

Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore

2025 | 97mins

Director: Shoshannah Stern

Starring: Jack Jason, Marlee Matlin, Henry Winkler



This documentary follows Marlee Matlin's life and rise to fame in 1987 when she became the first deaf actor to win an Academy Award for her role in *Children of a Lesser God* (1986). At 21, Matlin was thrust into the spotlight, becoming one of the first deaf people many Americans had seen on TV, becoming a representative for the deaf community.

The film boasts exclusive footage filmed over the course of Matlin's career by her longtime interpreter and producing partner Jack Jason – including Matlin behind the scenes on the sets of *Seinfeld* (1989) and *The West Wing* (1999). For the first time, in her own language of American Sign Language (ASL), Matlin reflects on her relationship with actor William Hurt, her place in the deaf community, her fight for roles, accessibility in Hollywood and what it means to be 'the first'. The documentary features interviews with Henry Winkler, Troy Kotsur and Aaron Sorkin.

Directed by Shoshannah Stern, she was inspired to pursue career as a deaf actor after seeing Matlin win her Oscar. This is Stern's directorial debut, previously starring on TV shows including *Grey's Anatomy*. When Matlin was approached about a documentary, she demanded that the director had to be Stern, stating that 'I wanted to have that type of conversation I could [with] Shoshannah, where I could feel free and sign and not worry about an interpreter voiceover' (The Guardian, 2025). In their conversations in the film, Stern and Matlin sign, and colour-coded subtitles are used to identify the speakers.

Marlee Matlin: Not Alone Anymore had its world premiere at the 2025 Sundance Film Festival. It has been praised by critics for its engaging portrait of Matlin, as well as its innovative use of captioning and integration of ASL.

'Director Shoshannah Stern's documentary about Marlee Matlin, the first deaf actor to win an Oscar, offers thought-provoking insights into the history of disability inclusion (and exclusion) in America'

- Peter Adams

Excellent

Fair

Poor



What did you think of the film? Please mark or tear the number.

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Did You Know?

- Matlin is the youngest person to receive the Oscar in the Best Actress Category at the age of 21.
- Matlin has campaigned for decades for better closed captioning and was instrumental in getting legislation passed in the US Congress in support of closed captioning for broadcast television. She also successfully campaigned for streaming services to provide closed captions.

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