

*From Storage to the Stage: Using Archives to Research, Create and Perform*

The Bertha Klausner Archive of Marcel Marceau Lecture

by Jeanine Thompson

Theatre creator and movement specialist, Jeanine Thompson, shares her discoveries from the American Heritage Center's Bertha Klausner Archive of the great French mime artist, Marcel Marceau. As a Klausner Fellowship recipient, Jeanine researched the archives in 2013. Her research inspired the creation and performance of a multimedia work about Marcel Marceau titled *There Is No Silence*. In this lecture, Jeanine shares images and stories of working with Marceau, her findings in the archive, and how they came to life on stage.

Good afternoon! Thank you for coming today. I'm very excited to share with you things that I have learned about the literary agent, Bertha Klausner, and a world famous French mime artist, Marcel Marceau.

I'm going to tell you a story that the Klausner archive has to tell, with materials from that archive. All materials that I quote are from the Klausner archive unless stated otherwise.

Let's start by introducing Bertha Klausner.



(Photo of Bertha Klausner, AHC photo archive.)

Bertha Klausner, born in 1901, developed one of the first national newspaper syndicates in the early 1930s. The *Independent Publishers Syndicate* was the model for current features such as *Parade* and *This Week*. In 1938 she left her syndicate to become an agent for cartoonists and artists. By 1945 she decided to concentrate on representing writers and founded the Bertha Klausner International Literary Agency, Inc. From the 1940s until 1960, Klausner commuted back and forth from her offices in Hollywood to New York, until 1960, when she decided to remain exclusively at her Park Avenue office in New York City.

She developed a wide reputation based upon her creativity, integrity, and dedication to promising writers. Her clients included actors Basil Rathbone and Lionel Barrymore, Pulitzer Prize winner Upton Sinclair, Cuban leader Fidel Castro, Eleanor Roosevelt, and mime artist Marcel Marceau. Her career spanned seven decades until she passed in 1997; and her career accomplishments continue to educate, illuminate and inspire, through the books that she got published and her archive at the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming.

So, who was Marcel Marceau?



(Photo of Marcel Marceau, OSU photo services.)

Marcel Marceau was born Marcel Mangel in 1923 in France to a Jewish family. When he was a child his mother took him to a Charlie Chaplin movie, that he would imitate and create his own silent skits. He was also a promising painter with a style very similar to Marc Chagall.

During the German occupation of France, Marceau and his brother worked with the French Resistance. They adopted the last name of "Marceau", chosen as a reference to General Marceau of the French Revolution.

Marceau helped to save the lives of numerous children. With his painting skills, he successfully altered their identity cards, and to keep them quiet and distracted, he entertained them with his Chaplin routines as he led them across the border to Switzerland. Marceau's father however was captured and sent to the notorious Auschwitz concentration camp, where he was killed.

After the war, Marceau enrolled in the Charles Dullin School of Dramatic Art in Paris - to become an actor. The movement teacher was Etienne Decroux, and it was he who introduced Marceau to the techniques of mime and speaking poetically from the heart with the body. This is what inspired Marceau to dedicate his life to developing the silent art form of mime.

All of these experiences laid the foundation of what was important to Marceau as a person and as an artist: the need to share with the world the universal understanding of empathy, the tragedies of war, the need for peace, strong education, and love.

In 1947 Marceau created his signature character Bip. He decided on this name after reading *Great Expectations* by Dickens, and that story's leading character named Pip. Bip became Marceau's alter-ego, similar to Chaplin's Little Tramp, struggling against big and small challenges of life.



(Publicity photo of Marcel Marceau.)

Marceau toured to the United States for the first time in 1955. His solo show was met with overwhelming acclaim and with record-breaking attendance. Everyone was delighted by his heartwarming stories and magical portrayals on the stage. He continued to tour through out the world, on every continent, until he passed in 2007.

He was awarded the Emmy for his work on television; his film credits include *Barbarella* with Jane Fonda, *Shanks*, and *Silent Movie* by Mel Brook's, in which to his delight, he spoke the only line, "No!" France awarded him with their highest recognitions the Legion of Honors and the National Order of Merit. Many artists credit him for inspiring their work, including Michael Jackson, who transformed Marceau's mime illusion "walking against the wind" into the moonwalk.

Here's a review from the archive by NY Times reviewer Mel Gussow of Marceau's show (A15 – date?)

"It is edifying to see a consummate artist continue to grow. Such is the case with Marcel Marceau... (H)e is still expanding his talent, sending his alter ego, Bip, on

different journeys and, as an actor-author, entering new arenas of comic absurdism... As we have known for many years, he can do more with a crooked finger or a raised eyebrow than most actors can do with their entire bodies. What is a constant discovery is his emotional range. As he has said, he does not act out anecdotes but visualizes feelings. His is the art of the invisible. His new show... runs a Marceavian gamut from hilarity to terror, and sometimes does so in an instant.”

