

Cultural Daily

Independent Voices, New Perspectives

Andrea Marcovicci Sings

Elisa Leonelli · Sunday, October 1st, 2023

I photographed and interviewed [Andrea Marcovicci](#) in her Laurel Canyon home in April 1981. She had just co-starred with Michael Caine in *The Hand* written and directed by Oliver Stone. I had liked her in *The Front* (1976) directed by Martin Ritt starring Woody Allen.



For that performance she was nominated as Best Acting Debut in a Motion Picture by the

journalists of the Hollywood Foreign Press, an association founded in 1943 that I joined in 1979. At the 1977 Golden Globes, held at the Beverly Hilton Saturday January 29, with Harry Belafonte as Master of Ceremony, she accepted for Susan Blakely the Best Actress award for the TV drama series *Rich Man, Poor Man*.



While scanning those old slides for my archives a few weeks ago, I did some research on Marcovicci's life and career and discovered that she was still performing as a singer, as she had been doing for decades. I contacted her and she graciously granted me a Zoom interview.

Andrea Marcovicci, born in New York, gets her Italian name from her father Eugen, born in Romania to Northern Italian parents in 1885, "he was an excellent doctor, as well as a fabulous pianist and a terrific dancer, a wonderful waltzer. He was 63 when I was born, died when I was 19. My mother Helen was a singer before she met my father, she was born in Pennsylvania and her parents come from Czechoslovakia and Russia. So I have a very Eastern European background."

Marcovicci's mother Helen died in 2016 at the age of 97. [Watch her perform](#) at age 93, introduced by her daughter: "everything I know about singing I learnt from this woman to my right."



“My mother took me very early to see old movies, when I saw Greta Garbo in *Camille*, I was sold, I thought: this is the only thing I can possibly do with my life. I can never remember not wanting to sing or act.”

“I started as a singer back in the late 60s, when the Vietnam war was happening, I was marching on Washington and singing protest songs. In the 70s I sang at a nightclub in the Village called Reno Sweeney. At the same time I was playing Ophelia in Central Park with Sam Waterston as Hamlet. I had appeared in episodic television, and starred in the TV movie *Cry Rape* (1973) which helped change the rape laws in California.”

“I was a tragedienne, so I was very lucky to be chosen for *The Front*, a wonderful picture that I’m proud of forever. Woody Allen was darling to me, he couldn’t have been sweeter; we went to a basketball game and out to dinner, I was invited to his home for dinner. He was very helpful and educational to me, because this was a comedy and I am not a comedienne. It would be on *Taxi* (1981) where I truly learnt how to do comedy.”



Andrea Marcovicci, Michael Gwynne (c) Elisa Leonelli 1981

“Michael Caine is a real marvel, fascinating, hysterically funny, the most professional person I’ve ever met. He has a wonderful balance to his personality so that he is always positive and cheerful. When we were on location, way up in Arrowhead, near San Bernardino, we would go out to dinner sometimes after shooting, and that was a delight for me, because his storytelling is extraordinary. When he was given a Gala tribute in New York City at Lincoln Center in 2004, they asked me to sing for him and Shakira “The Way You Look Tonight” while they danced. And that was a wonderful thrill for me.”



“Since 1985 I sing at that same nightclub, the Gardenia, for 38 years. But it wasn’t that I ever stopped doing one or the other, I’ve always tried to keep both singing and acting careers in the air as much as possible. Actually I did a TV series recently that I was very proud of, *Baskets*, with Zach Galafianakis, only four years ago. So I was pleased to get ten episodes, a big job at this late stage of the game.”

“When I did 25 seasons of shows at the *Oak Room* in the Algonquin Hotel (1987-2011), I wanted them to have themes, a beginning, a middle and an end, so people leave knowing more about music and about history than they knew when they came in. That’s because I’m an actress, I would never feel good if I didn’t have a plot. In 1991 it was the anniversary of America entering into World War II, so I did an entire show about Love Songs of World War II. I did a show about *Irving Berlin*, one about *Jerome Kern*, I sang *Frank Loesser*, *Rodgers and Hart*, *Kurt Weil*. And I got eccentric, I did one show on *Ruth Etting*, who was a star of the 30s, one on *Mabel Mercer*.”



“I would like to tell my fans to bring their children and their children’s children, because we’ve got to put a fire under younger people and have them realize that music should be about lyrics and poetry that you can understand, because when you fall in love, you need something that can inspire your young love, and this is the music they should be listening to. I’m considering perhaps singing at the Gardenia once a month to bring more young people into our music and to preserve the music of the first half of the 20th century. I’m concerned that it will disappear and I don’t want that to happen, it has so much to offer, there’s so much history and beauty in those lyrics and melodies.”



“I do watch the news, and I pray with everyone for the Ukraine, I don’t like it when I see this madman trying to become our President again, but because I spend my time with music, I am regenerating my energy with the beauty that comes with music, and when I go up on stage, I pour nothing but love out there, not chaos. We’re in a pretty scary time right now, and I just hope that we can all pull it together and get through this particularly nasty time. I can hardly believe that Americans are so divided right now. It’s not my America, it’s not the way I grew up.”



Andrea Marcovicci on Zoom 2023

Marcovicci has several performances coming up in New York and London, and you can see her in Los Angeles at the Gardenia Club, where she has been singing for 38 years, in a Christmas show on December 10, in duets with her protege, Maude Maggart. [Check her website](#) for details

We suggest you take a deep dive into [Marcovicci’s YouTube channel](#), as I did, and listen to her singing all these wonderful songs where you can understand the words and be moved. [Watch her sing “Sepia Life”](#) and see how she looks today.

You could also go and rewatch *The Front*, included in Amazon Prime, [see trailer here](#), and you will realize how this movie about the blacklisting of Hollywood screenwriters, directors and actors in the 1950s resonates in our times.

And you may wish to catch Michael Caine’s latest performance in *The Great Escaper* opposite Glenda Jackson.

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