



When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson

Pam Muñoz Ryan , Brian Selznick (Illustrator)

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Marian Anderson is best known for her historic concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939, which drew an integrated crowd of 75,000 people in pre-Civil Rights America. While this momentous event showcased the uniqueness of her voice, the strength of her character, and the struggles of the times in which she lived, it is only part of her story. Like the operatic arias Marian would come to sing, Ryan's text is as moving as a libretto, and Selznick's pictures as exquisitely detailed and elaborately designed as a stage set. What emerges most profoundly from their shared vision is a role model of courage.

When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson Details

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Author : Pam Muñoz Ryan , Brian Selznick (Illustrator)

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From Reader Review When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson for online ebook

Valerie Lurquin says

When Marian Sang is a great book for students in the upper elementary grades and studying music. Marian Anderson was one of the United States most important singers who is known for her concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939. She drew a diverse crowd of over 75,000 people together! She has such an incredible story beyond the power of her voice, her character and ability to see beyond race, and the struggles and ignorance with which she survived through. The book begins with sharing her story as an 8 year old girl in her church choir and takes you through her life. The illustrations and narration work effortlessly to depict a beautiful picture of her life. There are several vocabulary words through this story for students to research and find the meaning of as they are reading.

Krista the Krazy Kataloguer says

Her story is so inspiring! I only wish a CD had accompanied this book so that I could listen to her singing. Brian Selznick's illustrations are beautiful in their shades of brown, especially the gorgeous two-page spreads at the end of the book. Made me want to read more about her. Highly recommended!

Cora says

Beautiful illustrations and well written. More appropriate for 4th-7th grade.

Maci Thornton says

In this biography, we follow the life of Marian Anderson, who seems to have been born to sing. Marian fought through a lot of obstacles through life with a lot of support and encouragement from those around her to succeed in her dreams. She began singing in churches when she was young and worked hard to get to music school, even after she was denied for being a person of color. She then left America to sing without the constraints and to grow. When she returned to America, she was a symbol for a people of color and she was rejected from many venues for being black. Eventually, she performed and began to be invited to perform for kings and queens, presidents and first ladies, prime ministers, and more. Because she persisted and believed in herself, she was able to accomplish her dreams and set a new precedent for men and women of color.

I think this book could be used in A LOT of ways in the classroom. It could be used as a launching point for a PBL about the civil rights movement that would come later in history (after this story takes place) or about the roaring '20s era. It could be used as a supplement for social studies lessons about civil rights, racial discrimination, the '20s, or about influential African Americans during black history month. It could also be used in a literacy lesson about Main Idea where the students would go through this book and would find the key details about Marian Anderson's life and what she became known for and then write about the main idea of this book.

This book was a WOW book for me because I'm disappointed that I've never heard about Marian Anderson before, especially since she is such an icon for racial equality and breaking down the color barrier. She's also an inspiration for women since she was so independent and persistent. I am truly inspired by her dedication to her dreams and by how much she believed in herself, and I think this would be a good lesson to any and everyone.

Lisa Tobleman says

I was thinking about my Dad today, and in honor of Dr. Martin Luther King I have a special person I would like to introduce some of you to.

Her name was Marian Anderson, and she was one of the most amazing opera singers of her time. She sang everywhere in Europe and had a voice that was breathtaking. Thinking of my Dad because he was the one who told me about Ms Anderson when I was six, sitting in our living room off La Joya listening to a live Met broadcast like we did every Saturday. I can still hear his voice telling me that this amazing woman with a voice of an angel wanted to sing at the Met, but the directors at the time said no. Whites only! Undaunted, Marian looked for a place to sing. The First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt and her husband President Franklin D Roosevelt, solved this problem by inviting her to sing at the Lincoln Memorial. So Easter Sunday, April 9, 1939, Marian Sang to more than 75,000 people.

