

ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE
DE TOOWOOMBA
presents

Bleu Blanc Rouge

60E ANNIVERSAIRE
Célébration

7 OCTOBER 2021

**LAUNCH OF THE TOOWOOMBA
FRENCH FILM SERIES**

**The Strand
Margaret Street, Toowoomba**

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ALLIANCE FRANÇAISE DE TOOWOOMBA INC

Who we are

A not-for-profit organisation for the people of Toowoomba and the Darling Downs region who enjoy experiencing French language and culture.

Where we are

Suite 1, Level 1, 217 Margaret Street, Toowoomba
PO Box 401, Toowoomba Q 4350

Contact us

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Cork Eiffel Tower built by Alliance Française de Toowoomba member Tom Donohue on display at The Strand, Margaret Street, Toowoomba, October 2021

Une brève Histoire de l'Alliance Française de Toowoomba

The Alliance Française de Toowoomba was established in 1959 by a group of dedicated Toowoomba and Darling Downs francophiles (*The Courier Australien*, unknown). Originally called *Alliance Française (Section de Toowoomba)*, the organisation was very active in presenting concerts, dramatic performances, travel stories with slides, causeries, cultural activities, and film nights. In 1963, the Alliance began discussions to establish a School of French for children and adults. The School of French officially began in 1964 and classes were held at the then Church of England Boys' Preparatory School (now called Toowoomba Anglican School). The Alliance also held a school competition, entitled *Compétition de discours*, where all students learning French in schools in the Toowoomba and Darling Downs region could test their French speaking skills. Traditionally, all French language classes were conducted face to face, however, this changed in 2020 with the offering of online classes.

The early constitution of the Alliance was written in French and while some aspects have changed over time, the broad aim and mission remain the same; to teach the French language and bring together people with a common interest in France. The Alliance was first incorporated in 2002 under the then *Queensland Associations Incorporation Act 1981*.

In the first few years the Alliance held its meetings, travel story nights, causeries and other cultural performances in members' homes. This

changed, however, in 1964, when the Alliance secured its first 'club room', commonly referred to as the 'Alliance Room'. The Alliance Room was located in the McLeod's Building, Cnr Ruthven and Russell Streets, Toowoomba (now called the Beresford Building). Despite having a club room, members' homes were still popular venues for meetings and some social gatherings. The Alliance remained in the McLeod's Building until the late 1970s. After that time, Alliance meetings were once again, for the most part, held at members' homes, however, the University Centre, Jellicoe Street, Toowoomba, and The Glennie School were used on many occasions. In 2011, the Alliance secured the lease of suite 2, 217 Margaret Street, Toowoomba. The Alliance remained in this location until 2020 when it moved across the hallway to suite 1, a much larger office.



Alliance Française de Toowoomba Clubroom, 1964.
From left : Beverley Bassingthwaite, Margaret Boyce and Gwen Dowson

The Alliance has always recognised the importance of having French resources available to its members. In the early years, the resources were shared with schools for use by students of French. As the library grew it received its own dedicated section at the municipal library, where resources could be shared with the broader community. Since 2011, it has been housed at the Alliance premises at 217 Margaret Street, Toowoomba. In 2020, Alliance members gained free access to *Culturethèque* an e-library where resources are available via streaming or downloading.



Alliance Française de Toowoomba Office, 2021.

La Fête Nationale Française has always been a highlight of the Alliance calendar. The first recorded fête was in 1964. Over the years, the festivities have taken many forms including wine and cheese parties, formal dinners, cocktail parties, fondue nights, soirées and progressive

dinners. A variety of Toowoomba venues were used and some of these are the Alliance Room, Kensington Restaurant, Chrissy's Restaurant, Herries House, Karingal Café, the Cathedral Centre, Alpenhof Restaurant and Gold Park Sports Club. It was not unusual for events to be held outside Toowoomba. In 1996, La Fête Nationale was celebrated at La Goulue French Restaurant, Hatton Vale and on many occasions Alliance members generously opened their own homes for the celebration.



Celebrating La Fête Nationale in 1986 at the Gold Pack Sports Club.

From left François Frichot, Anne Abad, Daniel Abad, Norma Thomas and Peter Guastalla.

The Alliance has long embraced the French tradition of celebrating with food and wine. Events such as Beaujolais Nouveau tastings and the celebration of the Epiphany with the galette des rois have always been very popular.

