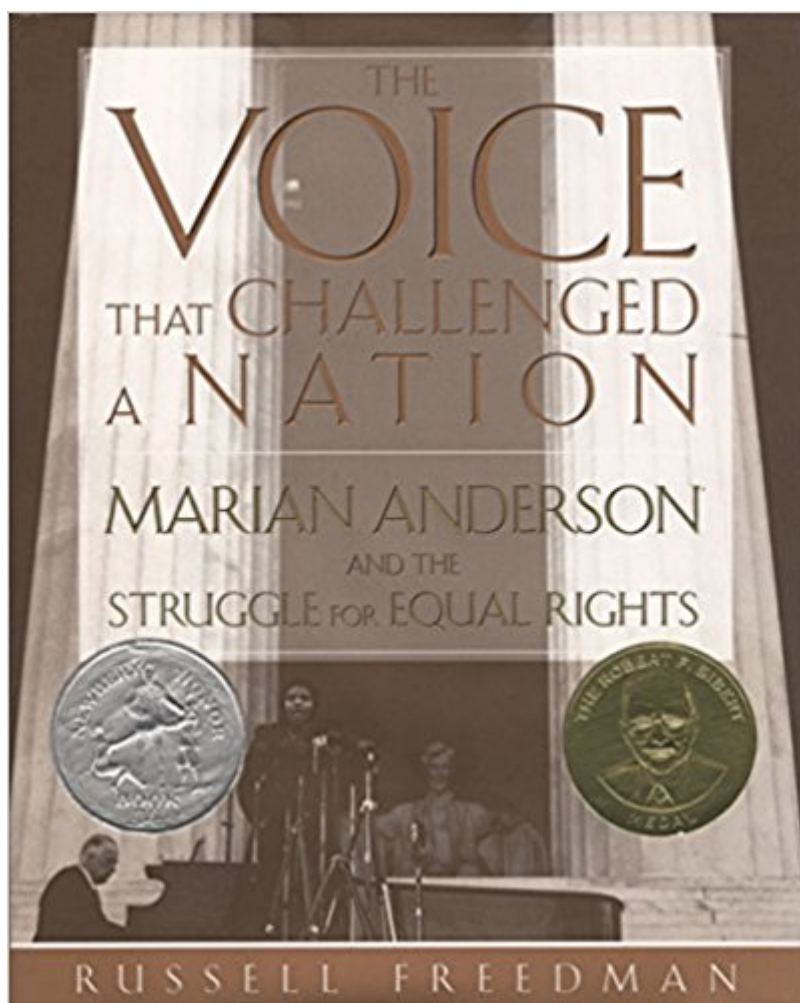


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The Voice That Challenged A Nation: Marian Anderson And The Struggle For Equal Rights



Synopsis

"A voice like yours," celebrated conductor Arturo Toscanini told contralto Marian Anderson, "is heard once in a hundred years." This insightful account of the great African American vocalist considers her life and musical career in the context of the history of civil rights in this country. Drawing on Anderson's own writings and other contemporary accounts, Russell Freedman shows readers a singer pursuing her art despite the social constraints that limited the careers of black performers in the 1920s and 1930s. Though not a crusader or a spokesperson by nature, Marian Anderson came to stand for all black artists -- and for all Americans of color -- when, with the help of such prominent figures as Eleanor Roosevelt, she gave her landmark 1939 performance on the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, which signaled the end of segregation in the arts. Carefully researched, expertly told, and profusely illustrated with contemporary photographs, this Newbery Honor and Sibert Medal-winning book is a moving account of the life of a talented and determined artist who left her mark on musical and social history. Through her story, Newbery Medal-winning author Russell Freedman, one of today's leading authors of nonfiction for young readers, illuminates the social and political climate of the day and an important chapter in American history. Notes, bibliography, discography, index.

Book Information

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Age Range: 10 - 12 years

Grade Level: 5 - 7

Customer Reviews

Grade 5-9
In the initial chapter, Freedman movingly and dramatically sets the stage for the performer's historic 1939 Easter concert at the Lincoln Memorial. In less than two pages, he

captures the huge crowd's eager anticipation, briefly describes the controversy sparked by the Daughters of the American Revolution's refusal to allow Anderson to appear at Constitution Hall, and mentions the significance of the concert. He leaves readers at the moment when "A profound hush settled over the crowd. . . she closed her eyes, lifted her head, clasped her hands before her, and began to sing." The author then switches to a chronological account of Anderson's life from her childhood in Philadelphia through her acclaimed U.S. and European concert tours in the 1920s and 1930s. He then gives a fuller account of the famous outdoor concert, which he refers to as a milestone in both musical and civil rights history. Freedman acknowledges that the singer did not set out to be a political activist or a crusader for civil rights. Numerous archival photographs, thorough chapter notes, a selected bibliography of works for both adult and younger readers, and a selected discography of currently available Anderson CDs are included. This inspiring work once again demonstrates Freedman's talent for showing how a person's life is molded by its historical and cultural context. Readers of Pam Muñoz Ryan's *When Marian Sang* (Scholastic, 2002) will appreciate this lengthier account of Anderson's life, as will all readers of biography, U.S. history, and musical history. . . Ginny Gustin, Sonoma County Library System, Santa Rosa, CA Copyright © Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All rights reserved. --This text refers to the Audible Audio Edition edition.

