Before viewing the film:

1. Have you heard of Miriam Makeba? Do you know of any African singers?


3. What does it mean to be in exile from a country? Can you think of an example in history of someone having been in exile?
During the Film:

Identifying Characters
Match the character with the appropriate description:

___Miriam Makeba b a) Miriam’s granddaughter
___Hugh Masekela c b) Queen of South African Music
___Abigail Kubeka e c) Miriam’s ex-husband, musician
___Lionel Rogosin g d) Miriam’s daughter
___Angelique Kidjo f e) Singer in The Skylarks with Miriam
___Nelson Lumumba Lee h f) Singer, won Grammy award 2008
___Zenzi Monique Lee a g) Director of “Come Back, Africa” which introduced Miriam to the West
___Stokely Carmichael i h) Miriam’s grandson
___Bongi Makeba Lee d i) Miriam’s second husband, former Black Panther leader

Comprehension Questions

1. Joe Mogotsi, leader of The Manhattan Brothers, said what about Miriam’s voice?

2. Give at least two details from Hugh Masekela’s description of Miriam and The Skylarks.

3. What did Miriam encourage the other women in The Skylarks to do in order to gain respect?
4. What project did Lionel Rogosin and Miriam work on together? Was it successful? In what two ways did it affect Miriam?

5. After Lionel Rogosin, who helped Miriam gain overnight success in the United States? Name at least one other celebrity that Miriam met during this time.

6. Miriam came to the United States from a country with little freedom. What did she think about African American freedom in the US? Where did she speak about this issue? Why was this important?

7. Was Miriam able to return to South Africa to bury her mother? Why?

8. One of Miriam’s most famous songs is PataPata. Does Miriam like this song? Why or why not?
9. When Miriam visited countries other than South Africa, how was she treated? What were her ties with African presidents?

10. What was the result of Miriam and Stokely’s marriage? Why did this happen?

11. Where did Miriam and Stokely move to when the leader of that country extended a formal invitation to them?

12. Why do the people of Guinea consider Miriam to be one of their national heroines?

13. What does Miriam say in an interview that is the difference between the treatment of blacks by South Africa and the US?

14. Where does Click Song get its name?

15. Who died on the same day as Miriam?
16. How old was Bongi when she died? What did she die from? Who was with her at the time of her death?

17. Miriam loved to host parties. Who was most often seen at her home? What did she always have available to anyone who visits?

18. Why does Bongi refer to her mother as Mother Africa in an interview?


20. Abigail compares Miriam to her mother in the concept of healing. How is each a healer?

21. What event prompted Miriam to move to Belgium?

22. When Miriam was finally able to return home to South Africa, where did she visit first?
23. Angelique says that Miriam influences 99% of female artists both directly and indirectly. Give at least one specific example of this from the female artists interviewed soon after.

24. When Miriam told Zanzi to take care of her home, what was she referring to?

25. When did Miriam die? Where was she when she died?

26. Where did Miriam want her ashes scattered? Why?

Post-Viewing Discussion Questions:

1. Harry Belafonte is shown in an interview saying that despite inequities and contradictions within this society, they have not been deterred from a black consciousness. He says he is physically removed from the community but spiritually committed to the community. “As long as one black brother or sister anywhere in the world is in bondage, there is no freedom for me.” Discuss each part of this statement. How is he physically removed but not spiritually? What does she mean by “in bondage”? 
2. Miriam sang in many different African languages. she learned the songs in other languages that she didn’t even speak and recorded them as well. What is the value of doing this? Can you think of any other artists who’ve chosen to sing or write in more than one language? What was the purpose?

3. Stokely Carmichael is interviewed as saying that an individual white boy has powers to stand behind him, police and government that will protect him and stand up for him. He says that when you see an African, on the other hand, there is no one to speak for him, no one to stand up for him. Do you agree with these statements? Were they true in the 60s but no longer true today? Does the statement apply only to blacks or also to other ethnicities? What about gender? Sexual orientation? Other target groups to consider?

4. Miriam is quoted as saying, “I always say that I don’t sing politics. I sing the truth.” What does she mean? Are there any modern artists who do the same?