Pétanque has also been a favourite event for members and tournaments have taken place in many of the beautiful Toowoomba parklands. In 2005, members enjoyed a lunch and an afternoon of pétanque at Preston Peak Winery and later that year met with the Armidale and Lismore alliance members for a lunch, winery tour and pétanque at Ballandean Estate Winery. In more recent times pétanque has been enjoyed as part of the annual end of year celebration.

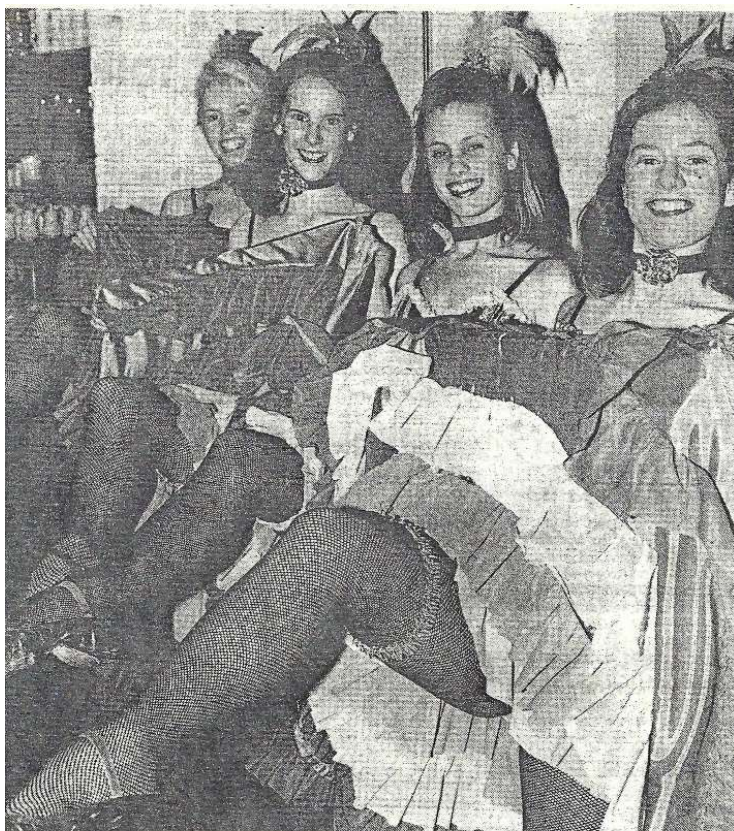


Members of Alliance Francais played French bowls — petanque — in Queens Park on Sunday. From left are Lee Perinet, Christiane Moodie, Louise Skidmore and Ruth Callow. Members meet for a game of petanque on the first Sunday of each month.

The Downs Star, Toowoomba, 6 June 1990

The Alliance members have always had a love of French films. The earliest records, from 1964, indicate that films were shown at The Coronet Theatre, Russell Street, Toowoomba. In later years the theatre was called Cinema Toowoomba and today is the Toowoomba Sports Club. French films were sourced direct from the Paris Alliance and from the French Embassy in Australia. In more recent history, the screening of French films has been coordinated through Ric's Flicks and Birch Carrol and Coyle. In 2021, The Strand Cinema, Toowoomba screened a series of French films and the Alliance is proud to have the official launch of the second series of French films as part of the 60e Anniversaire Celebration.

French music has long been enjoyed by the Alliance members. It was a usual practice, after general meetings, to have French music playing while guests enjoyed a light supper. French music was included in social programmes and French Christmas carols sung at the end of year celebrations. Mrs Norma Thomas presented a radio programme, *Entre nous*, and today Mr Michael Murtagh presents a weekly radio programme, *Radio France Toowoomba*, on FM102.7.



It was all legs and smiles for the cancan dancers performing at Saturday night's Toowoomba Alliance Francaise evening to celebrate Bastille Day. Kicking up their heels at Lyndalls in the Park Restaurant are (from left) Lara Harland, 19, Susan Young, 15, Kerry Norris, 16 and Robyn Joyner, 15. Alliance Francaise is a group for people who are either natives of France or who have an interest in French culture and language.

The Chronicle, Toowoomba, 16 July 1990

Francophones from the Toowoomba and Darling Downs communities have made the most of every opportunity to meet and participate in French conversation. For many years members opened their homes for these gatherings. Today, the Alliance's French conversation group, Café Bla Bla, offers a twice monthly meeting for Francophones to not only improve their language skills, but to learn about French culture and meet other Alliance members and like-minded people to share their passion and knowledge about anything French.