Marceau was also a writer whose work was shaped, mentored, negotiated and shared with the world by his literary agent Bertha Klausner. Starting in 1966, they worked together on numerous projects and books; and their work is clearly and abundantly documented in her archive at American Heritage Center.

I am able to comprise my findings, and tell the story of this archive, in three categories:

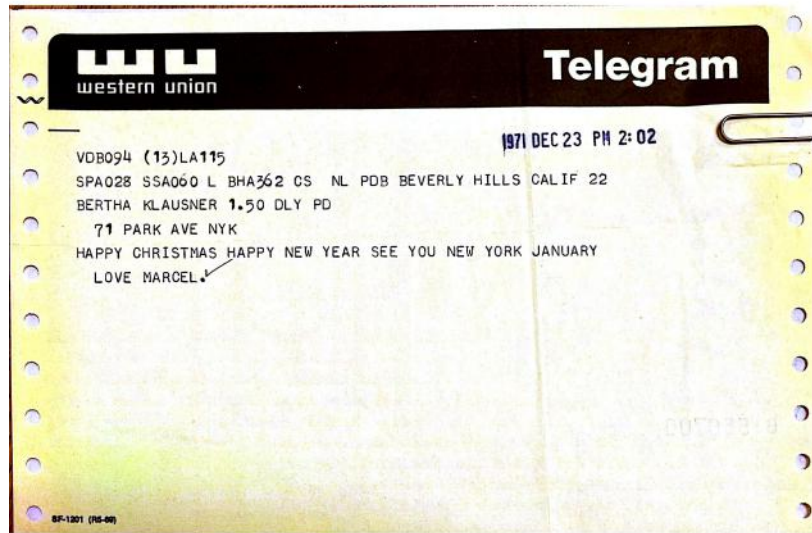
1. Klausner and Marceau’s respectful and strong business and personal relationship.
2. Marceau’s journey through the publishing world; the abundance of struggles he faced, and Klausner helping and guiding him every step of the way.
3. The wealth of publishing they accomplished together; and their enduring friendship and care for each other.

So, lets begin:

1. Klausner and Marceau’s respectful and strong relationship.

Their journey began with two forces coming together: Klausner’s abilities to nurture writers and Marceau’s interests in sharing with the world his work as a writer, poet and painter. Once Marceau and Klausner met, their shared dreams and friendship quickly took root.

An example of their friendship is one of the earliest pieces of correspondence in the archive – a 1971 telegram from Marceau wishing Klausner a Happy Christmas. (115)



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It reads, “Happy Christmas, Happy New Year, See you in New York, January, Love Marcel”

And in a telegram from Klausner to Marceau wishing him a Happy Birthday. (A14 - 1983)



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It reads, "Happy Birthday to a wonderful person. May you enjoy long life with fame and fortune. Much love, Bertha"

As well, throughout the years of their correspondence they would always ask each other how the other was doing, and how their family was doing – always asking by using the names of family members, and with references to specific events. There was a genuine sense of care between them.

## 2. Marceau's journey through the publishing world.

In the beginning of the archive, there are many examples of welcoming and highly appreciative letters from publishers who respect Marceau, as a performer and painter, who want to assist him in publishing.

The following are letters to Marceau from interested publishers:

This first one is from early on, from 1973. (A114)

"(Marceau,) you say about mime, "It must be there after me, otherwise I am smoke."  
This book could be a way for you to remain in the hands of children forever."

Another letter to Marceau (A109, 110 - 1972)

"You are too much of an artist in every sense for us to try to guide you in any way. The freer you are, the freer you can make the first book of Bip, the greater it will be. And we are hoping it will be so great that it earns the widest possible audience for itself and the books that follow... Truly it was a delight to watch you work, to hear you speak, (and) to be allowed those insights and glimpses into your strange and lovely mind. Fondly, CZ"

And a letter to Marceau edging him forward with gentle edits and appreciation (A112, 113 - 1973)

“(W)hen you do a double-page spread, be sure that nothing of great importance (a character’s face or hand, for example) falls into the gutter... We are so hoping that you are ready to proceed. This is going to be a fantastically unique and beautiful book. ... (On a personal note:) I framed (your) watercolor of Bip with his wings spread out, floating in that beautiful purple and blue world. It hangs over the couch. One visitor said, “You have an original Chagall!” When I said, “No, it’s an original Marcel Marceau.” He said, “Even better! ... Love, CZ”

This honeymoon period was quickly over. What I was really surprised to find in the archive was the overwhelming abundance of rejection letters. At first I couldn’t imagine Marceau receiving rejection letters. He is after all - Marcel Marceau! But there are many of them.

