

Sounds of South Africa

South African Musicians Exhibit



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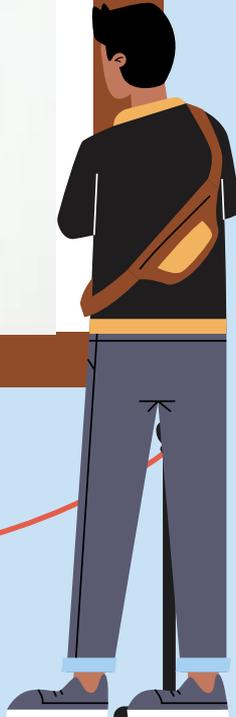
**Miriam
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03

**Soweto
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Tyla

2024

Sean Zanni—
Patrick

McMullan/
Getty Images

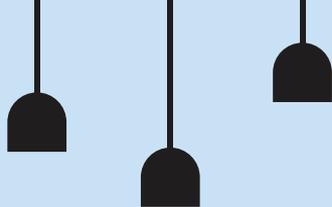
New York City

Photograph

Tyla Laura Seethal, known simply as Tyla, is a South African pop star. Tyla was born in Johannesburg, South Africa on January 30, 2002. Tyla’s parents are Sharleen and Sherwin Seethal, and she has three siblings.

Tyla describes herself as colored due to her mixed background consisting of Indian, Zulu Indo-Mauritian, and Irish ancestry. She graduated Edenglen High School in 2019 and began seriously pursuing her music career during a gap year before her plans to study mining engineering.

Tyla rose to fame in 2020 with her single “Getting Late” and received worldwide recognition for her song “Water” that went viral on social media starting a dance challenge. In 2024, she won the inaugural Grammy award for best African musical performance for “Water.”



“Tears”

November 20,
2024

Tyla

South Africa

Song

“Tears” is a song released by South African singer Tyla in 2024. The song is an acoustic ballad that branches from her typical amapiano style. In the song, Tyla sings, “Give all your tears to me / If you try, and you try and nothing works / Baby, you don’t have to hurt / Give all your tears to me / And I’ll cry them for you” highlighting the desire to take the pain away from someone suffering.



“Tears” was a collaborative effort from songwriters Divine Lightbody, Livvi Franc, Matthew Burnett, Michael Pollack, Mikkel Storleer Eriksen, Theron Thomas, Tor Erik Hermansen, and Tyla Seethal and released in partnership with Coke Studio in conjunction with FAX and Epic Records. The song was produced by Stargate, a Norwegian record production company and released as a single a month after her debut album, *TYLA+*.

TYLA: I have to say, thank you for doing this. I really look up to you and so does everyone in South Africa. How does it feel having another South African coming up in the game?

NOAH: I absolutely love it. Especially generationally, because it's amazing to see South Africans that do really well in different spheres. I remember when Charlize Theron won an Oscar and how proud the country was. And the other day, when Black Coffee was playing at Madison Square Garden, it was so wonderful to feel that energy beyond South Africa. Obviously, South Africans are really proud, but when I see you succeed, I wonder when the last time was that a South African had a solo song on the Billboard charts. I was looking it up and it went back 55 years to Hugh Masekela.

“Tyla Tells Trevor Noah Her Plan for Pop Stardom”

December 6, 2023

Trevor Noah / Interview Magazine

New York City Interview

Comedian Trevor Noah in conjunction with Interview Magazine sat down to interview singer Tyla. Both Trevor Noah and Tyla grew up in Johannesburg, South Africa and have risen to fame worldwide. Trevor Noah is best known for his Grammy Award winning comedy set “Son of Patricia,” his memoir *Born a Crime*, and hosting the Daily Show. Tyla is known for her Grammy award winning song “Water.”

The interview focuses on Tyla as the newest South African to represent her country on the world stage with Tyla mentioning that she loves seeing South African actresses, musicians, and artists represented across the globe. Trevor highlights Tyla’s success with bringing amapiano, a South African musical genre, to the world with her own twist of pop and African beats.



