



Monsieur Marceau: Actor Without Words

Leda Schubert, Gérard DuBois (Illustrator)

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Marcel Marceau, the world's most famous mime, enthralled audiences around the world for more than fifty years. When he waved his hand or lifted his eyebrow he was able to speak volumes without ever saying a word. But few know the story of the man behind those gestures . . . Distinguished author Leda Schubert and award-winning artist Gerard DuBois bring their own artistry to this gorgeously written and illustrated picture book biography.

Monsieur Marceau: Actor Without Words Details

Date : Published September 4th 2012 by Roaring Brook Press

ISBN : 9781596435292

Author : Leda Schubert , Gérard DuBois (Illustrator)

Format : Hardcover 40 pages

Genre : Childrens, Picture Books, Biography, Nonfiction, Cultural, History



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From Reader Review Monsieur Marceau: Actor Without Words for online ebook

Stephanie Chiaro says

This is the story of Monsieur Marceau, a famous French mime, who began miming after World War II. The story begins with his childhood. It describes Monsieur Marceau's family of performers, where he lived, and his hope of being the Charlie Chaplin of theater. When he was a boy, he used to mime for his friends for comedic purposes. At the age of sixteen, when the war began, the story described how his family moved, how Marceau joined a resistance group against the Nazis, how he used to lead Jewish children to safety, and how he helped hide some Americans. After his father died in the concentration camps and the war was over, Monsieur Marceau was quoted as describing how maybe his dream of miming spurs from how Jewish people often find it difficult to speak about the camps. His point was that if they don't want to talk, then maybe it's a Jewish thing (as he was Jewish but had changed his last name during the war). So he started studying mime. Bip was the name of the character he created, using a stovepipe hat, a red carnation, and lots of make-up. This was a very famous role for him and he won a great deal of awards and prizes, although, Monsieur Marceau did often speak off stage, and I mean he was a talker. He became a world traveller, performing in different countries, and that's the end.

So, what do I have to say about the book? I was interested in reading the book because I found the idea of a book about a mime so compelling and unique, that I couldn't pass it up, so the book covered a very interesting, unique topic. I also think it is important to include information about the character's childhood in these types of biography books, and I really enjoyed hearing about his heroic acts, how he was able to save so many people during the war. However, I do have to say, I wondered why Monsieur Marceau was chosen out of a list of mimes. Okay, I'll be the first to admit I know nothing about famous mimes. I didn't even know about Monsieur Marceau or his most famous teacher, but I'm sure there were other mimes, and I wondered why this one in particular stood out so much. Did he win a prize that was created only for him? Did he mark the pathway for mimes to come, and if so, how? Was he the first world-traveling mime? I think it is truly fantastic that he obviously had a great heart, as described by his saving other Jewish people, but career-wise, what did he do that stood out from others like him, or maybe there are no others like him. In that case, how? How is he so incredible? I think that was the only place the author fell short. Other than that, if the audience clearly saw how Monsieur Marceau was so important to the world of mime, this book would be a top-rated book, at least in my opinion.

To recap, a unique, interesting topic, childhood and background information, and heroic acts make this book a must-read, however I thought the book fell short with making Monsieur Marceau stand out amongst his peers.

CH13_Caitlin Murphy says

Marcel Marceau was an adored mime who lived from 1923 to 2007. He was born in France and grew up loving to entertain his friends by imitating Charlie Chaplin. When he was 16, WWII began and Marcel, a Jew, joined the French underground to resist the Nazis. He helped many Jewish children to safety and helped to hide American parachutists. After the war he created the character 'Bip' and quickly became famous. Author Leda Schubert and illustrator Gerard Dubois do a great job capturing Marcel Marceau's whimsical performances as well as his history of being a political activist during World War II. Marcel would be an interesting person for students to research and learn about when studying WWII. He is inspirational because although he was faced with many tragedies during the war (including the death of his father in a

concentration camp) he was able to create something beautiful. He was able to do something that required no language during a time when those who were from different countries and who spoke different languages felt very divided. I would recommend using this book with 2nd - 4th graders.

Kierstin Merritt says

The book is about a man named Marcel Mangel who was born in France during the 1920s. He leaves France due to World War II and ends up working for the military to fight against Nazis. Due to the fact that he is Jewish, Mangel helps many Jewish children escape to freedom and then later changes his last name so nobody would know of his ancestry. After the war is over Marceau studies the art of mime and creates a well-known mime character named Bip. Marceau becomes famous for acting as many people, as animals, or by doing classical mime acts that we know today. He travels the world performing and by doing so all silently, breaks through any language barrier there may be for famous actors or singers. Marceau would become the most famous mime in all of history. This book was a leap for me because I HATE MIMES!!! I love learning about history though so the facts in this book were enough to distract me. I thought it was interesting that the illustrations were fairly colorful and lively for the most part, but when talking about the war and concentration camps, it goes all plain.

Sharon Lawler says

Perfect blend of text and illustration brings to life the world's most famous mime.

Edward Sullivan says

An excellent introduction to the world's most famous mime. Compare this title to the recently published *Marcel Marceau: Master of Mime* by Gloria Spielman (Kar-Ben, 2011).

Audra Rowell says

Marcel Marceau is such an icon and now there's a wonderful picture book to give us his history. Just like *Me...Jane*, it's a great way to introduce finding your passion as a child and achieving your dreams, despite the obstacles that might arise. This book also offers a tiny peek into the French Resistance aspect of WWI.

