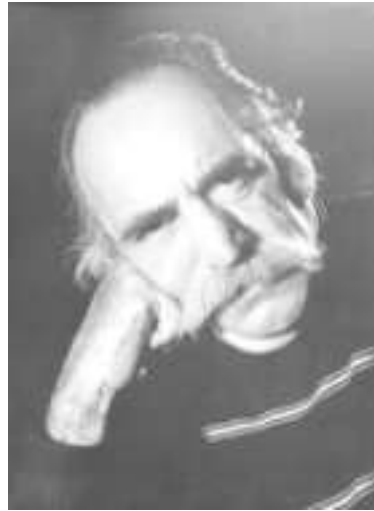


William Saroyan was born in Fresno, the centre of Armenian-Americans in California to Armenian immigrants Armenak and Takoohi Saroyan from Bitlis, Turkey.

He was an American author, novelist and playwright whose stories celebrated optimism in the middle of trials and difficulties of the Depression era. Several of Saroyan's works were drawn from his own experiences, although his approach to autobiographical facts can be called poetic, therefore many of his plays and short stories are about growing up impoverished as the son of Armenian immigrants. These stories were popular during the Great Depression. Saroyan set many of his Works in Fresno. He worked tirelessly to perfect a prose style that was full of zest for life and was seemingly impressionistic. The style became known as "Saroyanesque".

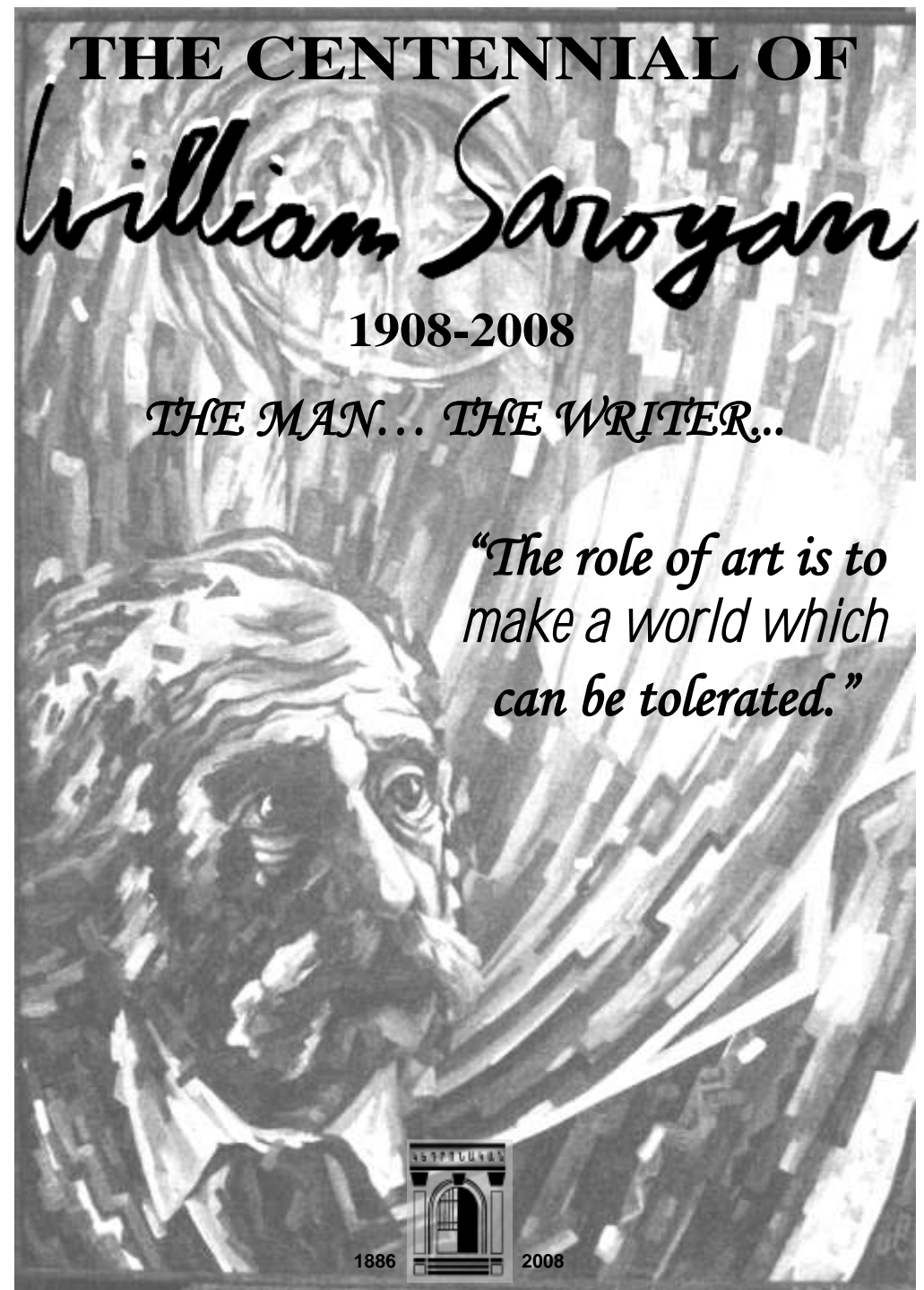


Among Saroyan's best known play is "*The Time of Your Life*" (1939) which won a Pulitzer Prize. Saroyan refused the honour but accepted the New York Drama Critics Circle award. The short story collection "*My Name is Aram*" (1940) is an international bestseller. It has been translated into many languages. He died in Fresno of cancer at age 72. Half of his ashes were buried in California, and the remainder in Armenia.