Qongqothwane

1963

Miriam Makeba

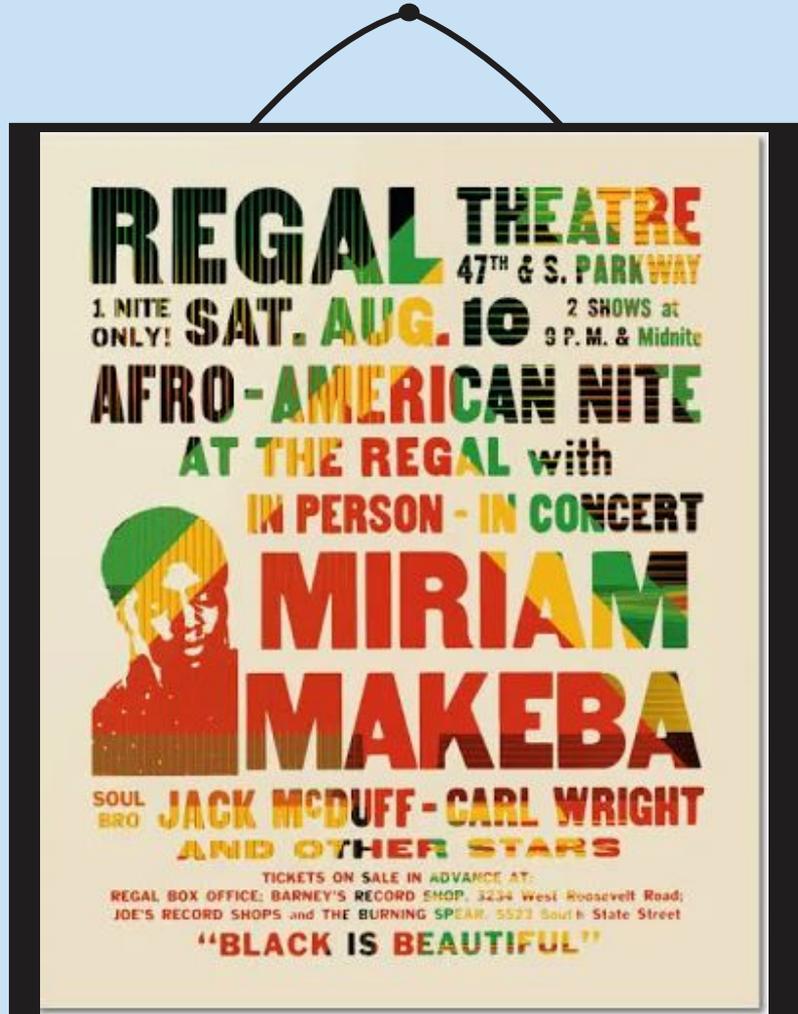
France: Ce soir à Cannes

Live Performance

Miriam Makeba, also known as Mama Afrika, was born in Johannesburg, South Africa in 1932. She began singing at school in the choir and became a professional singer in 1954. She moved to the United States and developed a successful recording career, including anti-apartheid songs, which eventually caused her to be exiled from South Africa. It was not until Nelson Mandela encouraged her to return in 1991 that she was able to perform once again in her homeland. Throughout her career, she composed over 30 albums. She passed away on November 8, 2008.

Makeba is best known for the song Qongqothwane, known as the "Click Song" in English, which uses and celebrates the use of click sounds in the Xhosa language. The "Click Song" is a traditional Xhosa song sung at weddings, believed to bring the new couple good fortune. Makeba popularized the song for Western audiences in the 1960s.





Afro-American Nite

1968

Regal Theatre

Chicago

Concert Poster

For three decades, Miriam Makeba was in exile from South Africa due to her advocacy against the system of apartheid in South Africa. During the 1960s, Makeba performed at concerts, bringing awareness to the beauty and oppression in her home country.

Miriam Makeba saw the world as her audience and passionately sang songs in multiple languages, including English, Xhosa, and Portuguese. She popularized traditional African songs with Western audiences, bringing a new global appreciation for South African art.

However, Makeba did not shy away from confronting racism. She used concerts, such as the Afro-American Nite at the Regal Theatre in Chicago, as platforms to educate the world on the oppression her people faced in South Africa.



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Gallery of Images

Johnny Clegg Gallery

1989

1997

2017

Photographs

Image 1:

Johnny Clegg is portrayed on the cover of his album *One Life*, released in 2006. The album contains 17 songs. All of the lyrics and music were written by Clegg, except for two of the tracks, which he did in collaboration. The album is a mix of world music and rock.

Image 2:

In 2017, Johnny Clegg embarked on a farewell tour in the United States, at age 66. On tour, he played songs from throughout his three-decade career.

