

COMMUNITY FORUM

Sister Zeni (Miriam)

by Dr. Jamil Cherovee

The simultaneous release of Sister Miriam Makeba's biography, *Makeba My Story* (NAL Books), and recording, *Sangoma* (Warner Bros. 25673), marks the rebirth of one of the world's extraordinary talents. Her biography, written along with James Hall, presents a tremendous life experience rife with joy and pain. "My life, my career, every song I sing and every appearance I make," she writes, "are bound up with the plight of my people. I have been denied my home. We have been denied our land. I have watched my family diminish. We have seen our best blood spilled in Sharpeville, Sowqeto, and Crossroads. I am in exile on the outside. We are in exile on the inside. "But, it is too much to expect that some day these wrongs will be righted."

Sangoma is a picturesque compilation of music indigenous to southern Africa. In particular, there is a song dedicated to the distinguished Afrikan conqueror, Shaka, and his mighty army portrayed in the song, *Unqakanami* ("How Big Is He?").

Sister Zeni (Miriam), born in Azania (South Afrika), opens her book with a poignant portrayal of the everyday life's struggle to survive. She exposes countless episodes of brutality and man's inhumanity to man. I'm inclined to believe, Sister Makeba, best known for her music rather than diplomatic and business pursuits, recalls her early beginnings as a vocalist in Azania to her long time friendship and association with Harry Belafonte, affectionately referred to as "Big Brother." Later she discusses the effect of being banned from the North American music industry; her spectacular return to the American scene as a part of the Paul Simon's *Graceland* Tour; to her outlook on her future hopes and aspirations. I believe, her personal and professional life constantly interweave themselves in this heartwrenching story. Sister Makeba's exile from South Africa in 1961 found her a woman without a country, or, at least the so-called Christian caucasoid oppressors would not permit her to come back to the land that rightfully belongs to her and her people, instead she found that other Afrikan leaders valued her association, and she was given nine different passports from Afrikan heads of state. Imagine that!

Foremost in her recollections of leaders was the late Al Hajj Sekou Ahmed Toure of Guinea. President Toure, Makeba recalls, was like a father to her and she looked up to this great Afrikan leader, drawing from his personal strength to help her overcome difficulty and tragedy in her own life. Sister Makeba recalled all of her marriages as endearing and tearful. For example, her most popular liaison with Brother Kwame Toure lifted the ire and wrath of the recording industry against her. Her husband was labeled a revolutionary and a dangerous militant. Subsequently, she was

banned from recording by her North American promoters. Although this major setback to her career was damning, she endured the ordeal of her exile through the strength of her relationship with her husband. Sister Makeba, recalls in contrast, the pitiful manner in which she lost the love of her husband to a younger woman, a fact she dislike but understands.

Regarding today's musical scene, Sister Makeba makes some pointed statements in an exclusive interview given to me about her role as an artist and an individual in today's world of musical apathy. Sister Makeba said that "There are artists who don't feel the need for addressing social problems ... but when you come from where I come from, you cannot ignore the fact that you are still a slave. So we keep on telling the world about what's happening at home. We are human beings first before being artists." "We are fortunate," she continued, "to have some kind of talent where people come and they listen (to us). We should always use that to upbraid others and help those who don't have. You cannot say what we can say ... of course, we are criticized for it all the time, especially me. They say I am political. I think the very air we breathe is political!"

In her book, she politely chides the Michael Jackson/Lionel Richie/Quincy Jones recording clique.

"The United States is rich ... Its people are concerned about evil things ... they go out and buy a record by a group called U.S.A. for Afrika. All the top singers raise funds to help the starving people of Ethiopia. I see the video and there is Big Brother (Harry Belafonte) singing, and Stevie Wonder, Dionne Warwick, and so many others. Everyone in Afrika is thankful for this aid. But we listen to the lyrics, and we wonder: What is this? "We are The World" the stars from Amerika sing. But who is the world? Where are the singers from, Afrika, Europe, and the East, the Third World? They are all Americans singing. We are The World, Oh, truly, we say, "Amerika" is the world!"

