

COMMUNITY NEWS

Sayat Nova Dance Group Sponsors Belmont, MA Showing of Saroyan Documentary

BY VICKI ALTROGGEN

BELMONT, MA—The film "Saroyan—The Man, The Writer" directed by Paul Kalinian was shown at the Belmont Studio Cinema on July 12 and 13, 1999. The film was sponsored over the two-day period by the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston and all of the proceeds were donated to the dance company by Kalinian.

William Saroyan came to life on July 12 and 13 to the delight of over 400 people who came to hear his story at the Belmont Studio Cinema. The large audience was treated to an energetic and vivid portrait of the writer William Saroyan. Though told on the big screen, the film "Saroyan—The Man, The Writer" touched the audience in a way that only a special film can.

Born in 1908, Saroyan grew up to become a gifted writer capable of capturing and sharing a passion for life. In his dual Armenian and American heritage he found love, sustenance, faith, and joy. He also grew to be loved by both of these communities in different ways. Paul Kalinian, the filmmaker, along with his daughter Susie Kalinian, could not be better suited for such a project. Somewhat doggedly (and humorously), they pursued their camera shy subject, even secretly "stealing" some photographic opportunities. But after Kalinian forced himself on Saroyan by singing Armenian folksongs, Saroyan relented and embraced him as a new friend. There begins the story of this very special film.

The sense you have of Saroyan on film comes shining through as you discover that the man himself was a warm, expansive, talkative, engaging and loveable personality—directly and absolutely himself. You become his friend.

The film narrative is largely Saroyan's own words, in his own voice, a talented storyteller remembering his times. William Saroyan lived the way he recommended young writers should write—with honesty and always from the heart. The film itself is a wonderful portrayal of a man and an artist. Additionally, it gives a flavor of this country's history, of a time and place which we can feel as our own



William Saroyan, in a 1930's photograph from an anthology of *Hairenik* contributors. Saroyan was among the paper's first English-language writers.

throughout the film. We see Saroyan's Armenian heritage in his eyes, in the eyes of his family members, in the music of the film, and in the closeness of the Armenian community in Fresno California.

From the film's first scene, a depiction of Saroyan's upbringing, we are drawn into Saroyan's story. From what seems like a very sad start to life, William Saroyan grins out of photographs with a puckish, mischievous, charming, and greatly talented air which exudes confidence. He is portrayed as a writer who stuck to his writing with drive and determination, always staying true to his heritage. Saroyan's novels, plays, and short story collections gained him much success and critical acclaim. The film does a great job at representing his life to Armenian and non-Armenian audiences

alike.

The musical score to the film was written by Mr. Paul Nazlikian from Los Angeles and serves the film in a most beautiful way. The musical score is a tremendous work worthy of a listen all its own.

For the Armenian nation, William Saroyan must certainly have a special place. But, for everyone this film is a joy to watch and an inspiration. William Saroyan's ashes are buried in Armenia and America, just as one thinks he would have liked after viewing this film. Just as Saroyan had hoped, his joy in his dual heritage is projected as much by this film as his own words.

For more information on the Sayat Nova Dance Company of Boston, please visit them on the web at www.sayatnova.com or call (617) 923-4455.

Dravidanoo Church Holds Annual Youth Talent Show