The National Archives recorded and preserved the concert. To listen to the whole radio broadcast of the concert look up <http://media.nara.gov/mopix/audio/ww2...>

This book means a lot to me because Ms. Anderson was both a beautiful singer and someone who my Dad adored. She pioneered equality for artists of color long before there was a Civil Rights Movement and did it simply by being so good she could demand things like she would only perform to mixed audiences.

The illustrator: Brian Selznick, who won his own Caldecott award for his book The Invention of Hugo Cabret, uses sepia tones and stylized people to convey the sense of time until the last page where the only bit of true color in the whole book is Ms Anderson on stage, singing at the Met...The First singer of color ever to perform there. I am not familiar with Pam Munoz Ryan's books, but this story focuses on Ms Anderson's life and her singing. I adore this book and read it often.

It should be in our library soon, so look for it to be featured along with other stories of important Civil Rights pioneers in the coming weeks.

Amanda says

Summary: This book is a biography about Marian Anderson. Marian is known for a concert she had on the Lincoln Memorial back in 1939. The biography begins with Marian as a child. She loved to sing and she always was humming while working. Her voice stood out and was so "strong and velvety" that all wanted to hear her sing. The choir director wanted to hear her sing and paired her to sing the low parts of the song. She was then being invited to other churches to sing as well. Marian sang with her eyes closed so that the song came from within. Marian used her singing to get her emotions out and expressed even within tragedy. She took singing very seriously and wanted to go to music school. When trying to apply to music school she was

turned down for being colored. She could not understand how people within music could be so evil. She continued to study music within her own neighborhood. Once in her twenties and singing in other states she would many times have to sing the same show twice for first white and then black people. Marian went on to prove her self enough to get professional training and travel to learn even more. When overseas she was singing for anyone and everyone and was appreciated. When she came to the United States segregation became an issue again. The biography continues to show Marian being a light for her people and a symbol for all.

Reflection:

Before there is even text on the pages of the book, it opens to beautiful illustrations that seem velvety to match the velvety sound of her voice as it is described. I found that for a biography book, this really pulled me into Marian's story. This story was not only about the struggle of a singer living out her dreams, but also of a colored person trying to overcome adversity. The powerful message of this book is to not give up on your dreams, and I feel that it was done in a way that could be related to by people overcoming discrimination as well as people striving for their dreams. This could be a great pairing to go along with teaching about civil rights and it takes a different twist on the typical stories we usually hear. I enjoyed this biography as well as how well it was put together.

(NS) Lisa says

Marian loved to sing and she did it very well. This story describes the talents and struggles of a gifted singer, in the times of racial barriers in the 20th century. We follow Marian from her childhood, singing in church, through her rejection to a music school that refused to take her because of her color, to her success despite the challenges of racism and prejudice.

We find that Marian Anderson is best known for her historic concert at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939, which drew an integrated crowd of over 75,000 people in pre-Civil Rights America. While this momentous event showcased the uniqueness of her character, and the struggles of the times in which she lived, it is only part of her story.

The book is organized to tell the story of Marian Anderson first, and then states all the historical facts at the end so that students can make the connection of Marian's life to what was going on in the world. It is easier to understand the story line without all the dates tossed into the main plot. This is a great biography to teach students how biographies work, and how to introduce the key components within a good biographical story.

This story would be appropriate for students in third through sixth grades.

Brenna says

“When Marian Sang: The True Recital of Marian Anderson: The Voice of a Century” is a story that describes the struggles of a gifted singer during the times of racial barriers in the 20th century (Ryan, 2005). Ryan takes us through Marian’s life as a child singing in church, to a young adult that is rejected from a music school because of her color (Ryan, 2005). We watch how Marian overcomes her struggles and fights the racial barriers of her time (Ryan, 2005). Marian Anderson is best known for her performance at the Lincoln Memorial in 1939 (Ryan, 2005). With an integrated crowd of 75,000 people she delivered a historical concert in the pre-Civil Rights era (Ryan, 2005). The way the story is told is simple and easy to follow. The story line is not cluttered with dates, but the dates are given at the end for reference. The colors

Selznick chose set the tone of the story with the use of browns, creams, and the occasional color. The story itself is powerful and moving, the added illustrations makes it that much more powerful. I would introduce this story to grades 1st-5th because of its simple and easy to follow story line and that it provides a separate part of the book for further research for older students.