Some of his books and plays are: *The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze and Other Stories* (1934), *Inhale and Exhale* (1936), *My Name Is Aram* (1940), *The Human Comedy* (1943), *The Assyrian and Other Stories* (1950), *The Bicycle Rider in Beverly Hills* (1952), *The Laughing Matter* (1953), *Mama I Love You* (1956), *Papa You're Crazy* (1957), *Here Comes There Goes You Know Who* (1961), *Boys and Girls Together* (1963), *After Thirty Years: The Daring Young Man on the Flying Trapeze* (1964), *Days of Life and Death and Escape to the Moon* (1970), *Obituaries* (1979); *My Heart's in the Highlands* [play] (April 1939), *The Time of Your Life* [play] (October 1939), *Hello Out There* [play] (September 1942), *Get Away Old Man* [play] (November 1943), *The Cave Dwellers* [play] (October 1957)



William Saroyan memorial in Fresno.



“I felt at home when I arrived Bitlis, to the home of father Armenak, mother Takoohi, grandma Lucy and the

“Three times in my life I have been captured: by the orphanage, by school, and by the Army.

But I'm mistaken. The fact is I was captured only once, when I was born, only that capture is also setting free,

To the River Euphrates

Euphrates, which is mine, doth flow or not,

There where its mountains feed its rush and roar.

And through those hills and plains by most forgot,

And by these eyes not seen, for evermore

Euphrates swells and rolls majestically,

Or is now dry, and arid myth, a tale.

If this is so, the truth, so let it be.

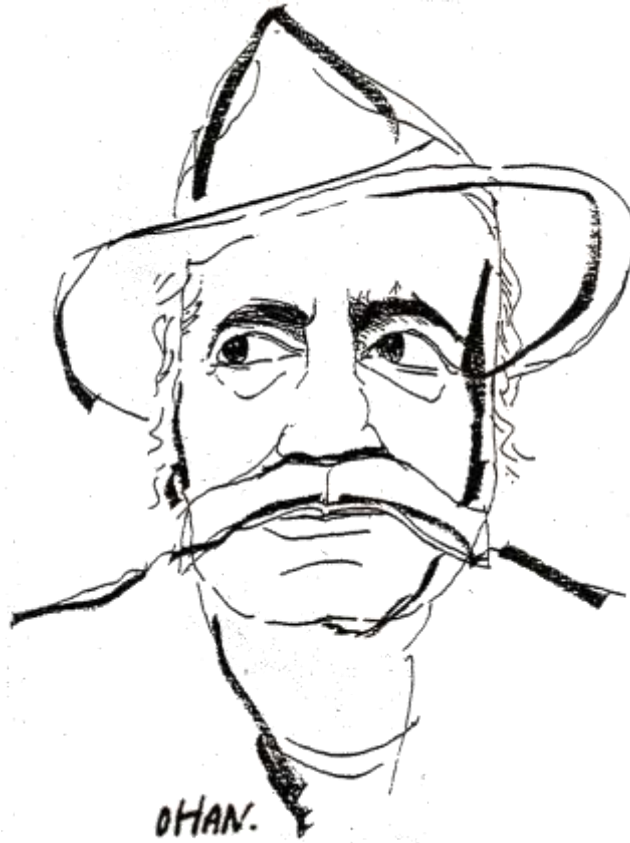
In me Euphrates is; nor can it fail

To ride its bed and cool its burning earth

With drink, and mine as well. Of wing no flight

May end in graceless crash. No spirit's mirth

May burn and die by heaven's harshest light.



Programme

- **Presentation on Saroyan's Life**
[Garen Tatyosoglu, Maral Sarkisyan]
- **Commemorating Saroyan**
[Tabita Toparlak, Arek Kendirli, Ari Demirel, Narod Ateş, Aksel Şahingöz, Lori Tolayan, Eray Taş, Selin Pabuççıyan and Manuel Aydın]
- **The Human Nose**
A short skit adapted from the The Human Comedy
[Jbid Boyacıyan, Arev Kılınçlı, Selin Pabuççıyan, Artun Gebenlioglu, Lidya Örs, Jbid Goganyan, Eray Taş, Raffi Balıkçioğlu and Can Bal]
- **Saroyan's literary personality**
Ohannes Kılıçdağı *[Bilgi University Sociology dept.]*

“...We were in Fresno, but we were nowhere, too. How could we really be in a place until death had caught up with one of us, and we had buried him and knew he was there?”

This, in fact, was the form the madness took in my Uncle Vоротan, the tailor who worked for Bloom Brothers in their shop on Merced Street.

Each evening when he reached his home, he asked both his wife and his mother, ‘Has anybody died yet, to heal this fearful loneliness, this, aimless walking about, the emptiness and disconnection?’ And each evening everybody in every branch of the family was not only still alive but getting stronger and bigger.

Word go around to everybody in the family, including the kids, that Vоротan had gone mad in a new way, compelled by the New World. He wanted somebody to die, an to be buried so that he, as well as the rest of us, might know that a tradition had been established, that a culture must inevitably follow, and that, consequently, we

“I hope you get me right. It's of great importance to me to breathe this air, to drink of Bitlis water and to see these people who've always been dear to my heart. I was always afraid not to find it as I had hoped it if I come one day. But I have found more than I dreamed of.”