The Alliance first established an online presence in 2008. Since that time the website has continued to be developed. In 2021, the website was migrated to the Oncord website and digital marketing platform. This provides the Alliance with a modern and professional website and also incorporates marketing and commerce components. The website is more contemporaneous with the global network of the Alliances Françaises under the auspice of the Fondation des Alliances Françaises. It provides members and the broader community with a user-friendly interface, enabling the more efficient sourcing of information about events, French language classes and resources.

In 2016, the Alliance's Facebook page went live. Having a Facebook presence has enabled the Alliance to further engage with its members and the wider community. In 2020, the Alliance continued to build its online presence and engagement with an Instagram account.

The idea of offering a corporate membership to schools was not a new idea for the Alliance. Corporate membership was first mooted in 1988, however, did not eventuate until 2020.

The Alliance has been visited by a number of dignitaries during its sixty year history. Some of these include -

- 1961 : His Excellency Monsieur Philippe Monod, during his visit to Queensland, met with Alliance members in Toowoomba (*Le Courrier Australien*, 1961);
- 1971 : His Excellency, Monsieur Salon, Conseiller Culturel et Scientifique, visited Toowoomba for the awarding of the *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* to Miss Gwen Dowson (*AFT correspondence*, 1971);
- 1991 : His Excellency Professor Denial Leiwers, Conseiller Culturel et Scientifique met with the Alliance Française de Toowoomba members (*The Chronicle*, 1991);
- 1992 : Monsieur Roland Drivon, General Secretary of the Alliance Française in Australia, as part of his 'goodbye' tour of Australian Alliance clubs, joined Alliance members in Toowoomba for a game of French pétanque (*The Chronicle*, 1992);
- 1996 : a French delegation, including His Excellency Monsieur Dominique Girard, French Ambassador attended a luncheon at The Glennie School with the Alliance Française de Toowoomba and at a civic reception Monsieur Girard received the members of the Alliance Française de Toowoomba and awarded Mrs Norma Thomas the *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* (*Le Courrier Australian*, 1996).

The Alliance Française de Toowoomba has always promoted the benefits of learning the French language and the new life perspectives that cultural understanding creates. This was highlighted with the honouring by the French Government of two founding members, Miss Gwen Dowson and Mrs Norma Thomas, in 1971 and 1996 respectively. Miss Dowson and Mrs Thomas received the *Chevalier dans l'Ordre des Palmes Académiques* in recognition of their outstanding contribution to French language and culture. Monsieur Dominique Girard, the then French Ambassador to Australia, when presenting Mrs Thomas with her award, highlighted just how great an honour it is to receive this investiture.

Following the death of Norma Thomas in 2000, and in recognition of her dedicated service to the Alliance Française de Toowoomba and her contribution to French language and culture, the Alliance established an annual school prize for outstanding students of French in Toowoomba. Entitled the *Norma Thomas Prize for Outstanding Achievement in French*, this award is still bestowed today.

To conclude, the Alliance Française de Toowoomba has a remarkable history spanning sixty years. Through the dedication of its founders and the continuing commitment of people who have a heartfelt passion for all things French, the Alliance has become a part of the fabric of the Toowoomba and Darling Downs community. It will be interesting to see what the next sixty years brings!