Letter from Random House to Klausner (A29 - 1981)

“The problem is ... (that) none of the magic that permeates his own performances on stage has made its way into this story. And compared to Marcel’s own ethereal qualities, this seems leaden and uninspired.”

Another letter from Random House to Klausner (A5 - 1988)

“I’m afraid this simply wouldn’t work for American kids: it’s far too long, and the syrupy philosophizing wouldn’t go down well. Further, the illustrations, wouldn’t work for this country either.”

Letter to Klausner regarding a book by acclaimed photographer Max Waldman of his photographs of Marceau (A33 - 1981)

“Despite the broadening appeal of mime, mime books don’t sell. And this would be no ordinary mime book, but really an interpretive art book requiring a very large first printing to justify a competitive retail price. It just doesn’t work.”

And a letter from Klausner to Marceau (A3 - 1989)



“As you know, we have tried many publishers unsuccessfully. Not one of them said they would publish (it, even) if you would revise. Certainly your name is important, but ... (let’s keep trying).”

Once Klausner secured a publisher for Marceau’s manuscripts, there were demands for edits and rewrites, and some times those demands were very unpleasant.

Letter from Harper & Row to Klausner (A101 - 1978)

“Marcel’s new manuscript requires rewriting – not editing. He shifts time and tense constantly, he philosophies far beyond the grasp of most adult readers let alone kids, he is often discussing the doubts, fears and hopes of an artist’s crisis rather than telling a story accessible to kids. ... You know and he knows our immense love and admiration for him as an artist and as a person. But the task he has given us must be done by the artist himself...”

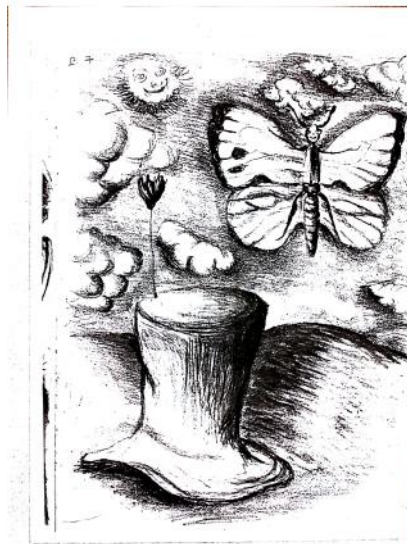
Letter from Harper & Row Reader (A 52, 53 - 1983)

“The (text) is awkward (and) weak... excessive use of adverbs and adjectives.. does not sound like material children would understand.... it goes on too long... vocabulary is too difficult... too much of the story imparting a lesson and verges on lecturing and worse.. Is this a children’s book?”

Final notice letter from Harper & Row to Klausner (A 17, 18 - 1983)

“(If the manuscript changes have not been made) there doesn’t seem any further reason for any of us to see each other, since the countless talks and letters we’ve exchanged haven’t come to any fulfillment of the contracted book... however, if it is done the way we all discussed, over and over again, then we should meet before Marcel leaves the country again.” (Here again are the requests:) The artwork is excessively dirty, full of erasures, smudges and white-out... The face of the butterfly cheapens the whole effect of the book... The opening and closing drawings with Bip astride the butterfly are so pornographically suggestive that even some children will notice... All must be redone.”

Here are some of those initial drawings by Marceau.



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(Marcel Marceau's initial drawings for *Bip and the Butterfly* (37, 38, 40, 41, 43).)

Through the entire process of publishing, Klausner remained Marceau's constant champion, expecting the best from him, as well as insisting on the best from those that dealt with him.

Letter from Klausner to Harper & Row (A19 – 1983)

“Dear Charlotte, I spoke with Marcel regarding the illustrations which he has completed for *Bip and The Butterfly*. As he explained it to me, he did show you the illustrations which he had put into a book binder to protect them. Unfortunately they were smudged as the tissue had not protected them. He could easily have removed any part of the illustrations where necessary...I understand that you have some criticism regarding the eyes of butterflies and also that some of the poetry needed editing. At no time did Marcel refuse to cooperate with you or rework where necessary. Marcel feels very rejected as he thinks it is very unfair, in view of the fact that you know that he can redo any part of the book. I still think that you should meet with Marcel and go over the project with him and give him an opportunity to reinstate his contract.”

There were also severe challenges and problems with Marceau not delivering on contracts and advances:

Letter from Random House to Klausner (124 - 1976)

“(W)e are of course disappointed that his autobiography will not be forthcoming in the immediate future because of his commitments, we are prepared to wait patiently until he does have time to finish it. However, I would make the point that no other book project should come before ours.”

