

NEW THEATRE REVIEW



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Australian Artists and Writers Say:

On page 4, "New Theatre Review" prints a report of the recent "Artists' Front to Win the War" meeting in America. We feel that such a meeting, and indeed the growing activity of artists throughout the democracies, demands that we not only welcome such a move, but look forward to a similar Win-the-War Front of artists in Australia. With this in mind, we have asked a number of Australian artists in a variety of fields to comment on the proposal. Here are some of the replies we have received so far; we welcome more.

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KATHARINE SUSANNAH PRICHARD, leading Australian novelist and member of the Fellowship of Australian Writers, long in the forefront of anti-fascist activity, writes:

I have heard of the Artists' Front to Win the War in America, and think a similar organisation would be of value in Australia to unite the cultural forces of our country, opposed to fascism. Mayakovsky, the great Soviet poet, indicated how powerful the influence of writers and artists can be when it is directed towards the service of a great cause. To defeat fascism and win the war for a reconstruction of society which will express our desire for progress, should be the objective of any intelligent man and woman, these days.

I would give my wholehearted support to an organisation of artists formed for this purpose.

ARMSTRONG, world-famous cartoonist of the Melbourne "Argus," comments:

In these critical days artists are the representatives of democracy's culture and ideas. They express the progress that has been made in the world. Wherever Hitler and his system have gone they have destroyed culture and its achievements. Hitler has sworn to destroy anything in the nature of culture and ideals. I feel that artists have a duty to add their voice and influence in the fight to preserve the achievements of art and civilisation.

Our efforts in this struggle must be intensified so that the Nazi system is overwhelmed by the joint action of the Allies—Russia in the East and Britain and America in the West. The task is urgent.

D. COLQUHOUN, one of Australia's best-known painters, says:

In war time the necessity for keeping up the standard of art is even greater than in times of peace. So many things tend to lower the dignity and consequently the morale of a people at war that for those who practice the arts there is an added responsibility. The survival of our culture is linked with our continued freedom as a people.

The New Theatre seems to appre-

ciate the fact that the men and women of the forces are the same citizens who liked good art before the war, and that now they have greater need of it than ever.

GEORGE FARWELL, well-known short-story writer, author of radio dramas, literary critic for the A.B.C., member of the editorial board of "Progress," telegraphs:

ALL ARTISTS SHOULD WELCOME PROPOSAL IF VALUE ART MUST DEFEND AGAINST FASCIST BARBARISM. HAVE DUTY TO HELP RALLY PEOPLE TO FULL WAR EFFORT.

EDOUARD BOROVSANSKY, Australia's leading exponent of classical ballet, says:

Ballet plays a very important part in the cultural life of the peoples of the world. In Australia, despite the war, the interest in ballet is growing rapidly, although even the dancers themselves are engaged in war work and can only give a certain amount of their time to the study of Ballet. Most of Australia's artists are doing their part in the tremendous struggle to win the war—and freedom. This freedom is absolutely necessary to art, as without it the individual creative effort cannot flourish. Australians are beginning to realise that Ballet, like all the other fine arts, is international. It is the natural expression of all people to dance and appreciate ballet—not just the privilege of the few. With this fact ever before me, I look forward with great hope to the time when Australians will share the same feeling for ballet as our brave allies, the Russian people.

DR. A. E. FLOYD, well-known Melbourne organist and musical leader, comments:

An artist who was not ready to resist Fascism with all his might would be a traitor to his own cause. For an artist, whether he be a writer, painter, musician or dramatist, is primarily concerned with the creation and the presentation of truth and beauty—truth unfettered and beauty uncorrupted—and these the fascist cannot tolerate. He deliberately sets out to destroy both them and their makers.

The artist acts on the assumption that man cannot live by bread alone;

food for the body is necessary, and we mean to see that nobody lacks it; but the mind and the spirit also need nourishment, and the artist, if he is true to his calling, can supply this nourishment in a unique degree.

The fascist has been fed on ugliness and lies; he is art's inveterate enemy. The artist, whether in drama, music, painting or literature, is the willing bond-servant of truth and beauty; for them he lives and works, and in defence of them, when necessary, he will be ready to fight.

DR. REG. ELLERY, psychiatrist and writer, author of "Health in the Soviet Union," comments:

The credo of the American "Artists' Front to Win the War," that "artists are the spokesmen of democracy's culture and ideals, which Hitler has sworn to destroy, and that we have a responsibility to act and speak now, when these traditions stand in such mortal danger," seems to me to be an inspiration to the artists of the world, the free world and the world already overrun by fascism. The full realisation of this by Australian artists can only help to make our war effort more effective.

NORMAN BANKS, well-known radio commentator, says:

We all realise that the most important thing we have to do is to win the war against fascism. Soldiers, factory workers, farmers, everyone seems to be organised for that effort. The artists of Australia should also unite for the same cause, and although much has been done by them more must be done by them, as by ever one else.

HAYDN JAMES, brilliant young A.B.C. conductor, states:

Artists can only work in complete freedom—a freedom which fascism utterly destroy. Musicians, composers, writers, painters, must unite to everything possible in the most effective way, for the successful prosecution of this war against fascism.

OUR COVER

The cover of "New Theatre Review" is a line-cut by Marguerite Mahood, adapted from a caricature by William Gropper, famous American working class artist.