"a fully realized portrait of a musical artist and her times...an outstanding, handsome biography. Freedman at his best." KIRKUS REVIEWS, starred reviews Kirkus Reviews, Starred "Freedman provides thrilling accounts...copious quotes...allow her resonant voice--and personal grace--to fill these pages...An engrossing biography." PUBLISHERS WEEKLY, starred review Publishers Weekly, Starred "This inspiring work once again demonstrates Freedman's talent for showing how a person's life is molded by its historical and cultural context." SLJ School Library Journal, Starred "In his signature prose, plain yet eloquent. Freedman tells Anderson's triumphant story . . . Older readers and adults will want this too." BOOKLIST Booklist, ALA "Freedman offers the story of a movement encapsulated in the biography of an extraordinary African-American woman." BCCB Bulletin of the Center for Children's Books "a masterful biography...The prose is sharp and clean with generous use of quotations...a superb choice." VOYA VOYA (Voice of Youth Advocates)

This book was written for young adults, but it is an excellent introduction to Marian Anderson, her tremendous five-octave voice, and how her voice and life became part of the civil rights movement. Whether singing opera or spirituals, she can move you to feel music and its emotion, not just hear

it. Check out some of her recordings - though not all her albums are available, some of the ones that are still allow you to experience her impact. I can never hear "My country, 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty..." without thinking of her, and this book reveals some of the emotions behind her singing this song at the Lincoln Memorial. *Spirituals Negro Spirituals 1924-1949*

This will be a much shorter review than others have entered, but I did want to say that I was so happy to have come upon this version of the Marian Anderson story. It fills a niche for a biography for middle level students that illustrates the drama of Anderson's life. What an amazing woman, and how beautifully Patterson writes her story. It is a wonderful exemplar of high quality writing for students and equally interesting for any adult.

We used this for a book report at school. Easy to read, even for a 3rd/4th grader. It showed an interesting aspect of Black American History that people normally don't know about

Very fast shipping and excellent condition. Very informative! This worked very well for a class I needed it for and is a great product to have apart of a home library. I really love this book. I would recommend it definitely.

This is a great book with wonderful visuals. I used this to teach african american history in elementary and middle school

There is a reason he is a Newbery award winner. Some have called his prose is "simple" or "clean" but think I believe a better term would be "understated." An English major, Freedman knows how to write, with an economical, elegant style that lends even greater strength to the unfolding historical drama. This is not a comprehensive 'trivial pursuit" biography but a story of Anderson's life within the context of segregation and the beginning of the civil rights movement. The details are carefully chosen to support the narrative (for example, he does not dwell heavily upon the world of classical music as does Rubin's biography of Leonard Bernstein, "Music is It," although Anderson's entire career and claim to fame is through music as much as Bernstein, another minority Jewish). This is already telegraphed in the title but few can masterfully weave a biography seamlessly into the historical fabric as does Freedman. At the same time, he is careful to leave the reader to draw his/her own conclusions from the text. More than just a "biography," this is a book of a key figure AND her times. Substantive and readably, this is a perfect candidate for Common Core standards.

The Voice that Challenged a Nation: Marian Anderson and the Struggle for Equal Rights by Russell Freedman is an in depth look at the life and career of Marian Anderson, and what impact her career had on the 1960s Civil Rights movement. Before picking this book up, I didn't really know who Marian Anderson was. The name sounded vaguely familiar, but I couldn't have told you who she was. When I think of the Civil Rights movement, I think of the main people associated with that- the ones you learn about in school- Martin Luther King Jr., Rosa Parks and the Montgomery, AL bus boycotters, the lunch counter sit in crew and Malcom X. I'd never thought much about performers and the impact they might have. Marian Anderson was a young black woman who loved to sing. She sang in her church choir, and after a series of sacrifices made by both her and the members of her community and congregation, she was able to begin a successful singing career in the time when very few people who weren't ethnically Caucasian had a chance. Her abilities as a vocalist and her wide international fame made it possible for her to take a stance on equal rights and have people listen. As her fame grew, she refused to sing for segregated audiences, and when Constitution Hall, owned by the Daughters of the American Revolution in Washington D.C. refused her the chance to perform because she was black, she and her good friend, Eleanor Roosevelt (the first lady) staged a free concert on the steps of The Lincoln Memorial. She was an incredible woman, who didn't apologize to anyone for who or what she was. She had a firm sense of self, and a strong character. Reading this book, I was amazed at the impact she had on moving the Civil Rights Movement forward. This isn't the first Freedman biography I've read, and I have to say that I like his style. It's easily accessible for younger kids, but contains enough information that they are a great starting place for adults as well. He uses a lot of photos to illustrate his points, and they really help to bring the subject of the biography (or photobiography) alive. I read this book because it won the 2005 Newbery Honor Award, but it's a great book to read if you are interested in her life, classical singers, or the impact of some of the lesser known, but still influential, members of the Civil Rights Movement.

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