Letter from Harper & Row to Klausner (A102, 103 - 1980)

“Your, and Marcel’s, presumption that I was working on his manuscript is impossible to understand in the light of our talks and my letter to you... We never received any dummy.. no sketches, no text... We have received neither this nor any other manuscript from Marcel in return for the \$2500 we advanced him.. Therefore the tone and content of your last letter amazes me. Please tell Marcel that I am distressed both at the misunderstanding involved and the attitude reflected in your letter.”

Another letter from Harper & Row to Klausner (A10 & 11 - 1982)

“The \$2500 of the \$5000 advance due on delivery that we paid Marcel ... was at his request to help him out. Technically, we need not have paid that money since the \$5000 was due on delivery of text and art ... we should at least be reimbursed for the \$2500... we are sorry that what we expected to be a beautiful, tender book for children hasn’t turned out to be anything of the kind. We cannot, of course, request cancellation until we have the financial end of things settled. It is quite clear, though, that we have no intention of publishing this book.”

Another letter from Random House to Klausner (A 106 - 1977)

“I am baffled by Marcel’s proposal to write another book “about his work” when he hasn’t even finished the one for which we have now had a contract for eleven years..... It has been delayed due to “Marcel’s backbreaking schedule.” (He’s) been

spreading himself too thin in too many directions with other publications.... it seems to me absolute madness for him to contemplate undertaking another project now. His primary responsibilities, of course, is to his audiences all over the world, but any time left over from that, should be devoted to the autobiography.” “I’m taking the liberty of sending a copy of this letter to Bip in Los Angeles.”

And another letter from the same publisher to Klausner (A9 - 1982)

“Dear Bertha, This is absurd. We have been waiting for the Marceau contract since 1968, (14 years) and there are no indications whatsoever that (the autobiography) is closer to completion than last time we talked.”

Throughout Marceau’s career there were very real challenges that contributed to him not being able to timely deliver publishing requirements while maintaining his extensive world tours. We need to remember that he performed approximately 200 solo shows a year, and on every continent in the world.

Here is one of his international posters with quotes from archive:



(Marcel Marceau poster (A93).)

And here is an excellent example of his touring schedule, also from the archive.

MURDO MURDO Winter, 1972			
Date	City	Hall & Capacity	Local Patron
Tue. Jan. 9 Wed. Jan. 10 Thu. Jan. 11	HOUSTON, TEX.	Jones Hall 2,000	Mr. James Archard Society for the Performing Arts 411 Louisiana Street Houston, Texas 77002 (713) 257-5124, 528-0974
Fri. Jan. 12	DAY OFF		
Sat. Jan. 13	ST. LOUIS, MO.	Rail Opera House 3,154	Mr. Lewis Friedman The Episcopal Agency P.O. Box 1420 St. Louis, Mo. 63101 (314) 276-4544
Sun. Jan. 14	KANSAS CITY, MO.	Music Hall 2,500	Mr. Lewis Friedman (see above)
Mon. Jan. 15	MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.	Orybman Theatre 2,678	Mr. Lewis Friedman (see above) Local contact - Mr. Dean Jans (612) 332-0383
Tue. Jan. 16 Wed. Jan. 17	MINNEAPOLIS, MINN.	Orybman Hall 2,731	Mr. Lewis Friedman (see above) Local contact - Mr. Bill Lane (612) 332-0383
Thu. Jan. 18	OMAHA, NEB.	Orybman Theatre 2,725	Mr. Dick Walker 20th Century Productions Suite 240, Avella Court 1615 Howard Street Omaha, Neb. 68103 (402) 341-7097 (712) 332-0710
Fri. Jan. 19 Sat. Jan. 20	DENVER, COLO.	Music Hall	Mr. Bob Garner Denver International P.O. Box 355 Denver, Colo. 80202 (303) 462-4100
Sun. Jan. 21	DAY OFF		