Sangoma, is named for an attribute of her late mother, Nomkomndelo. The name, "Sangoma," refers to a type of doctor from the Swazi family group (or tribe). In addition to the mix of medicine and music are the delightful rhythm arrangements by her former husband Brother Hugh Masekela. The music technology of multi-track recording and overdubbing allowed Sister Makeba to be her own back-up vocal group.

In summary, Sister Makeba has found that, like her mother, her life's musical contribution is like a healing medicine to the sick world and that she is "Sangoma" too. *Makeba My Story*, the book, and *Sangoma*, the album, gives her audience a double dose of strong medicine to heal an ailing and oppressed people moving into the 1990's.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Mr. Useni Eugene Perkins, executive director of the Urban League of Portland will be autographing copies of his new book, *Harvesting New Generations* on Saturday, Oct. 29, from 2-4 p.m. at the Talking Drum Bookstore located at 1634 N.E. Alberta St. Other titles by Mr. Perkins will also be available. Profits from books sold at this event will be donated to the Black Educational Center School. For more information please call 284-9552 or 282-9465.



Mr. Useni Eugene Perkins

Reception For Students

City Commissioner Dick Bogle has invited 50 students from three North and Northeast Portland middle schools, their parents, and adult mentors to a "get-acquainted" reception at 5:30 p.m., Thursday, Oct. 27 at the King Neighborhood Facility.

The reception marks the start of the Commissioner's Mentor Program, and adjunct to the Albina Ministerial Alliance's Self-Enhancement Program which provides "at-risk" youths with alternatives to gang participation, drugs and crime.

The mentor program is designed to link sixth, seventh and eighth graders taking part in the Self-Enhancement Program with positive role models from the community. Students are drawn from Ockley Green, Whittaker and Harriet Tubman middle schools.

Following a welcome by Commissioner Bogle, former Trail Blazer Maurice Lucas, chairman of the Self-Enhancement Program's advisory board, will acknowledge individuals who have contributed to the program's success.

He will be joined by advisory board member Terry Baker, a Portland attorney who won football's Heisman Trophy as an All-American quarterback at Oregon State University. Baker had led the Jefferson Democrats to the state AAA football title.

Ray Leary and Tony Hopson, co-directors of the Self-Enhancement Program, will then introduce each youngster to his or her mentor, a person selected on the basis of common cultural background, and such common interests as sports or hobbies.

Each mentor and student will have received a profile of the person he or she is matched up with, and most will have talked on the

phone. None, however, will have met face to face until the introduction ceremony.



Tony Hopson and Ray Leary

Following introductions, refreshments will be served by McCormick and Schmick's Seafood Restaurant.

Leary said the Commissioner's Mentor Program "gives professionals a chance to become acquainted with the problems of today's inner city kids."

He added the program allows adult mentors to assist "on the front line in our current efforts to stem the tide of drugs and gangs, and build a bright future for our young people."

Bogle, who signed on as the program's first volunteer, is seeking to recruit 25 additional mentors per month over the next four months. Persons interested in joining the program should contact Bogle's office in City Hall.

Leary said the time involvement and personal contact is "up to the individual," but mentors are being asked to make at least two phone calls each week, and to get together with their young people at least once every other week.

Weatherization in King Neighborhood

120 homes to be weatherized in King neighborhood. The Block-By-Block Weatherization Project will be implemented again in 1988/89 in King neighborhood. This project offers free weatherization to residents of the neighborhood. To qualify you must live in King neighborhood, attend the Energy Fair to be held Nov. 5, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. at King School and meet the income guidelines.

The free weatherization can include attic insulation, heating duct wrap, weatherstripping, exterior caulking up to a value of 500 dollars. The work done on your residence will depend on what actual needs to be done to make your home energy efficient as determined by an energy audit.

A target area will be canvassed door-to-door beginning Oct. 29, but all residents of King neighborhood who meet the income guidelines are eligible to apply for the free weatherization program at the Energy Fair.

