT LX

MAKEBA (singing)

**PATA PATA**

Saguquga sathi bega nantsi Pata Pata

(We turn around and say here is Pata Pata)

Saguquga sathi bega nantsi Pata Pata

Hiyo mama hiyo ma nantsi Pata Pata

(That woman is Pata Pata)

Hiyo mama hiyo ma nantsi Pata Pata

"Pata Pata" is the name of a dance we do down Johannesburg way.

And everybody starts to move as soon as "Pata Pata" starts to play - whoo

Saguquga sath' - hit it!

Aah- saguquga sath' - nantsi - hit it!

Saguquga sathi bega nantsi Pata Pata

Whoo, every Friday and Saturday night it's "Pata Pata" time

The dance keeps going all night long till the morning sun begins to shine - hey!

LX OUT

(END)