The Chronicle, Toowoomba, 31 May 1990

Tableau d'Honneur de l'Alliance Française de Toowoomba - 1963-1973

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE-PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER	COMMITTEE
1963	Peter Guastalla	Don Meacham Anatole (Tony) Colesnic			
1964	Peter Guastalla	Don Meacham Father Sykes	Ruth Callow	Mr Hadley	Gwen Dowson Jill Cumming Anatole (Tony) Colesnic Mr RA Reynolds Kathleen Simmons
1965	Peter Guastalla	Don Meacham Father Sykes Eugene Desmarchelier	Ruth Callow	Mr RA Reynolds	Gwen Dowson Jill Cumming Anatole (Tony) Colesnic Mr RA Reynolds Kathleen Simmons Beverley Bassingthwaighte
1966	Peter Guastalla	Don Meacham Eugene Desmarchelier Anatole (Tony) Colesnic	Ruth Callow	Mr RA Reynolds	Gwen Dowson Jill Cumming Beverley Bassingthwaighte Beryl Free Leslie Macpherson Father Wilson
1967	Peter Guastalla	Don Meacham Gwen Dowson	Ruth Callow	Mr RA Reynolds	Jill Cumming Leslie Macpherson Ann Pressland Madeleine Jones
1968	Peter Guastalla	Don Meacham Gwen Dowson	Ruth Callow	Mr RA Reynolds	Jill Cumming Leslie Macpherson Marc de Lamargé Michel de Lamargé Mrs Watson Mr Sorby Adams
1969	Peter Guastalla	Don Meacham Gwen Dowson	Ann Pressland	Mr RA Reynolds	Norma Thomas Leslie Macpherson Michel de Lamargé Dorothy Stevens Patrick Murray Roslyn McIntyre
1970	Peter Guastalla	Gwen Dowson Patrick Murray	Margaret Syer	Dorothy Farmer	Norma Thomas Dorothy Stevens Mrs Wynhoven
1971	Peter Guastalla	Gwen Dowson Patrick Murray	Ruth Callow	Dorothy Farmer	Mr RA Reynolds Dorothy Stevens Miss Wynhoven Mrs O'Brien Mr Sorby Adams
1972	Peter Guastalla	Gwen Dowson Patrick Murray Marc de la Marge	Dorothy Stevens	Dorothy Farmer	Norma Thomas David Hodgson John Roma Eugene Desmarchelier Mrs O'Brien Mr Sorby Adams
1973	Peter Guastalla	Gwen Dowson Patrick Murray	Dorothy Stevens	Alex Rose	Norma Thomas Ruth Callow David Hodgson Philippe Sambain

Tableau d'Honneur de l'Alliance Française de Toowoomba - 1974-1987

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE-PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER	COMMITTEE
1974	Peter Guastalla	Gwen Dowson David Hodgson	Ruth Callow	Alex Rose	Norma Thomas Tim Taylor Denise Wildman
1975	Philippe Sambain	Peter Guastalla Gwen Dowson	Norma Thomas	Alex Rose	David Hodgson Denise Wildman Sue Fagg Kathleen Rose Patrick Murray
1976	Gwen Dowson	Peter Guastalla Ruth Callow	Norma Thomas	Alex Rose	Laura Sheridan Vera Buckingham Darrell Walk Ros Walk Cyril Conroy
1977	Gwen Dowson	Peter Guastalla Patrick Murray	Dorothea Brightman	Alex Rose	Cyril Conroy Mary Le Nair Elli Fachin Katina Kyprios Barbara Hadley Philip Smith
1978	Gwen Dowson	Peter Guastalla Patrick Murray	Dorothea Brightman	Philip Smith	Cyril Conroy Elli Fachin Ruth Warrington
1979	Philip Smith	Peter Guastalla Patrick Murray	Dorothea Brightman	Chris Reeve	Cyril Conroy Elli Fachin Ruth Warrington Helen Best
1980	Philip Smith	Peter Guastalla Patrick Murray	Dorothy Stevens	John Alroe	Cyril Conroy Dorothea Brightman R Redpath Cecilie Williams Maryanne Dever Lee Glanville
1981	Philip Smith	Peter Guastalla	Dorothy Stevens	John Alroe	Cecilie Williams Rose-Marie Lund Jon Lund
1982	Philip Smith	Peter Guastalla	Dorothy Stevens	John Alroe	Norma Thomas Cecilie Williams Rosemary Lund
1983	Philip Smith	Peter Guastalla	Anne Evrat	John Alroe	Norma Thomas Cecilie Williams Rose-Marie Lund
1984	Philip Smith	Peter Guastalla	Anne Evrat	John Alroe	Norma Thomas Keith Bellmaine
1985	Philip Smith	Peter Guastalla	Christine McErlean	John Alroe	Norma Thomas Keith Bellmaine
1986	Daniel Abad	Peter Guastalla	Norma Thomas	John Alroe	Anne Abad François Frichot
1987	Daniel Abad	Peter Guastalla	Norma Thomas	John Alroe	Anne Abad François Frichot Margaret Crombie