MURDO MURDO Winter, 1972			
Date	City	Hall & Capacity	Local Patron
Mon. Jan. 22	SANTA BARBARA, CA.	Arlington Theatre 2,000	Mr. Stephen Glass P.O. Box 6774 Santa Barbara, Ca. 93101 (805) 962-0001
Tue. Jan. 23	FRESNO, CA.	Convention Center 2,300	Mr. David Johnson David Johnson Presents 422 Collins Avenue Westfield, Ca. 94094 (415) 439-1231, 450-1677
Wed. Jan. 24	SAN RAFAEL, CA.	Marine Veterans Aud. 2,000	Mr. David Johnson (see above)
Thu. Jan. 25	SEASIDE, CA.	Center for Performing Arts 2,100	Mr. Don Thomson San Juan Theatre Bldg P.O. Box 665 San Juan, Ca. 95150 (916) 260-1111
Fri. Jan. 26 Sat. Jan. 27	BERKELEY, CA.	Dell'Inch Hall 2,100	Mr. Betty Conway University of California 221 Dell'Inch Hall Berkeley, Ca. 94720 (415) 842-3811
Mon. Jan. 29	DAY OFF		
Tue. Jan. 30 Wed. Jan. 31	LOS ANGELES, CA.	Music Hall 1,892	Mr. Edmund Harris University of California 605 Richard Ave. Los Angeles, Ca. 90024 (213) 637-4001
Thu. Feb. 1	DAY OFF		
Fri. Feb. 2	CAMBRIDGE, MA.	Belgian Aud. 2,100	Mr. Jay Debo Cambridge College Cambridge, Ca. 02111 (617) 421-4031
Sat. Feb. 3	NEW BEDFORD, MA.	Belgian Aud. 2,100	Mr. Bob Turner (see first page)
Sun. Feb. 4	CLAREMONT, CA.	Belgian Aud. 2,100	see above
Mon. Feb. 5	TUCSON, ARIZ.	Main Aud. 2,520	Mr. N. Leacher University of Arizona 1508 West Sixth Tucson, Ariz. 85724 (602) 884-1541
Tue. Feb. 6 Wed. Feb. 7	TUMACACI, ARIZ.	Sammy Aud. 3,610	Mr. Warren Ramsey Arizona State University Apache Bldg. Tucson, Ariz. 85724 (602) 963-2626

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MURDO MURDO Winter, 1972			
Date	City	Hall & Capacity	Local Patron
Thu. Feb. 8 Fri. Feb. 9	FRASCO		
Sat. Feb. 10	WEST POINT, N.Y.	Flamboy Theatre 4,270	Mr. William Sout P.O. Williams Academy West Point, N.Y. 10996 (914) 538-7762
Sun. Feb. 11	ROSELAND, N.J.	Horris Stage 1,100	Mr. Ernest Ciano 100 South Street Roseland, N.J. 07068 (201) 540-9277
Mon. Feb. 12 Tue. Feb. 13	PHILADELPHIA, PA.	Academy of Music 2,920	Mr. Max Miller 220 Locust Street Philadelphia, Pa. 19103 (215) 657-7000
Wed. Feb. 14	ELSTON, CONN.	Knicker Aud. 2,728	Mr. David Miller Princeton Connecticut 24 South Street Eastford, Conn. 06203 (203) 724-0711
Thu. Feb. 15	ROCKY HILL, N.Y.	Eastman Theatre 3,000	Stephanie Philomeno 20 River Place Rocky Hill, N.Y. 10864 Mr. Marion Cannon (716) 414-4620
Fri. Feb. 16	BUFFALO, N.Y.	Step's Theatre 3,100	Mr. Charles Chabany Friends of Buffalo Theatre 600 Main Street Buffalo, N.Y. 14202
Sat. Feb. 17	HAMPSHIRE, N.Y.	Chickadee Theatre 2,000	Mr. P. Robinson Friends of the Arts Box 18 Locust Valley, N.Y. 11560 (516) 756-1899
Sun. Feb. 18	DAY OFF		
Mon. Feb. 19	CLEVELAND, O.	Palace Theatre	Mr. Ray Dearden Flamboy Opera House 2611 Euclid Avenue Cleveland, O. 44115 (216) 737-4444
Tue. Feb. 20	TYTOWNSHIP, PA.	Music Hall 2,830	Mr. Paul Jans 633 Penn. Ave. Pittsburgh, Pa. 15222 (412) 281-8181

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MARCEL MARCEAU WINTER 1979			
Wed. Feb. 21	ARKON, D.	Thomas Ave. 1,000	Mr. Clinton Horton University of Akron Akron, O. 44324 (216) 379-3343
Thu. Feb. 22	INDIANAPOLIS, IND.	Clowes Hall 2,200	Mr. Ed Paddock 4610 Summit Avenue Indianapolis, Ind. 46208 (317) 824-6321
Fri. Feb. 23	BLOOMINGTON, IND.	Indiana U. Aud. 2,750	Mr. Leonard Ruffe Indiana University Bloomington, Ind. 47403 (317) 327-2222
Sat. Feb. 24	DAY OFF		
Sun. Feb. 25	SARASOTA, IND.	2220th Hall 4,072	Mr. Mark Baber Purdue University West Lafayette, Ind. 47907 (317) 748-2062
Mon. Feb. 26	DAY OFF		
Tue. Feb. 27	ANNAPOLIS, MICH.	Music Hall	Mr. Alan Kishenstein 130 Madison Avenue Detroit, Mich. 48226 (313) 962-7622
Wed. Mar. 1	DAY OFF		
Thu. Mar. 2	COLUMBUS, OHIO	Mushon Ave. 2,000	Mr. Tim van Sant Ohio State University Columbus, O. 43210 (614) 622-5248
Wed. Mar. 7	CHANDLER, ARIZ.	Field Avenue	Mr. Rodney Schaub Johnson Psychological, Inc. 2322 Thompson Avenue Mesa, Ariz. 49411 (602) 759-1891
Thu. Mar. 8			
Fri. Mar. 9			
Sat. Mar. 10	CHARLOTTE, TENN.	Tivoli Theatre 1,750	Mr. Robert Fones 707 Market Street Knoxville, Tenn. 37902 (615) 522-6741
Sun. Mar. 11	ROSELTON, N.C.	Memorial Aud. 2,300	Ms. Susan Owen North Carolina State Univ. Raleigh, N.C. 27607 (919) 737-2100