Agata Wilusz says

Absolutely loved this picturebook biography if Marian Anderson's life and struggle to be heard as an African American singer. I was saddened to learn that although she was American she was not allowed to perform in many places or treated with the dignity all people deserve, but that she was able to get and do all of those things overseas! Marian was very determined and persevered to achieve her dreams, and not only that, but she also used her platform to help others. This was a quick and easy read that I highly recommend!

Kathryn says

I was so excited to find this book after falling in love with Ryan and Selznick's other book Amelia and Eleanor Go for a Ride Based on a True Story "When Marian Sang" did not disappoint!

My book came with a companion cassette recording which I thought was just going to be of Marian's famous Lincoln Memorial performance but was actually a narration of the story. What I liked about this: we got to hear the songs from the book--isn't it neat to KNOW what the songs are supposed to sound like, rather than guessing? Especially for something historic. What I did NOT like: this was NOT actually Marian Anderson's actual performances (I wanted to hear HER voice!) and it took a really, really long time to "read" with all those songs--some of them were very very slow. So, I ended up switching it off half way through and just reading the book.

As for the BOOK itself: Marvelous! I love how Ryan conveys such humanity and spirit amidst good historical detail. I thought this was a wonderful and balanced portrayal of an amazingly talented woman who also happened to become an idol of the civil rights cause (as the historical notes state, she was not always comfortable with this designation!) This is not a "poor me" story, despite the obstacles she faced. Selznick's artwork is so captivating and moving--I absolutely loved it! You can almost HEAR Marian sing just by looking at her soulful eyes and expressions.

Be sure you read the notes at the back of the book. Selznick's actually brought tears to my eyes!!!

After I finished this, I went on YouTube to find some of Marian's performance so I could actually hear HER sing. Quite moving. I highly recommend the whole reading/listening experience!

Jennifer Tarr says

I did enjoy WHEN MARIAN SANG. I did not know Marian Anderson before reading it and wish, now, I could meet her. The plot and theme were similar to a dozen African-American Athlete stories that have been written or made into television shows and movies. Yet this touched me more—perhaps it was the lyrics that peppered the pages, or the idea that “high art” such as opera, might transcend street violence or prejudice, or

the fact that she was accepted internationally before she was accepted at home (an irony that always confounds and upsets me). In this way, the author selected a good topic, one I grew to care about. I also believe the author and illustrator together conveyed a quiet confidence and enduring spirit that gave dignity to this woman. The unfairness of prejudice was conveyed—with sadness, but not bitterness...which may be authentic, I don't know for sure. But the result was a powerful, piece--I was proud of her triumph at singing at the Met. I was proud for Marian, and I was proud of Americans for evolving their thinking and opening their eyes, ears and hearts. For me, this was an award winner.

Matthew says

To check out my review: <http://dancinginth3dark.blogspot.com>

It amazes me how this famous opera singer never graces the pages of history books in terms of historical and remarkable tale of overcoming struggles in the United States. I remember vividly reading this book in my civics class and being enchanted by the story, how relatable Marian Anderson is, and how I never came across her name before reading this book. I couldn't believe this story to be true and I wish they would make a movie out of her character. If they could cast anyone for the role of Marian hands down I have to say Audra McDonald.

Audra McDonald has the looks, the talent, and the capability of tapping into Marian and bringing her story to life and definitely Oscar-Winning performance. Marian predates Martin Luther King Jr. and yet both their performances have changed a nation. I applaud the author of writing this story and beautiful illustrations to make the story colorful and relevant in the 21st century.

