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William Windom and Thurber: 'My world' ten years later

Ian Bailey and Paul O'Donnell If William Windom had received the role of Captain James T, Kirk instead of William Shatner he might well be the only actor in North America performing in a one-man show about the crafty Starfleet Captain. As it was, Windom had to be

content will a guest starring role in one of the T.V. series' most celebrated episodes as the crazed Commander Decker - a role he says gave him more mileage than three years on another vintage television series, "The Farmer's Daughter". He also had to be content with a 1970 Emmy for the acclaimed tubular series "My World and Welcome to It". The same year, however, the show was cancelled, due to low Neilson ratings, and Windom followed up on a desire to do a one-man show on James Thurber, the American humorist.

"I'd just finished 'My World', that's why it made sense to do it about Thurber. If the show had been about Ghengis Khan that would be the one man show to do." Twelve years and countless performances later, William Windom finds himself at Toronto at the Leah Posluns Theatre acting in Thurber.

Windom, the very essence of a Hollywood star, puffing on a cigarette, spoke about the man e has personified on stage for over a decade.

Thurber is good with words. He knows how to deal with the English language," says an emphatic Windom. He feels taht Thurber has may things in common with the youth of today. "He tilts at the same windmills that young people do. He exposes his own sense of humor to them which helps them to develop theirs." Windom with a smile on his face, points out that Thurber, "likes to puncture the balloon of pomposity." He wryly admits, however, that it all sounds like hot air unless one sees the show.

More popular by face than name, Windom began his acting career playing Richard III to the troops oversees during World War II. Immediately after the War he did six Broadway shows. "I stayed in New York stumbling around at a little higher lever of Economic benefit. You make



William Windom, the star of numerous television shows, is currently in Toronto starring in a theatrical tribute to Thurber.

more money in California than in New York, but you don't make much in either place."

Windom, who performs Thurber 45 times a year, as well as performances as Ernie Pyle, assembled the show and did some cutting of material. He has always enjoyed Thurber but is willing to admit that it was the Emmy for his performance as the beleaguered cartoonist based on Thurber in "My World and Welcome to It" that "gunned him into doing the show". "I would not have done a one man show about Thurber if that show had been about anyone else. I would have picked the one that got the award."

Windom has performed Thurbe all over the world and

has a jacket with the name of each city and campus he has performed the show at. The impressive tally ranges from UCLA to Hong Kong.

The American character actor lists tenacity and a love for the material as being the two skills most important in performing in a one man show. He sees his performances of *Thurber* as being more along the lines of a presentation than acting. The main point is to encourage people to read more Thurber material. He figures that will four children, ages 3 - 17, to feed, he will be doing the show for another 20 years.

Thurber runs to Feb. 14.