MARCEL MARCEAU WINTER 1979			
Mon. Mar. 12	DAY OFF		
Tue. Mar. 13	DAY OFF		
Wed. Mar. 14	ST. THOMAS, VIRGIN ISLANDS	Polynesian Center 1,198	Mr. Maggie Kirkus Children of Virgin Islands St. Thomas, V.I. 00801 (809) 774-8475

(Marcel Marceau 1979 American Tour Itinerary (A 64 – 68).)

This is an itinerary of just the United States portion of his 1979 world tour. Here you can see the date, the city, the theatre and the number of seats, and the contact person. Look at the dates and how frequently he changes cities yet still performing with no time off. The travel alone would make most people drop, let alone trying to do that and perform any kind of solo show. Occasionally you will see a day off.

At this point, I'm sure that Marceau was feeling deeply disappointed, rejected and backed into a corner. He pushes back, breaking contracts and insisting on keeping advance money:

Letter from Marceau to Random House referring to his autobiography (A95, 96 - 1980)

“Things have changed since 1966. The French public would not understand... that an artist of his own country grants to it only a translation of its autobiography. It would be inconsistent to publish first in English a manuscript originally drawn up in my language... French... I propose to grant you an option for the English-speaking countries on the rights of my French version.”

Letter from Marceau to Klausner (A100 - 1980)

“As to Harper & Row, they seem not to have accepted the project regarding *Bip and The Butterfly*. I do not agree on their proposal to debit the sum advanced for *Pimporello* on the money received for *The Story of Bip*. I believe that I have fulfilled my obligations and that I have finalized (the) *Pimporello* manuscript. If they do not accept the manuscript, this is their own decision. I plan to keep the money, and it will indemnify me for the work I have done.”

Letter from Klausner to Random House supporting Marceau’s decision (A69 - 1979)

“I have been requested by Marcel Marceau to cancel his contract with Random House for his autobiography. When this contract was signed, Marceau was to write his memories in French and Random House (was) to translate (it) in sections... Please confirm your agreement to return all rights to Marcel Marceau.”

Klausner also helped him through lawsuits, including a book made of photographs of him being published without his consent.

Letter from Klausner to book author and publisher (A 84 - 1979)

“(W)e have the right to bring suit against Paddington Press and Ben Martin for one half of all monies earned by Ben Martin from all income for the length of the contract and the copyright. As Ben Martin has no written agreement with Marcel Marceau, he cannot claim full ownership to the photographs or the text. It is my belief that the publisher should be attached immediately and be responsible for all monies which have been paid to Ben Martin which are due to Marceau. ...Ben Martin cannot use photographs of Marceau ...without (his) written consent. As a world famous personality, Marceau has the right to sue...”

3. The wealth of publishing they accomplished together.

Through their work together Klausner made sure that Marceau’s work lived on beyond his presence on the stage and his fear of being only a waft of “smoke”. She got him published and got his books into the hands of many people young and old.



Here are some of their book reviews from the archive:

*The Story of Bip* by O.V. Koen (A105 – 1976)

“Marcel Marceau, creator of Bip, that magician of gesture and facial expression, now shows inadvertently that he can paint well and write poetically about what is in his heart. This phantastic trip to the moon and the return to our earth confirms what Marceau fans have suspected all the time: namely, that Bip’s communicative eyes and subtle gestures reveal not only a magician-artist but a philosopher, one who loves his fellow man”.

*The Story of Bip*, for Publishers Weekly, by Paul Nathan, (123 – 1976?)

“The art of Marcel Marceau is demonstrating international appeal between book covers as well as on the stage. Since its placement here by agent Bertha Klausner for recent publication by Harper & Row, “The Story of Bip”, written and illustrated by the mime who created the character, has begun to make appearances in half a dozen other countries: England, France, Germany, Japan, Sweden and Denmark.”