Abigail says

Author Leda Schubert and illustrator Gerard DuBois present the life story of celebrated mime Marcel Marceau in this informative and engaging picture-book biography, managing to capture some of the pathos of his early life, as well as the magic of his craft through the simple but expressive text and evocative artwork. Born in 1923 as Marcel Mangel, Marceau was a young man when the Nazis occupied France, joining the resistance and becoming involved in many daring activities, from leading groups of Jewish

schoolchildren across the border to safety in Switzerland to hiding American parachutists who had landed behind enemy lines. His father, who like many of France's Jews did not survive the war, was killed in a concentration camp. After the war, Mangel took the name Marceau and began to study the art of mime, creating the now famous character of Bip, a tragic-comic character with sad eyes and a penchant for amusing adventures. This character, and Marceau's work as a performer, would eventually become world-famous, entertaining thousands of audiences during the course of his long career.

As someone who knew very little of mime in general or Marcel Marceau in particular - I had been familiar with the name, of course, and recognized the face of "Bip," when I saw him, but that was the extent of my familiarity with the subject - I went in to Monsieur Marceau with no set expectations. I came away immensely impressed, both with the subject of the book, and with its creators. I was particularly struck by the connections Marceau himself drew between his choice of profession, which involved silent communication, and his identity as a Jew, and the son of a victim of the Nazi Final Solution: *"The people who came back from the camps were never able to talk about it,"* Marceau once said, *"My name is Mangel. I am Jewish. Perhaps that, unconsciously, contributed towards my choice of silence."* Obviously, there is so much more to Marceau than Bip, his "public face," and this excellent book communicates that wonderfully. I appreciated the fact that Schubert was able to communicate so much, factually and emotionally, without drowning her narrative with information. The artwork by Gerard DuBois brilliantly captures the emotion in Schubert's text, skillfully depicting the mixture of sadness and joy that seems to have characterized Marceau's life and art.

All in all, this is a wonderful biography for younger readers, one that manages to be both informative and moving - an afterword gives more details about Marceau - and a beautiful book, artistically speaking. Recommended to children who enjoy biography, or who are interested in mime, theater, and/or Marcel Marceau.

Yoo Kyung Sung says

What an engaging biography of Monsieur Marceau? I never knew he was a Jew. WW II and Holocaust are shared in the journey of his life. I appreciate WW II and Holocaust are not focused as the center of the story but rather steps that shape Monsieur Marceau's identity as an actor who has a deep life and professional philosophy and belief. I appreciate controled text amounts while the powerful illustration offers "less is more" strength throughout the story.

Debbie Raulerson says

I wanted to read this book on a recommendation from a friend. I went to our public library to find it and they didn't have it, so they ordered it for me, adding it to their collection. This is a picture book with wonderful illustrations and even better words that will draw anyone into Marceau's life. I can't wait to share this book Monday with my students. I teach 9th through 12 grade theatre but know my students will enjoy learning about Marceau's life as much as I did. This book will bring out the wonder of childhood and expressionism in anyone. Thank you Amy for the recommendation.

Emily says

Audience: Primary

Genre: Nonfiction-Biography

Fiction Twin Text: Mirette on the High Wire by Emily Arnold McCully. These books remind me of each other because they both discuss hobbies that are not as well known and deal with overcoming hardships or problems people face internally. I think this fiction selection would enhance my nonfiction selection because both books are about hobbies that young children may be unfamiliar with and also show different countries that the students may not have been to.

Jessica says

I did not realize what a complex and interesting life Marcel Marceau led until I read this book, now I want to find out more. Favorite quote "Do not meddle in the affairs of wizards, for you are crunchy and taste good with ketchup" - Marcel Marceau

Beverly says

Interesting short biography. Apparently, Marceau is quoted as saying, "Never get a mime talking, he won't stop" which I found ironically humorous.

Holly Mueller says

Several people recommended this to me at NCTE in Boston when looking through sale books, so of course I bought it! I knew of Monsieur Marceau, but I didn't know about his role in the Holocaust, joining the French underground and saving hundreds of Jewish children by leading them out of occupied France, over the Alps, and into Switzerland. Sparse writing but beautiful illustrations will introduce children to a fascinating man.

Irina Su says

A beautifully illustrated book about the life of Marcel Marceau including his life before he became a world famous mime. This picture book introduces the reader to the life of Marcel Marceau starting with his love of silent movies as a young boy. He was born into an artistic family with dancers and musicians. He began miming when he was young to entertain his friends. He had to leave France when World War II started. Marcel changed his name from Mangel to Marceau to hide the fact that he was Jewish. He created a character named Bip and wore white makeup. He never spoke during his act, he would use his body to tell a story. The best parts of this book are the beautiful pictures that show Marcel on stage performing. His nimble body and control over his expressions and movements are truly captured in the illustrations. The book touches on his religion and the fact that it was a difficult time in history to be Jewish. The book also mentions how much audiences from many countries were touched by the universal language of mime that Monsieur Marceau shared with his audience.

Jamil says

Marcel Marceau, French Resistance Fighter, Mime.

"The people who came back from the camps were never able to talk about it...My name is Mangel. I am Jewish. Perhaps that, unconsciously, contributed towards my choice of silence."
