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Oscars 2018: The Silent Child, starring six-year-old deaf British girl, wins

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Oscars 2018



Maisie Sly walked the red carpet with Rachel Shenton and Chris Overton

A film starring a six-year-old deaf British girl and made by two former Hollyoaks stars has won an Oscar.

The Silent Child, which tells the story of a girl who struggles to communicate, was named best live action short film.

It stars Maisie Sly, aged six, from Swindon, and Rachel Shenton, who played Mitzeeee Minniver in the Channel 4 soap.

Shenton also wrote it and used sign language in her acceptance speech. It was directed by Chris Overton - AKA Hollyoaks cage fighter Liam McAllister.

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"I made a promise to our six-year-old lead actress that I would sign this speech," Shenton said while accepting the statuette at Sunday's ceremony in Hollywood.

"My hands are shaking a little bit so I apologise," she added.



Shenton signed her acceptance speech

While signing, she continued: "Our movie is about a deaf child being born into a world of silence. It's not exaggerated or sensationalised for the movie.

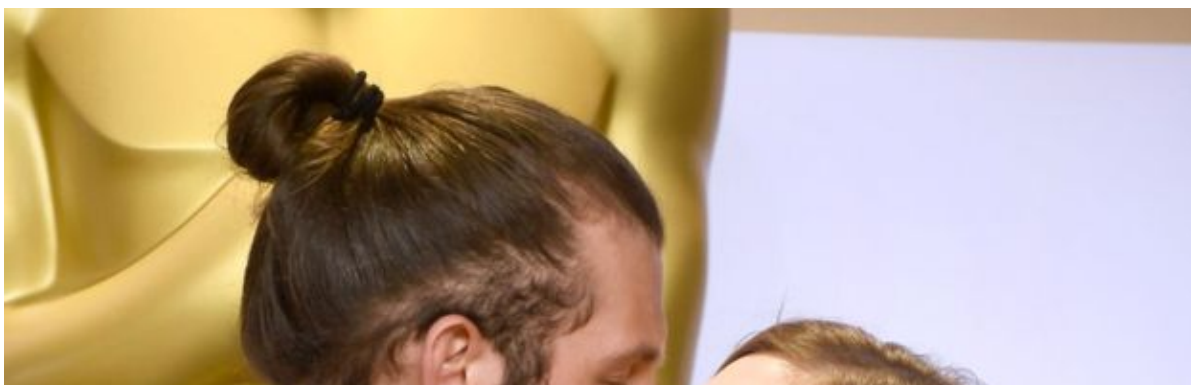


Maisie is taking Hollywood life in her stride.

"This is happening. Millions of children all over the world live in silence and face communication barriers, and particularly access to education.

"Deafness is a silent disability. You can't see it and it's not life threatening so I want to say the biggest of thank yous to the Academy for allowing us to put this in front of a mainstream audience."

The Silent Child tells the story of a profoundly deaf four-year-old called Libby, played by Maisie. She lives a silent life until a social worker, played by Rachel, teaches her how to communicate through sign language.





Overton and Shenton are engaged

Rachel, from Stoke-on-Trent, was inspired to write the film by her father, who went deaf after receiving treatment for chemotherapy when she was 12.

She became a qualified British Sign Language Interpreter and ambassador for the National Deaf Children's Society.

**Marlee Matlin**

@MarleeMatlin

YAYAYAYAY!! "The Silent Child" produced by [@RachelShenton](#) just won an Oscar. Sign Language at the [#Oscars](#) once again!!!! SO PROUD of you Rachel!!!!!!!!!!

3:17 AM - Mar 5, 2018

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Report

**Dani Mitchell**

@dani_m_97

That woman signing her speech for the deaf actress in The Silent Child was the greatest thing I've ever seen 🙏
[#Oscars](#)

3:18 AM - Mar 5, 2018

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Report

**E. M. Sheehan**

@emsheehanwrites

Replying to @emsheehanwrites

Very happy for The Silent Child, and love that the speech was signed. First and only obvious rep for disabilities thus far. [#DisTheOscars](#) [#Oscars](#)

3:21 AM - Mar 5, 2018

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**Kody Keplinger**

@Kody_Keplinger

I have not seen The Silent Child, but I'm excited to see the academy honor a short film that stars a disabled child AS a disabled child. Can we extend this grace to mainstream films as well? [#Oscars](#)

3:22 AM - Mar 5, 2018

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In his acceptance speech, Overton thanked Shenton - his fiancée. He said: "It's really your hard work for the last 12 years that has really made this project authentic."

Overton also thanked their parents for making cup cakes to raise funds for the film, and those who backed its crowdfunding campaign.

The pair cast Maisie, who had never acted before, after a nationwide search involved advertising on the websites of deaf organisations. They auditioned 100 children before they found their star.

Maisie's family had recently relocated 160 miles from Plymouth to Swindon so Maisie could attend a mainstream school where deaf children are supported.

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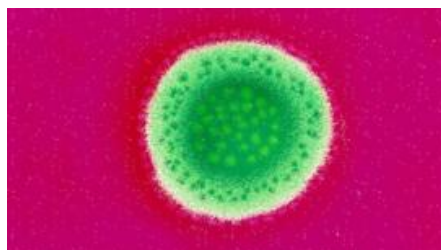
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