We meet Marian Anderson who has the natural gift to sing. She grows up in the church and as time passes she dreams of being a singer particularly an Opera Singer. The only exception is she's poor and sadly black in the early 20th century. It was never heard of a black person to sing Opera let alone sell sold out concerts between the prejudice they suffer both professionally and in society. Marian is desperate to accomplish her dreams and yet they seem so far away from accomplishing.

No teacher wants to accept her to a music school because of the color of her skin, she has to work to support her family since her father passed away early in her life, and luckily the church will pay for her private lessons because they believe in her dreams and are willing to donate to the church. I've never seen that religious experience before and regardless whether you are religious or not I believe we need that in our community. We should take care of our own and help others to aspire to their dreams especially children.

Then the magical event happens is when she discovers a famous opera singer who is accepting students for private lessons and she is granted the opportunity to work with him and she trains hard to become the singer she is meant to be. After two years of lessons she is prepared to make the next move and that means to travel to Europe where it's easier to land roles and feel free of living in a country and not worry about the color of your skin.

She becomes a overnight sensation in the opera world and decides to make the passage back to the States and immediately she suffers the consequences of racism in America. No hotels would allow her to check in, concert halls refuse to accept her, and she has to perform separate concerts for whites only and then for the color people.

One event that helped fuel the fire allowed her to get press coverage and the chance of a lifetime to perform a concert at the Lincoln Memorial. The President of the United States and the 1st lady gave the permission to allow this event. This was never heard of in history which is part of the reason Dr. King used the venue during the civil rights moment and thousands showed up to witness Marian Anderson. Everyone of every color and race showed up to this event and she makes history. Years later she will break another record as the first African-American to perform at the Metropolitan Opera.

This book gave me all the feels the first time I read it and reading it for the second time I felt the same magic again. It always fascinates me when obstacles are presented to some people and how they carefully analyze their choices and pick the different path that will help them achieve their dreams and more. In the beginning you connect with Marian and believe it's not possible for her to accomplish her goals and more and yet fate would present itself and by making the right connections at the right time, new doors of opportunities opened themselves up and allowed Marian to become an Opera Singer. Her goal was to just perform opera and yet she broke records never heard of in history and people should know about her and her story.

I cannot rave enough about this book and I suggest everyone to check out this book and read it! Cannot wait for the day when they turn her story into a movie...

Amy Herrick says

Categories/Genres for this class fulfilled by this book:

Non-Fiction; Picture Book

Estimate of age level of interest:

Grades K-5

Estimate of reading level:

Grade 4

Brief description:

The book tells the story of the great opera singer Marian Anderson, a black woman whose 1939 concert on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial drew a crowd of 75,000 people in her support. Readers will learn the incredible struggles Anderson faced as a black performer in the US and the hard work required to become such an accomplished artist. The beautiful illustrations perfectly reflect Anderson's dignity and powerful presence.

2 characteristics of this genre and subgenre and how they appear in the book:

A characteristic of non-fiction biographies for young people is that they provide readers with a role model and show the challenges and choices that person made. When Marian Sang chronicles her struggles and fortitude; she is an excellent representation of a person who transcended great obstacles. Another characteristic of non-fiction picture books is that the illustrations and text are appropriately balanced. The illustrations in this book are stunning: the portraits of Anderson often fill most of the page; her demeanor portrays power and internal inspiration. The sepia tones are calm, dignified, and do a perfect job highlighting the monochromatic viewpoint of her detractors while proving it to be rich and varied to those paying attention.

In what ways and how well does the book as a whole serve its intended audience?

The book is best suited for a read-aloud with younger students, but strong readers in 3rd and 4th grade will be interested in Anderson's story. The illustrations are extraordinary; they mirror Anderson's experiences. For instance, on an ocean liner headed to Europe, the vantage point is from the ground: the boat looks enormous while she looks small. In another illustration, her mother is hugging a young Anderson, the two fill the page, creating intimacy and warmth. Students will feel they have gotten to know Marian Anderson through the illustrations as well as the text.

