HANSON & SCHWAM
public relations
9200 sunset boulevard
los angeles, california 90069
(213) 278-1255

WALTER KOENIG

Biography

By Michael Santner

An apt handle for Walter Koenig might be twentieth-century Renaissance Man. Wearing more hats than a rack at Sardi's, he is a writer, novelist, producer, director, lecturer and teacher as well as renowned actor.

Starring in no less than seven feature films, including his signature role of Pavel Chekhov in all four of the already-released Star Trek movies: "Star Trek: The Motion Picture," (he wrote Chekhov's Enterprise a 'making of' diary for that film), "Star Trek II: The Wrath of Khan," "Star Trek III: The Search for Spock," and the block-buster hit of last year, "Star Trek IV: The Voyage Home." The latest installment, "Star Trek V," again has Walter starring and will begin filming this fall. In addition, he has starred in "Deadly Honeymoon," and his new feature science—fiction action—adventure starring role in "MoonTrap" co-starring Bruce Campbell and Leigh Lombardi; about the discovery of a settlement on the Moon that predates recorded history. The film will be released in the fall of 1988.

Walter found himself able to avoid being typecast in his "Star Trek" role by landing starring roles. In addition to his long—running association with the "Star Trek" television series,
he's also starred in three movies-for—television including "Antony and Cleopatra (Pompey) ," "Goodbye Raggedy Ann" and "The Questor Tapes" as well as over 30 starring roles in major series television, including "The Hitchcock Hour," "Columbo," "Medical Center," "Ironside," "Bring 'Em Back Alive," "The Untouchables" and "Ben Casey."

Walter made the decision to extend his career to writing ahich has been and continues to be enormously successful. "I've never been one to sit idle waiting for the phone to ring," Walter reveals.

Walter has written episodes for such popular shows as the animated "Star Trek" series for executive producer, Gene Roddenberry. Additionally, he has scripted segments of "Whatever Happened to the Class of '65," the critically acclaimed hit series "Family" with Kristy McNichol, "The Incredible Hulk," "The Powers of Matthew Star" and the Saturday—morning live—action Krofft adventure series, "The Land of the Lost."

His latest novel, "Buck Alice and the Actor Robot," which Koenig describes as a "satiric fantasy," hit the bookstore shelves in March, 1988.

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"I guess since the book's precipitating event is a devastating invasion of Earth and that one of the main characters is an actor who thinks he's a robot, it can be called a science—fiction novel.

The story focuses on a group of relatively bizarre people who have had a difficult life to begin with and now have to deal with a world turned upside—down." Koenig concentrates the story on the people and their self—concepts, not the events; a move he and other science—fiction aficionados consider unique.

In the past 20 years, he has written 30 scripts and two published books; quite an accomplishment for someone who never went near a collegiate English course! "I passed out of freshman English and never found time to take any of the other courses in the department," Koenig admits.

His follow-up to "Buck Alice," tentatively titled "Ready When You Are, C.B." has been optioned as a major motion picture with a start date of this summer. Although Koenig writes both scripts and novels, he finds the latter more challenging and ultimately, more satisfying. "A good screenplay is the work of an accomplished craftsman; a good novel requires more pure literary talent," he believes.

Walter Koenig's entertainment talent also encompasses stage direction. In Los Angeles, he has mounted productions of "Twelve Angry Men," "Hotel Paradiso," "Becket," and "America Hurrah." "I Wish I May," a feature about three struggling actors, revealed Walter in yet another of his theatrical hats. He produced this well-received film/comedy as well as wrote the screenplay.

Contributing his acting ability to the stage, he has starred in "A Midsummer Night's Dream" and "Six Characters In Search of an Author" in New York; "Make A Million" in Chicago and in a multitude of shows in Los Angeles including "Steambath," "White House Murder Case," "The Deputy," "Typist and the Tiger," "Night Must Fall," "La Ronde" and "Blood Wedding," as well as two touring productions, "Box and Cox" and "Actors," a one—act play mounted by Walter and Mark Lenard, also of "Star Trek" (Mr. Spock's father).

Walter, the son of Lithuanian immigrants, was born in Chicago and raised in Manhattan where he got his first shot at acting at Fieldston High School. He played the lead in "Peer Gynt" and Dick Dudgeon in "The Devil's Disciple."