

Torme and Windom captivate Hult audience

By Jonathan Siegle
Of the Emerald

Mel Torme and William Windom brought their different brands of solo entertainment into the Hult Center Saturday and Sunday, to end a weekend of entertainment as varied and different as Sun Ra and Scandia Festival.

Mel Torme is a rarity — a white, male jazz singer. His contemporaries, the pop singers of the 1940s and 50s are either dead or passe, or like Sinatra, have lost their voices. Torme's remains pure and facile. The human voice as an instrument was made to improvise, whether it be an Italian aria or a be-bop scat.

For the older folks in the audience he sang standards and ballads. He sang tributes to Johnny Mercer and Jerome Kern, his favorite lyricist and composer respectively. He sang tributes to Ella

Fitzgerald and Fred Astaire of all people, but the thrill came when he cut loose on a riff.

Torme is an entertainer. He can be very corny, but he knows how to play an audience — and Saturday night's wanted to be played with. It lay on its back like a happy hound and let Torme scratch its belly.

The high point of the evening may very well have been when Torme sang a satire of the Cole Porter's "You're the Tops." He introduced it saying, "There are times I just don't feel like singing a love song — sometimes just the opposite." Then he cut loose with "You're the Pits."

Torme's success may be attributed to both his refusal to compromise his music and his unique position in the jazz world. For him, at least, it may be said there is none other like him.

His contemporaries, he says, "fol-

lowed the path of the crooner, the vocal sex symbol." They chose the fame route for quick popularity. Torme today is in top form, enjoying greater popularity and having a whole lot of fun.

Torme performed in front of a hot trio, featuring Jay Lenhart on bass and Mike Renzi on piano. Sunday night William Windom performed the first of his two one-man shows of the works of James Thurber in front of a quiet trio, an old typewriter, a small table, and a stool.

Windom is a warm, friendly man. His portrait of the wry, witty Thurber is masterfully low key. It is typical of Thurber's life, that this writer who gave so much to American culture is played with such quiet grace.

Thurber gave us Walter Mitty, the man who put the fantasy world in the dictionary. For years, Thurber wrote essays, fables, stories, and reminiscences of his

youth in Columbus, Ohio. His many cartoons often played upon two themes, weak men and dogs.

Thurber's life and works were dramatized briefly on television in the series "My World, and Welcome to It." William Windom played Thurber. When the show was canceled, Windom began doing his one-man shows on the road.

Among the pieces Windom chose were tales of two police dogs chasing a leopard, Thurber's rules for a happy marriage, a weary scientist discussing life with a lemming, a 50-year-old man reliving an experience with a bully when he was 13, and Walter Mitty.

Thurber's wit and gentle criticism stood out before Windom's understanding portrayal. After discussing life a while, the scientist asked the lemming why they all kill themselves. The lemming asked the scientists why humans don't.



Photo by Dave Kao

Chilean artist Victor Paz will have his realist paintings on display in the EMU through Thursday.

Chilean realist's paintings on display

The works of Chilean painter Victor Paz, a noted realist, remain on display in the EMU's mezzanine level through Thursday.

This is Paz's first American exhibition. The 33-year-old artist emphasizes the physical elements of his subjects in their visual setting, while incorporating emotion to "strike a balance between that which is real and that which is pictorial," Paz says.

"It is not enough to do a work of art; I must conceive a work of art," he says. "A work of art is life made into art."

Influenced by the work of Rembrandt and contemporary realist Claudio Bravo, Paz views himself as a promising figure among a new Chilean generation of painters.

Paz will travel to San Francisco at the completion of his current exhibition, where he will meet with other realists, then return to Chile to continue expanding his work.

Modern Times Theatre slates Hiroshima play

The EMU Cultural Forum will present Modern Times Theatre's production of "Hibakusha: Stories from Hiroshima," on Wednesday, Nov. 3 at 8 p.m. in the EMU Ballroom.

The New York-based company recently has finished a highly successful off-Broadway run with good reviews.

"A saga of love and courage... the acting is as impassioned as the writing," wrote the New York Times.

Set in Hiroshima, spanning the years 1948 to 1968, the play takes its title from the Japanese word for "victims of the bomb." Ostracized by their fellow Japanese after the war, the Hibakusha banded together to help one another and to educate the world about the plight.

As one bomb victim explains, "The question we ask ourselves is not why so many die, but why did we survive? And we ourselves must be the answer to that question."

The play is drawn from meticulous research into journalistic and scholarly accounts of the bombing, and 28 characters join to tell the story of one couple and the effects of the bombing on their lives.

"We must go on talking about these things and not fall into silence," says company member Steve Friedman, the author of the play.

In the play, the power of the subject matter and the commitment of the actors combine for a moving and memorable evening of theater.

Tickets for the play, priced at \$3, are available at the EMU Main Desk. More information is available from the Cultural Forum at 686-4373.

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