Pimporello, book announcement (A8)

“Marcel Marceau has written “Pimporello”, a novel. He calls it “the odyssey of a street mime based on my life if I’d lived in Fascist Italy. It deals with Mussolini, the war, the underground... part dream, part reality. It will be translated from French.” (and Bertha Klausner, his New York agent, says it comes out here in September). “I’d originally written it in English for children, but it was rejected as too philosophical. Therefore I rewrote it and went deeper, more romantic, so it is now for grownups and children at heart.”

Together they published 6 books – 5 for “grownups and children at heart” and 1 autobiography. Yes, finally that long awaited, frequently fought about, autobiography! Unfortunately it was still only published in French by the time Klausner and Marceau both died. But, it did get published.

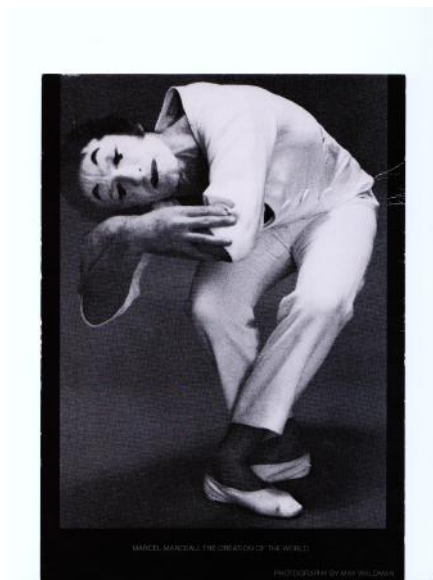
Klausner and Marceau's published books are:



(Cover of *The Marcel Marceau Alphabet Book*)

Marcel Marceau's Alphabet Book

1970



(A photo of Marcel Marceau from *Max Waldman: Marcel Marceau* book)

Max Waldman: Marcel Marceau Photographs

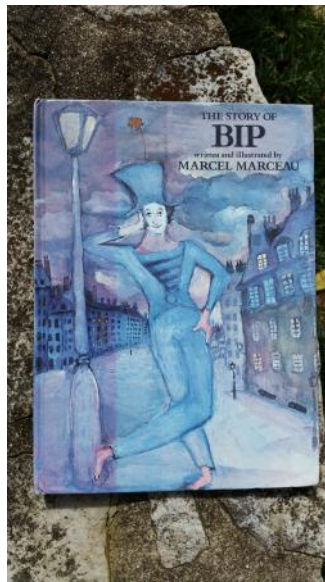
1970



(Cover of *The Marcel Marceau Counting Book*)

Marcel Marceau's Counting Book

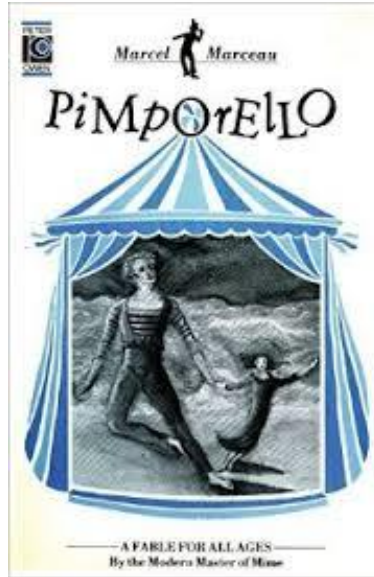
1971



(Cover of *The Story of Bip* Book)

The Story of Bip: Written and Illustrated by Marcel Marceau

1976



(Cover of *Pimporello* Book)

Pimporello

1991



(Cover of *Le Mime: Marcel Marceau* Book)

Le Mime: Marcel Marceau's Autobiography

1996

This date is one year before Klausner's passing.

What I discovered in this archive about Klausner and Marceau was that their relationship was ---- a love story, in many respects: she encouraged him, she guided him, she assuaged him, she protected him, she fought for him, she dealt with lawsuits for him, she negotiated his fees and payments, she challenged him to do the very best he possibly could do, - but most of all ---- she cared for him - and he cared for her.

There is one letter from Marceau to Klausner that really exemplifies the heart of their relationship for me. (A 26, 27 1986)

“My dear Bertha, Thank you for your wonderful letter. I am recovering now from my two severe operations (hemorrhage from a bleeding ulcer). There was too much stress, traveling, and hard work as well, in my life. It is the first time I can rest after thirty years of an uninterrupted theatre show. It is wonderful to know that your father has lived 102 years, and I know that we shall celebrate your 82 birthday too. ... For the moment, I am painting and writing poems... I always thought I was a tree, which couldn't break, but, you learn from life. My heart is very good, and I have a healthy organism to help me survive. My dear Bertha, I wish you.. good wonderful health, and I will be very happy to see you again on my next tour... Until then, we shall keep in touch. I will let you know about everything, and I embrace you with my warmest feelings. Always, your faithful Bip. Marcel Marceau ”

I was deeply moved, intrigued and inspired by all of the material, and the story, that I discovered in the Klausner archive. I knew that I wanted to do something with it. And I immediately knew that I had the perfect production to do just that.

