MIRIAM MAKEBA: 1932-2008

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Category: Observations

I'm at an age where the musical heroes of my youth can all get a free government bus pass. Some have grown old gracefully, some leap around trying to pretend that they are in their twenties (they fool no one but themselves) and some maintain the fire and spark of their youth into their old age. I was very sad to hear this morning that the great Miriam Makeba had died at the age of 76, but I couldn't help but smile at the news that she had just been performing at an anti-mafia concert. After a lifetime protesting against apartheid, she still had the drive to confront injustice and wrongdoing. Amazing! "It's better to burn out, than it is to rust", but Miriam's fire burned for a long time. I can't sing, but I hope I'm still speaking out for things that matter when I get to her age.

Here she is singing her most famous song, Pata Pata (Touch, Touch). I have a version of this sung by a Sengalese singer as the ring tone on my mobile.