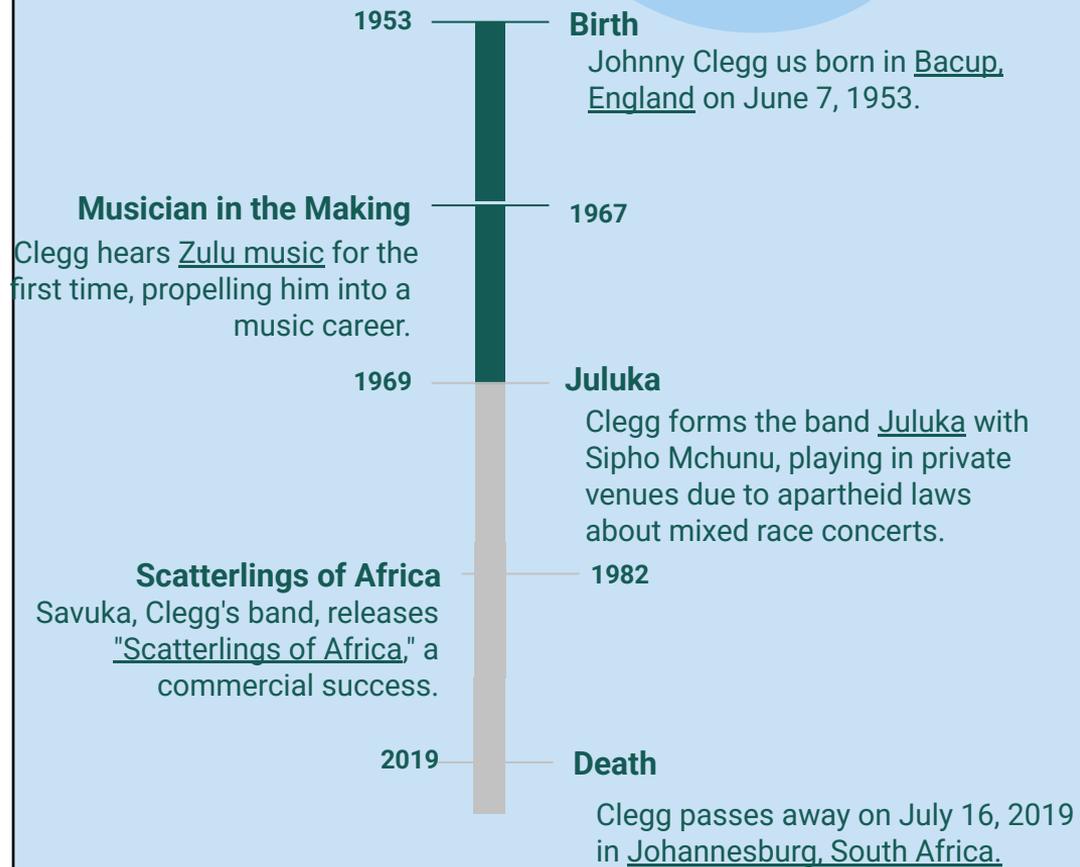
Image 3:

Besides being an accomplished musician and lyricist, Clegg is also a dancer. He often incorporated African and specifically South African style moves and dances into his performances, such as in his 1997 concert performances.

Life of Johnny Clegg Johnny Clegg, also known as the White Zulu, was born in 1953 in Bacup, England to an English father and a Zimbabwean mother. At the age of 7, he moved to Zimbabwe and then to Johannesburg, South Africa.

2025 His stepfather was an anti-apartheid crime reporter, and his mother was a cabaret singer. These influences propelled him to appreciate Black culture. In 1967, as a teen, he heard Zulu street music for the first time, and by 1969, he was in the band Juluka with Spho Mchunu. Their music and performances were a mix of European and African culture and spoke to the masses about the struggles the system of apartheid caused in South Africa. Clegg's music often faced resistance and bans from a government that did not allow mixed-race performances. Clegg would perform at churches, private homes, universities, etc., to circumvent apartheid restrictions.

Timeline Clegg is best known for his song "Scatterlings of Africa," released with the band Savuka in 1982. The song addressed all people with African ancestry who are often separated from their original homeland. Clegg continued performing throughout the 1990s and into the 2000s before passing away in 2019.



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