

# Clarity of action, beauty of emotion

The auditorium wasn't full by any means, but the lobby was crowded with most of Edmonton's "artsy set" when I walked in the door. I was possessed of an excellent seat in the third row center, and speculated before the performance began about how I should have brought a tape recorder. Surely the sound of Marcel Marceau's slippers would be worth something in the open market. I was speculating about an underground record when a friend leaned over to me and said, "Marcel Marceau already has a record out. It's fifteen minutes of silence and one minute of applause."

But when the performance started it was obvious that the ratio of 'minutes of silence' to applause would be much greater. Marcel Marceau has spent years mastering the art of mime, and it is obvious in the body control and sensitivity he brought to his performance.

The first half of his presentation was devoted 'Style Pantomimes', what he terms as a 'mixture of anecdote with pure bodily virtuosity' to achieve 'a marriage of form and content' which 'gives Style Pantomimes their continuity and harmony: to give pleasure by grace, to move the spectator by the content...clarity of action, beauty of emotion, merge in a harmony that is constant even when they break or are dissonant.'

That is the philosophy of Style Pantomime. The reality, to an observer, is the disciplined expression of humor and humanity by the use of compact and universal gesture and gesticulation. Marceau moved from laughter to depth and sensitivity in seconds in such exercises as the Circus Performer, the Sculptor, the Creation of the World, the Public Garden, the Trial, and The Mask Maker.

In the Mask Maker he reached the height of the tragi-comic art that is mime. While the audience was still convulsed with laughter at the mask-maker's efforts to

remove the mask of a clown, we saw the weariness and despair of the trapped artist, his body tortured by the effort of escape. The theme of escape begun in the Cage was here carried to complete expression.

The second half of the program was devoted to Marceau's character Bip. Marceau calls Bip 'the silent witness of the lives of all men, struggling against onehandicap another, with joys and sorrows as their daily companions.' Bip is a white-faced innocent, Everyman who twirls through life with tragicomedy and gentleness.



Marcel Marceau

For Edmonton, Bip was a Lion Tamer, David and Goliath, a Guest at a Society Party, In Love Committing Suicide, and A Soldier. He began with the farcical humor of the Lion Tamer and progressed through the pure exercise in skill that was David and Goliath (the two characters emerging in rapid turn from behind a screen) to end with the Soldier, a powerful statement against the futility of war. As the lights faded down on Bip's tortured spinning body, then came up again on the empty stage and Bip's crumpled hat, the audience burst into

moved and enthusiastic applause.

My applause and my participation in the standing ovation were, not a tribute to a great entertainer, for Marceau is not an entertainer, but recognition of a great artist. For without doubt, Marceau is one of the greatest living mime artists in the world. He has devoted his life to the art of which he says the following: "Does not pantomime offer the language of the heart? Everything can be expressed through the art of mime, which shuns the deceitful words that raise barriers against comprehension between men. Words can be deceitful, but the mime, in order to be understood by all, must be simple and clear without ambiguity...By breaking through the wall of languages, a mime can become a brother to all the audiences of the world.

I have performed in many countries, before audiences of many nationalities: emotion or hilarity rise, expands and fades away in identical pattern. Since I became a mime, I have not found it possible to identify laughter or tears that were specifically French or German, English or American or Russian...

Pantomime is... a universal art and a means of communion between all the people in the world who crave for love and beauty."

Candas Dorsey



Marceau's craft, incidentally, is mime. His medium - the mind and spirit of his audience. He tinkered away on me for 2½ hours on Tuesday night, touching a soft spot here, lancing an abscess there to expel its noxious vapours. All I could do for the most part was to gaze on in dumbstruck wonder as he pursued his noble craft.

Clothed in transfigured white, Monsieur Marceau exercised his celestial Art. I gasped - I reeled - I sighed and he expressed a slight avarce of soul with a gesture, a feast of emotion with a look.

Unfortunately, there was one thing missing at the performance and that was a means for the audience to express its appreciation, and its joy in the

communion. After the last pantomime, I expected the audience to rise en masse, consume the stage like a disease, and shower Marceau with kisses and tears of bliss. As it was I felt I was insulting him to get up for another cornball standing ovation. If a travel film can get one, what does that leave for a virtuoso?

To those of you who missed it - O, you hapless cretins, you greensicknes carrion, you! I suppose you must be forgiven, though - you know not what you have done. But can you forgive yourselves?

by David Bird

## Minority report

The trouble with Marcel Marceau is that he obviates so many of your favorite superlatives any reviewer who would even attempt to express some of Marceau's art would have to be hopelessly pretentious, so I'll begin.

# CKUA's Petersen talks to B. J. Wilson

The following is part of an interview that Holger Petersen of CKUA had with B.J. Wilson of Procol Harum when that group came to the Jubilee Auditorium for a concert with the ESO last week. The Gateway would like to thank Mr. Petersen and CKUA for making this interview available to us and also Your Friendly Arts Editor would like to thank Don Stanton for all the work he put in on it. "Thanks Don"--Your Friendly Arts Editor.

Petersen: Your drumming is probably the most tasteful I've heard.

Wilson: Well, I'm like a gunslinger, there's always someone better. I have an identifiable style. The reason for this being the enjoyment I get out of playing Garry's songs.

Petersen: Who would you consider "great" among contemporary drummers?

Wilson: Levon Helm of The Band is my favorite. Not only is he ultra-simplistic in his style, but he uses extremely good taste in anything he plays. He just drives the Band along, which is all any good drummer does. The guy in Led Zep, I don't even know his name (John Bonham-ed.) just gets louder and louder, he's got no control over the dynamics of rhythm. The last rock and roll drummer played in Vince Taylor's group 10 years ago.

Petersen: The last??

Wilson: The only guy who comes close is the cat in Sha-Na-Na who can really play rock and roll. Skip Prokop is a superb percussionist, really dedicated. I saw him once when he was with the Paupers and

thought he was incredible. I haven't heard of him since.

Petersen: He's got his own group now--Lighthouse.

Wilson: Oh, that's his group. Yeah, very dedicated.

Petersen: What singular musician has most impressed you?

Wilson: Mathew Fisher who used to play organ with the group. He could pick up any instrument and learn to play it in a day. He could play a guitar solo, that he heard five years before, and play it note for note. Simply incredible musician.

Petersen: Will the recording you have made in Edmonton sell as well as your others?

Wilson: We'll have to sell at least half a million records to break even.

Petersen: Really! Do you pay production costs and then sell the finished product to A &

M?

Wilson: Yeah, not only do we pay the whole shot till the album starts selling, but we also have law suits up to our ears. We usually settle these out of court, and they're quite expensive.

Petersen: Who are your lawsuits usually with?

Wilson: Managers, and promotional agencies, who have little idea what makes a musician tick. To top it off, we earn \$10 thousand in America, Her Majesty takes away \$8 thousand in taxes.

Petersen: Can you ever see yourself doing session work in studio or eventually quitting drumming altogether?

Wilson: Answer to both questions-- no. I can't ever see myself quitting drumming. Me mum's always asking when I'm going to get a real job and work

in a factory.

Holger Petersen has regular shows on CKUA Saturday at noon ("Natch'l Blues") and Sunday from 9 p.m. to 1 a.m. (Pickin' Up the Pieces"). His interviews may be heard on Tony Dillon Davis's Rock Show on Saturday nights.

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