Also at the Energy Fair participants who meet the income guidelines will receive a certificate of free do-it-yourself weatherization materials. So come to the Energy Fair which again is being held Nov. 5, at the King School.

The free weatherization is paid for by Portland General Electric, Pacific Power & Light, Northwest Natural Gas, The Oregon Department of Energy and the City of Portland, Energy Office.

For more information about the free weatherization please call the Community Energy Project at 284-7868.



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COMMUNITY ANNOUNCEMENTS

Les Femmes is hosting their third annual "Scholarship Luncheon Honoring Mr. John Chism."

Mr. Chism has been named the new Executive Director of the American Heart Association, Oregon Affiliate.

Chism graduated from Iowa State with a Bachelor of Science in Sociology and Physical Education. After graduation he served as the District Scout Executive of Cleveland's Boy Scouts. He then went on to get a Masters of Social Science Administration from Case Reserve in Cleveland.

Afterwards he worked as a fund raiser for United Way. He has been with the American Heart Association since 1980, first at the Cleveland Affiliate and as a National Program Representative at the National Center. For the past three years he has worked as an Affiliate Management Consultant. Chism joined the Oregon Affiliate full time the first part of May 1988.

Chism is married and has two daughters age 16 and 21.

Les Femmes are extending this invitation to you to join us. The "Scholarship Luncheon" will be held on Saturday, Nov. 5, 1988 from 12:00 Noon to 2:30 p.m. at Shenanigan's Restaurant, 4575 North Channel (Swan Island), Portland, Oregon. The cost of the luncheon is \$15.00 your support at this affair would be appreciated. If you would like to attend please contact Sherra Neal on 283-0061 or Ethel Waters on 287-8546.

The Portland Pro-AM Basketball League will be having a basketball preview, featuring: Seattle, Kent, Vancouver, B.C. and Portland. The dates for the preview will be, Nov. 5 & 6, 1988.

Four games will be played at PCC Cascade from 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.) and four games will be played at the Salvation Army, from 1:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. (Sat. & Sun.)

There will be a poolside dance at the Coliseum Ramada Inn on Saturday, Nov. 5, from 8:30 p.m. to 12:00 Midnight. Cost for the dance will be \$4.00

Vancouver Men's Club, Vancouver, Washington, invites you to their Annual Halloween Dance Celebration, Saturday, October 29, 1988 - Time: 8:00 p.m. to 2:00 a.m. Royal Esquire Club, Portland, Oregon, 1708 N.E. Alberta, (206) 256-4287 - (503) 287-5145 - Info. (503) 222-6471. Donation - \$7.00.

Red Cross Enhances Outreach Efforts



In the 1987-88 American Red Cross Annual Report, Sharon Ritter, Red Cross executive director, reported that the Oregon Trail Chapter now has 14.7 percent minority employees and that 30 percent of the volunteers placed during 1987-88 were minorities.

"We are proud of our hiring practices for employees and volunteers," said Ms. Ritter. "We have also expanded our outreach efforts with minority populations, especially the Black community where we are providing even more health, safety and educational programs."

Along with more AIDS education programs, a combination blood pressure and cholesterol screening program is conducted

at several locations in north and northeast neighborhoods.

The Red Cross also provides educational training programs for pre-schoolers, school-age children, teenagers and childcare providers. First aid, CPR and emergency disaster classes are available to help individuals avoid, prepare for and cope with emergencies.

The Black Outreach Committee of the Red Cross meets on a regular basis to access the needs of the Black community and the best means to meet those needs.

If you would like to learn more about the programs available in your community, call the Red Cross, 284-1234.

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Executive Director
Seattle Urban League

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MEMBERS & GUESTS



Standing tall at the Kappa Alpha Psi Fraternity "Black and White Ball" are (left to right) Stan Scott, Michael "Chappie" Grice, Charles Strouther and Ken Berry. Photo by Ruby Rearden