Early Life: Zenzile Miriam Makeba was born on March 4, 1932, in Johannesburg, South Africa. Her mother was a Swazi sangoma (traditional healer) and her father, who died when she was six years old, was a Xhosa teacher. Makeba's first experience with singing was in her mother's church choir.

First Recordings and Early Career: Makeba's professional career began in the 1950s with the Manhattan Brothers, with whom she recorded her first hit song, "Pata Pata". She later formed the all-woman group The Skylarks, combining jazz and traditional South African melodies.

Exile from South Africa: After appearing in the anti-apartheid documentary "Come Back, Africa" in 1959, Makeba’s South African passport was revoked, and she became an exile for the next 30 years. She moved to the United States, where she gained fame and became involved in the civil rights movement.

Marriage to Hugh Masekela and Stokely Carmichael: Makeba was married several times, most notably to South African trumpeter Hugh Masekela and later to Stokely Carmichael, a leader of the Black Panther Party. Her marriage to Carmichael caused her to lose support in the United States, leading to her relocation to Guinea.

Testimony at the United Nations: Makeba was the first black African woman to speak at the United Nations, testifying about apartheid in 1963. This further increased her profile as an activist and made her music a symbol of the anti-apartheid movement.

The "Click Song": One of her most famous songs, "Qongqothwane" (known as "The Click Song"), featured the distinctive clicks of her native Xhosa language. Her performance of this song introduced much of the world to the sounds of African music.

Grammy Award: Makeba was the first African musician to win a Grammy Award, which she shared with Harry Belafonte in 1966 for the album "An Evening with Belafonte/Makeba". The album dealt with the plight of black South Africans under apartheid.

Return to South Africa: Following the release of Nelson Mandela from prison in 1990, Makeba returned to South Africa at his invitation after spending 31 years in exile. She continued to perform and speak out against apartheid and for the rights of oppressed people worldwide.

Activism and Philanthropy: Throughout her life, Makeba dedicated herself to humanitarian causes. She served as a Goodwill Ambassador for the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations and founded the ZM Makeba Trust and the Miriam Makeba Rehabilitation Centre for abused girls.

Death and Legacy: Miriam Makeba died of a heart attack on November 10, 2008, after performing at a concert in Italy that was organized to support writer Roberto Saviano in his stand against the Camorra, a mafia-like organization. Her music and her work as a civil rights activist left an enduring legacy, and she continues to be revered as a symbol of the fight against oppression, as well as for her musical contributions.