





WILLIAM SHATNER

MY SILENT FRIENDS

By Nada H. Abdelmoniem

PEOPLE KNOW HIM AS A STAR FLEET CAPTAIN, A VETERAN POLICE SARGEANT, AND A BARMY ATTORNEY ON TELEVISION, BUT NOT MANY PEOPLE KNOW WILLIAM SHATNER AS A SERIOUS HORSEMAN WITH A HEART OF GOLD.

THE TWO TIME EMMY AWARD AND GOLDEN GLOBE WINNER, ACTOR, MUSICIAN, RECORDING ARTIST, AND AUTHOR, WILLIAM SHATNER HAS PUT HIS LOVE AND PASSION FOR HORSES TO SERVICE IN RAISING MILLIONS OF DOLLARS FOR CHILDREN IN NEED. IT WAS BACK IN THE LATE 1980S THAT SHATNER FIRST WATCHED A RIDING EXHIBITION BY CHILDREN WHO WERE SEVERELY HANDICAPPED, YET THERE THEY WERE GOING THROUGH INTRICATE EXERCISES ON THE BACK OF A HORSE. THE PROGRAMME WAS SPONSORED BY 'AHEAD WITH HORSES', A THERAPEUTIC RIDING GROUP FOR HANDICAPPED CHILDREN. WHEN THE EXHIBITION WAS OVER, SHATNER SAT, DEEPLY AFFECTED BY WHAT HE HAD SEEN; "YOU CAN'T WATCH THESE KIDS WITHOUT KNOWING YOU HAVE TO HELP, SOMEHOW." AND SO, IN MARCH OF 1990 CAME THE LAUNCH OF THE FIRST HOLLYWOOD CHARITY HORSE SHOW. SOON, OTHER CHARITIES IN NEED OF HELP WERE ADDED, SMALL, GRASS ROOT CHARITIES DOING BIG TIME JOBS.

When was your first encounter with horses?

My first encounter with a horse was Pegasus. In some long lost comic book, the winged horse spoke his thoughts from a balloon around his head. And my childish imagination went from there.

How do horses inspire you?

