

WILLIAM SAROYAN THE IMMORTAL

By HOVIG ETIAN

"In the time of your life, live-so that in that good time there shall be no ugliness or death for yourself or for any life your life touches. Seek goodness everywhere, and when it is found, bring it out of its hiding-place and let it be free and unashamed. In the time of your life, live - so that in that wondrous time you shall not add to the misery and sorrow of the world, but shall smile to the infinite delight and mystery of it."

These were the immortal words of William Saroyan — a heartfelt message to posterity.

Thirteen years after his departure, the reverberations of the wonderful world of this extraordinary human being still lingers in the hearts and souls of all those who admired his versatile literature. There are those among Armenians, who have had the unique privilege of having been in the immediate circle of the great author. I can name at least two such persons: Varaz Samuelian, the sculptor and Paul Kalinian, the photographer-portraitist. Millions of others of every nationality in this world, were close to him by fascination with his wonderful writings. Personally, I have met him in Yerevan, where he was the darling of the Armenian intelligentsia. One of his admirers, director Vartan Ajemian, staged one of his works, "My Heart is in the Highlands," at the Sundukian National Thea-



ter. On that day, the theater was full to capacity. Saroyan was sitting at the front row along with some dignitaries. At certain stage of the play, the audience was astounded by his ecstatic exclamations, "Hrashali eh! Zarmanali eh!....."

Paul Kalinian, the famous photographer-portraitist of Fresno, who immortalized Saroyan with his exquisite portraits, as well as with the commemorative postal stamps which were circulated simultaneously in Fresno and Yerevan, on May 22, 1991, has now come up with a unique tribute to Saroyan—a documentary film, entitled, "William Saroyan: The Man, the Writer."

This one-hour film is written, directed and produced by Paul Kalinian. It is a superb production. I have enjoyed it tremendously. The story begins in Fresno in the early 1900's and spans a period of about 80 years. Following the introductory remarks, it opens with Saroyan reminiscing about his past. Then, Mike Connors—fellow Armenian actor

from Fresno—narrates Saroyan's literary life, based on biographies, interviews, recordings, newspaper and magazine articles and his personal recollections.

The film contains also excerpts of Saroyan's voice both in English and Armenian, vignettes of Fresno — past and present — on recreated locations, home movies, rare footage, original photographs, and memorabilia and scenes from Saroyan's numerous visits to the Motherland.

Now that this film is being shown again on April 17, 1994, at the Agajanian Hall in Pasadena, I intend to see it once more.

With this film, Paul Kalinian has immortalized William Saroyan and in so doing he has proven to be a veritable artist and a perfectionist. I admire his commitment to excellence.

NOTE: This film is available for any organizational or cultural event. Please contact the producer:



Paul Kalinian