

FILM REVIEW: Reverential Biopic 'Mama Africa: Miriam Makeba' Chronicles Rise, Fall and Triumphant Return of Singer/Activist

By Kam Williams
For The Skanner News

Zenzile Miriam Makeba had the misfortune of being born Black in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1932, which relegated her to second-class citizenship. In fact, she spent the first six months of her life behind bars with her mother, a sangoma (witch doctor), sent to prison days just after her birth.

Luckily, her mom was also an amateur singer, and that was a gift Miriam inherited. She married at 17 and had a child a year later, but was soon abandoned by her abusive husband. So, she started singing professionally to support her young daughter.

After performing and recording with several different bands, she found a measure of fame as the lead singer of an all-girl group called The Skylarks. Then, while on tour out of the country in 1959, Miriam's passport was revoked after the release in Italy of "Come Back, Africa," a secretly-filmed, anti-apartheid docudrama in which she appeared.

Despite the ban, Miriam's career would catch fire while in exile, with the help of such influential entertainers as Harry Belafonte and Sidney Poitier. Soon, international audiences were appreciating her unique sound, an eclectic mix of jazz, pop and traditional African tunes.

Review

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in theaters, but at least this one doesn't attempt to turn a felon into a saint. Yes, the picture's well-cast and scripted, yet it somehow adds up to less than its parts.

Even for a former world-class athlete, crime does not pay!

Very Good ★★½

Rated R for profanity, drug use and some violence

Running time: 140 min.

Production Studios: The Mark Gordon Company / Pascal Pictures/ Huayi Brothers Pictures

Distributor: STX Entertainment

To see a trailer for Molly's Game, visit TheSkanner.com.



'Mama Africa: Miriam Makeba'

But because of the continued civil strife back in her homeland, Miriam used her platform to criticize the South African government. In 1963, she even testified at the United Nations, imploring the organization to impose economic sanctions on the country for its imprisonment of attorney Nelson Mandela and thousands of other political activists lobbying for equality.

However, Miriam would fall out of favor in 1968 after marrying Stokely Carmichael, the controversial leader of the Black Power move-

ment. For she made many powerful enemies in the U.S. by virtue of that union.

After all, it was one thing to point out all the injustice in her native South Africa, but quite another to complain about the mistreatment of African Americans. Almost overnight, Miriam's concerts were canceled and her records were pulled off the shelves, too.

Hounded by the FBI and her career ruined, she abandoned the States with Stokely for Guinea, but would have to wait for the fall

of the Apartheid regime to be welcomed home with open arms by outlawed freedom fighter-turned-President Nelson Mandela. A fitting tribute to a rare talent who dedicated her life to the liberation of oppressed people all over the world.

Excellent ★★★★★

Unrated

Running time: 90 min.

In English and French with subtitles

Production Studios: Starhaus Filmproduktion / Millennium Film / Marianna Films

Alan Page Exhibits Slavery and Segregation Artifacts in Time for Super Bowl

Former Minnesota Supreme Court Justice and NFL hall of famer puts relics on display at Minnesota library

By Steve Karnowski
Associated Press

MINNEAPOLIS — An iron collar that kept slaves in bondage. A branding iron that marked human beings as someone's property. A photograph of Black babies captioned as "alligator bait." A fine china plate with gold lettering that says, "KKK 'God Give Us Men.'"

They're among the artifacts of slavery and segregation collected by NFL Hall of Famer and retired Minnesota Supreme Court Justice Alan Page and his wife, Diane Sims Page. They went on display this month in time for Super Bowl visitors and the thousands of other people expected to flock to downtown Minneapolis for the festivities. The exhibit, "TESTIFY: Americana from Slavery to Today," runs through Feb. 6 at the Minneapolis Central Library.

While a sign at the entrance warns that some items inside might be disturbing, there are

also messages of hope and promise. There's a banner that was held by a mourner in 1865, when a funeral train took President Abraham Lincoln's body home to Illinois. The banner reads, "Our Country Shall Be One Country!" Page said it moved him to tears when he first saw it.

"For me it transports me back to that time and that place," Alan Page said.

Signs that once enforced segregation in the South hang from a wall down the center of the gallery. They designated restrooms as "white" or "colored," and marked the "colored waiting room" at train and bus stations. Just across from it is an assembly of vibrant pictures by Black artists, showing how African Americans reclaimed control over their own narrative. Diane Page said the contrast between the "oppressive and expressive" is deliberate.

Alan Page, a feared member of the Vikings' Purple People Eaters de-

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Kam Williams


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NEW MOVIES OPENING EVERY WEEK!



SHOWTIMES

The Week of
Friday, Feb. 2 through
Thursday, Feb. 8

<p>ALL THE MONEY IN THE WORLD (R) Fri-Thur: 1:55, 7:05</p> <p>DOWNSIZING (R) Fri-Thur: 1:45, 9:25</p> <p>COCO (PG) Fri-Thur: 2:40, 7:20</p> <p>WONDER (PG) Fri-Thur: 11:20a, 4:55</p> <p>MURDER ON THE ORIENT EXPRESS (PG-13) Fri-Thur: 4:40, 9:50</p>	<p>THOR: RAGNAROK (PG-13) Fri-Thur: 12:00, 6:45</p> <p>THE FLORIDA PROJECT (R) Fri-Thur: 9:35</p> <p>KUBO AND THE TWO STRINGS (PG) Fri-Thur: 11:40, 4:30</p> <p>\$4.00 adults, \$3.00 senior citizens (65+), \$3.00 for kids (12 & under)</p>
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7818 SE Stark St, Portland, OR 97215
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Babysitting: Children 2 to 8 years old. Fri: shows starting between 3:30 pm and 8 pm. Sat - Sun: shows starting between 1 pm and 8 pm. \$9.50 per child for the length of the movie. Call to reserve a spot, no drop ins.

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