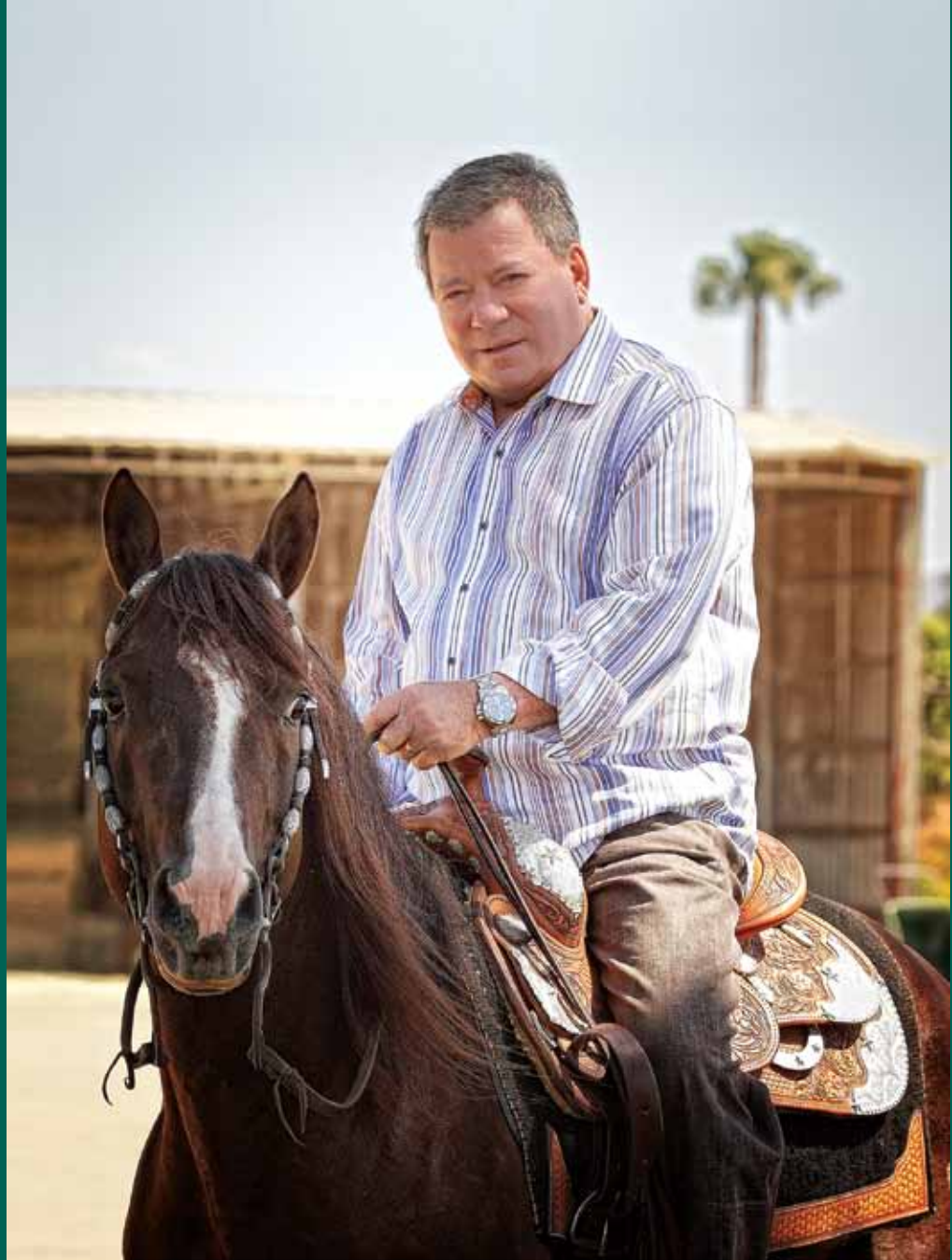
When I go to the stables to see my horses, I feel like I am visiting old friends, not garrulous, obnoxious, objectionable friends but pure friendship of silence. In the quiet of the stable, the scent of oats around, I am able to communicate with my talkative friends in non-verbal language. They respond to me as I to them. And the beginning of the unity of man and horse commences.

We understand that you are very much involved in charity work/ organisations that are horse related; what would you like our readers to know about that?

For the last several decades, I have been putting on a quarter horse show that displays the discipline of reining. As a result of my being able to get publicity for companies, I have been able to assemble some sponsors who give us money for charity. We give a large party on the Saturday of our horse show, the last weekend in April, and between the party, the sponsors, the attendees coming to the show, we have raised over the many years several million dollars that go to a diverse number of charities but mainly those involved in hypo-therapy. The Hollywood Charity Horse Show has been able to secure the performances of many headliners in country music, and as a result, our parties are always successful.

We keep our fingers crossed every year that generous benefactors will donate money to www.horseshow.org. Every penny of that donation goes to help some child in need. Nothing is taken off for administration.

Are there particular incidents involving horses that you find special or spectacular that you would like to share with our readers?



Perhaps the most special incident is the time I spend working with great detail on the perfection of the art of reining. It is through that communication that I have frequently achieved that closeness to the horse that makes it seem as though we are one.

We understand you favour the American Saddlebred horse; why?

I favour all horses and see in them the great beauty and the function for which they were bred. I am especially drawn to the American Saddlebred for its beauty and gait, to the Standardbred for its endurance and grittiness, and to the American quarter horse for those fast twitch muscles for which they were bred.

Please tell us about your stud

farm?

I breed Saddlebreds, Standardbreds and Quarterhorses and start their training at two and either ride them or sell them after that. Belle Reve Farm is our name.

Where do Arabian horses stand in reference to your liking to American Saddlebreds?

I am aware that all of our horses have come from the Arabian.

Have you ever visited any countries in the Middle East?

No.

If you are invited to attend a horse event in Egypt, would you accept?

As fast as a Warmblood would jump, I would accept. 🇪🇬