

Spring 2013

The Establishment of the American Archive of Marcel Marceau
By Jeanine Thompson



Photo: Jeanine Thompson and Marcel Marceau, © OSU Photo Services 2001

At the fifth anniversary of the passing of the great French mime artist, Marcel Marceau, The Ohio State University's Theatre Research Institute (TRI) and Department of Theatre are announcing that they have established an archive devoted to Marcel Marceau and his teaching and artistic legacy.

By way of an extraordinary gift in 2011 from Marceau's tour manager, Tony Miccoci, the American archives of Marcel Marceau found a new home at the treasured TRI at OSU. This archive is in conjunction with other mime and movement theatre holdings at the TRI.

It is our hope that the American Archive of Marcel Marceau will:

- Preserve the legacy of and promote the use of the American archive of Marcel Marceau.
- Champion the artistry of professional mime artists, past and present, working throughout the world.
- Educate and inspire future generations about the history and art form of mime.
- Further the teaching and performance of mime and movement theatre at The Ohio State University.

The process of establishing this archive has been an arduous process that has taken over nineteen years and has included the help and input of many individuals. The dream of this archive was constantly held strongly in the hearts and minds of two individuals: Jeanine Thompson, Associate Professor at OSU who studied with Marceau since 1985, and Nena Couch, Professor and Curator of the TRI at OSU.

When asked how the dream for this archive began, Jeanine stated, "I was about to start my MFA in Dance at OSU. I was sitting in a coffee shop across the street from the Dance Department in 1991, I was contemplating a question posed to me by a friend, "Why at this point in your career do you want to get your master's degree at Ohio State?" I knew there were a few answers to that question, however what immediately came out of my mouth was, "I want to institutionalize the art of mime. I want to make sure that our generation and future generations can see, learn and hopefully appreciate the art form that has so powerfully impacted my artistry and teaching. And I believe that I can do that at Ohio State."

Upon completing her MFA in Dance, Jeanine was hired as the Movement Specialist in the OSU Department of Theatre. During her first year on faculty, she organized and conducted the first of five intensive residencies with Marcel Marceau held at OSU. Participants included students, faculty and invited professionals from across the country. Residency activities included intensive master classes with Marceau on his technique and style, and composition laboratories in which Marceau would see and critique work created by the participants. These sessions would often result in Marceau jumping up on stage with the participant and both of them performing his critique side-by-side. Marceau also presented Lecture Demonstrations, performances and guest speaking.



Photo: Etienne Bouduelle (Marceau Company member), Jeanine Thompson and Marcel Marceau demonstrating *Youth, Maturity, Old Age and Death*, during residency at OSU, © Marilyn McKinley 1995

Highlights of his residencies for Jeanine were working with Jeff Light from Industrial Light and Magic and the OSU Advanced Computing Center for Design (ACCAD) in motion capturing Marceau and his signature movements. As well, watching Marceau film her all time favorite solo of his, *Bip Remembers*.

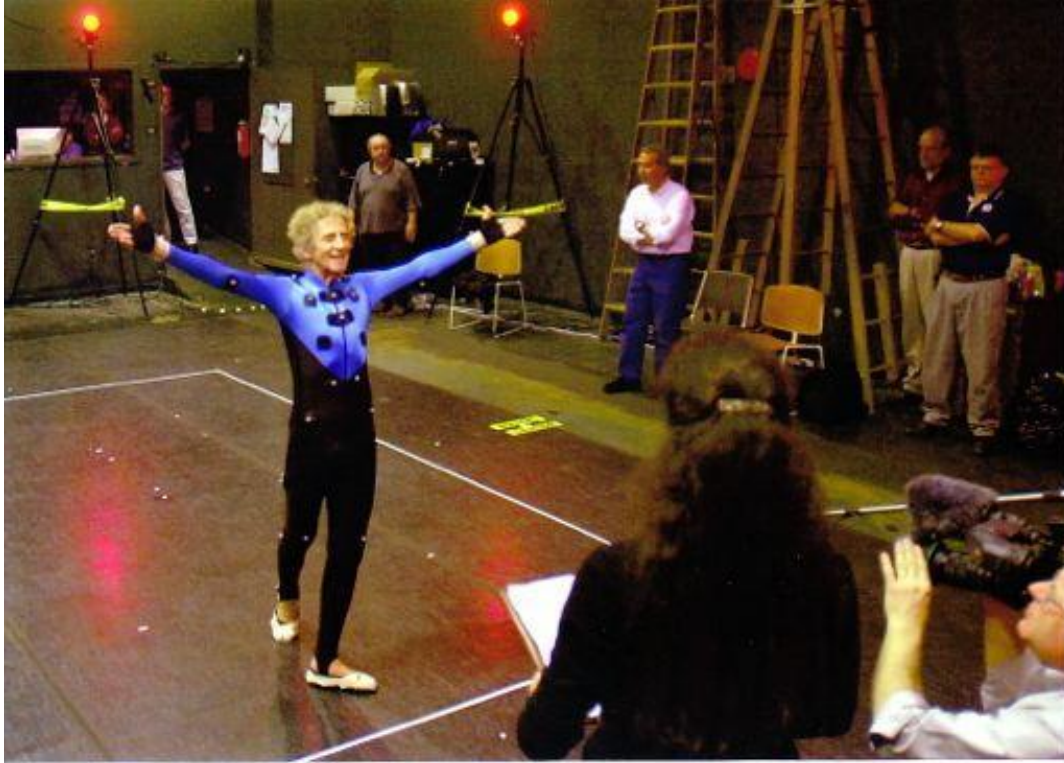


Photo: Motion capture of Marcel Marceau, with Jeff Light (ILM) and Jeanine Thompson (OSU), © OSU Photo Services 2001.

On a hot August day in 2011, the moving truck holding treasures from one of the greatest artists of our time, arrived in Columbus from New York City. The boxes were carefully unloaded and escorted down the long path to the climate-controlled library. As the first box was delicately cut open, the seventeen years of discussions, list making, planning, hoping and dreaming that Marceau, Jeanine and Nena did into getting these materials here, all became well worthwhile.

It is our hope that this archive will make available the volume of materials collected of Marceau's teaching and touring in the United States. Plans for the materials include preserving the delicate videotapes and paper in order to allow these items to be researched, and compiling materials to assist with making archive searches more concise.



Photo: Marcel Marceau in residence at OSU, © OSU Photo Services 2001