Awards:

ALA Notable Children's Book
Book Sense Book of the Year Finalist
CCBC Choices 2000
Red Clover Award
Robert F. Sibert Informational Book Honor 2003

Published reviews from professional sources:

Booklist 06/01/03
Booklist starred 11/15/02
Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books 12/01/02
Five Owls 06/20/03
Kirkus Reviews starred 09/01/02
Library Media Connection starred 01/01/03
Publishers Weekly starred 10/07/02
School Library Journal starred 11/01/02

Jennifer Cochran says

This was a very touching and motivating story detailing the life and determination of Marian Anderson. This book was a very compelling read, and as I read and admired the artwork by Brian Selznick, I kept thinking and repeating the expression, "When one door closes, a window opens." That phrase could not be more true for Marian Anderson. Even as a young child, all Marian ever wanted to do was sing, but she was born during a time when her skin color stopped her from achieving her dream. This book details her journey of perseverance to be a world-renown singer, and teaches the lesson that something worthwhile is always achievable in the end.

This book can be classified as a biography, and is appropriate for a read-aloud for grades 2-4. Students who are entering grade 5 would also appreciate this story as a read-aloud, but it could also be read independently at that age. I absolutely love this book as a read-aloud and it can be taken in so many directions in the classroom. In my 3rd grade classroom, I would love to use this text during February and talk with my students about how they will want to leave their mark on this world. Marian Anderson was the first African American woman to sing in the Constitution Hall, and she opened up so many opportunities for others to follow their dreams and believe the possible. She left her mark not only on our country, but our world, and I want my students to think big about their mark as well. This book is an excellent story to teach my students about perseverance, determination, and the power of dreaming big! I want my students to dream and believe in their future, and hopefully this story gives them the motivation they need to reach for the stars. I would also use this book in my class to have really great discussion and compare our world now to Marian's world then. I would be interested to hear them brainstorm and discuss the similarities and differences, and what

challenges our society has now that society back then did not have.

If I haven't made it clear, I love books with a message, and books that inspire me! Even as an adult, Marian's story inspires me. There have been, and I'm sure will be, instances in my life where I am afraid to dream outside of my comfort zone because failure and the unknown are scary. Marian had obstacles in her life that tried to keep her from her dream, and each time she found her way around them. I figure, if she can come back from racial prejudice, then I can find a way around my meager trivial problems. As an adult, it is easy to get into a rhythm and forget to dream, but this story lights a spark in your brain, and an immediate love in your heart. And not only was it eloquently written, but the artwork in this story is incredible! After reading the text, I went back through and spent some time just admiring the artwork. Just in the pictures alone, each time I looked, I found something new. I love when illustrations in a story constantly keep your eyes moving in such a meaningful way! The text and illustrations in this book tie in beautifully to make this a must-read in your classroom and your life.

This is definitely a story that I will pick up and re-read on my "not so inspired" days, because it is truly a pick-me-up in more ways than one, and has so much potential and worth in the classroom setting! If you haven't read it, this one is definitely worth picking up off the shelf!

Stephen McKinney says

Perseverance. If I had to choose one word to encapsulate what "When Marian Sang" is about, this would be it. The beautifully illustrated biography, written by Pam Muñoz Ryan with pictures by Brian Selznick, provides an insight into the life of one of our country's greatest singers, Marian Anderson. The book follows Marian from childhood, when she began her vocal career in youth choirs throughout South Philadelphia, astounding her neighborhood audiences with her vibrant multi-range voice. The story then proceeds into her confrontations with racial prejudice when she is denied entry into various music schools during the Jim Crow era. Marian perseveres through these struggles and eventually ends up on a stage that as a child, she thought was as far away as the sun.

I would list this book at a third grade level for read aloud. The themes, sentence and word complexity and subject/cultural background complexity make it a good choice for third graders. This text would be an excellent resource during a cross-curriculum unit involving history. It would be a fascinating lesson to have students look up the hymns that are used throughout the story and locate the origins of each song. From these hymns (and text), students could pull words that they did not know and place them in an individualized word bank. Having them read/sing these hymns would also allow practice for fluency.