During the time of my first visit here, last year, at the Ohio State University (OSU), I was already in the process of creating a new performance piece about the life and work of Marcel Marceau. This was a multimedia collaboration created by faculty and students from Department of Theatre and the Advanced Computing Center for the

Arts and Design (ACCAD). This work just premiered this past April; and we titled it - *There Is No Silence*.

You see, Marceau was one of the most important people I had ever met in my life.



(Jeanine Thompson and Marcel Marceau, OSU photo services, 2001)

He was my mentor, master teacher and dear friend. I worked with him for over 20 years: studying with him, demonstrating for his teaching, him coaching my performances and choreography, and producing his workshops in the United States.

I helped to acquire the Marcel Marceau American Archive at The Ohio State University's Theatre Research Institute. This archive includes documentation of the 4 residencies we did with Marcel Marceau. These residencies included master classes, lectures and performances. One of the highlights of these for me, was when the Department of Theatre and ACCAD, joined together with two alumni who were working at the Industrial Light & Magic, to motion capture Marcel Marceau's signature movements.



(Marcel Marceau doing motion capture session at OSU, 2001)

At first Marceau was very hesitant to get into the motion capture suit and to have his skeletal form rendered into dots. But, after we did the first take, and he saw what the data actually looked like, he realized that the motion capture technology actually did capture the essence of his movement. We motion captured his conventions character, many iconic illusions, including leaning against the bar and walking against the wind, and he ended with a performance of a full-length piece called *The Eater of Hearts*. It was an experience and privilege that I will never forget.

I knew that for this new work I was creating about Marceau, that I wanted to use his motion capture data some how, some way. And it was something that I discovered in the Klausner archive that inspired me how I might use it.



- Generated by CamScanner from intsig.com

- Generated by CamScanner from intsig.com

(Bip life-size dolls created by a fan of Marcel Marceau (A 89, 92).)

Someone made these life-size dolls of Bip. These photos are from the Klausner archive. The person who made them was asking for permission to market them. They never did get marketed, however last year when I went home, I had a new idea of how to bring Marceau's motion capture data to life.

My collaboration team, started working in the motion capture lab with a puppet inspired by these life size dolls.



(Motion capture puppet created by ACCAD and manipulated by OSU students, 2013)



These puppets transformed in our production into a motion capture driven projected animation of Bip flying through the sky.



(Animation created by Vita Berezina-Blackburn with Sarah Ware in motion capture suit, from *There Is No Silence*, 2014)

And – one of my favorite parts in the show:



(Photo of Patrick Wiabel in duet with his and Marcel Marceau's motion capture data, from *There Is No Silence*, 2014)

a student, Patrick Wiabel, was motion captured live on stage, doing a duet with Marceau's motion capture data, that had been animated. Their duet was projected onto a screen the size of our full proscenium. The audience gasped at this moving duet.

As well, having read so much material in the Klausner archive about the book, *The Story of Bip*, I went home, reread the book and shared it with my team. It became a primary resource for all of us. It influenced many of our choices, including having the character Bip as the ever-present figure in *There Is No Silence*. And seeing all of Marceau's beautiful paintings throughout the book, we decided to have his paintings projected onto our six projection surfaces throughout the production.



(Photo of Jane Elliott with projected animation created by Vita Berezina-Blackburn, from *There Is No Silence*, 2014.)



(Lithograph of Marcel Marceau's painting *Bip in Paris* utilized in animation in *There Is No Silence*, 2014)

So, what does the future hold?

I will be publishing an article on my findings in the Klausner Archive in the Theatre Survey Journal.

With my collaboration team, I hope to be sharing at international conferences about the process of creating *There Is No Silence*, and all of the spectacular multimedia elements that were developed and utilized in the production.

And through the legacy of my teaching, and my students teaching, Marcel Marceau's mime techniques and styles will continue to be taught, along with what I have learned from all of these archives.

With the wealth of these resources: the Klausner archive, the OSU Theatre Research Institute Archive and ACCAD's Motion Capture Data Archive, we have abundant material about Marcel Marceau, on numerous topics, that is preserved. These materials will be shared, researched and appreciated by generations of students, teachers, artists and the general public, for many years to come.

And finally, since digging through the Klausner papers, a new goal has emerged for me – to get Marceau’s autobiography translated into English. Perhaps that will be my foray into the publishing world. One that I hope Bertha Klausner, will be helping me with, in spirit.

Thank you.