Tableau d'Honneur de l'Alliance Française de Toowoomba – 1988-2003

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE-PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER	COMMITTEE
1988	Peter Guastalla	Anthony (Tony) Curry	Anthony (Tony) Curry	Louise Skidmore	François Frichot Cecilie Williams John Alroe Elvire Caruana
1989	Peter Guastalla	Anthony (Tony) Curry	Anthony (Tony) Curry	Elvire Caruana	François Frichot Elvire Caruana Damien Healy
1990	Peter Guastalla	François Frichot	Jennifer Warren	Louise Skidmore	Elvire Caruana Edna Black Lee Périnet
1991	Christiane Moody	François Frichot	Christiane Moody	Norma Thomas	Lee Périnet
1992	Norma Thomas	François Frichot	Suzanne Jepson	Norma Thomas	Ruth Callow Jennifer Warren
1993	Norma Thomas	François Frichot	Jennifer Warren	Norma Thomas	Suzanne Jepson Beverley Frichot
1994	Suzanne Jepson	Edward Verdi	Jennifer Warren	Jennifer Warren	Elizabeth Crowther Peter Turner Ruth Callow
1995	Edward Verdi	Cathy Boyle	Valerie Allen	Peter Turner	Leanne Grams Carol James Friedhelm Grams Elizabeth Crowther Heidi Kuchel
1996	Edward Verdi	Michael Berthold	Heidi Kuchel	Peter Turner	Lucita Whitby Jennifer Warren Carol James Sheila Scott-Power
1997	Michael Berthold	Suzanne Jepson	Judy Smit	Peter Turner	Carol James Sheila Scott-Power Sandy Pottinger Ann Dashwood
1998	Michael Berthold	Suzanne Jepson	Judy Smit	Peter Turner	Clare Vowless Vivian Brooks
1999	Michael Berthold	Suzanne Jepson	Judy Smit	Michelle Stafford	Kate Kuzma Tania Kennedy Evelyn Mejia Agnes Tymms Sarah James
2000	Michael Berthold	Heidi Kuchel		Michelle Stafford	Sheila Scott-Power Agnes Tymms Janet Mayes
2001	Heidi Kuchel	Agnes Tymms	Jennifer Warren	Michelle Stafford	Sheila Scott-Power Janet Mayes Cheryl Feeney
2002	Agnes Tymms	Wendy Lorenz	Cheryl Feeney	Michelle Stafford	Heidi Kuchel Janet Mayes Hayley Stafford
2003	Agnes Tymms	Wendy Lorenz	Nicola Coster	Michelle Stafford	Janet Mayes Cheryl Feeney Glennis Brodie

Tableau d'Honneur de l'Alliance Française de Toowoomba – 2004-2017

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE-PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER	COMMITTEE
2004	Agnes Tymms	Wendy Lorenz	Florence Marshall	David Marshall	Cheryl Feeney Glennis Brodie Heidi Kuchel Anne Bryant Nicola Coster
2005	Wendy Lorenz	Cheryl Feeney	Janet Mayes	Jenny Borton	Marie Cameron Heidi Kuchel Andrew Kuchel Anne Bryant David Marshall
2006	Wendy Lorenz	Cheryl Feeney	Janet Mayes	Jenny Borton	Marie Cameron Heidi Kuchel Sylvie Hayere Anne Bryant Ian Feeney
2007	Sébastien Hébert	Cheryl Feeney	Janet Mayers	Nicola Hayden (assisted by Heather Castles)	Sylvie Hayere Gerda Roche Gabriel Kenny
2008	Sébastien Hébert	Cheryl Feeney	Jean-François Rochecouste	Heather Castles	Sylvie Hayere Magda Corredor Gabriel Kenny
2009	Sébastien Hébert	Patrick Ferron	Mehryar Nooriafshar	Heather Castles	Cheryl Feeney Sylvie Hayere Magda Corredor Gabrielle Kenny Janet Mayes
2010	Sébastien Hébert	Jean-François Rochecouste	Ron Addie	Pran Boolaky	Sigrid McCausland
2011	Ron Addie	Sylvie Hayere	Angela Kelly	Ian Hunter	Felicity Rea Robyn Kuhn*
2012	Gabriella Berger	Sylvie Hayere	Robert Learmonth	Ian Hunter	Ron Addie Laura Berger-Uichanco Barbara Learmonth Robyn Kuhn* Natalie Holden*
2013	Gabriella Berger	Sylvie Hayere	Greg Gurrin	Angelo Uichanco	Gary Crooke Ron Addie Barbara Learmonth Natalie Holden*
2014	Sylvie Hayere	Kath Brammer	Greg Gurrin	David Park-Ballay	Ron Addie Gary Crooke Maud Bagnall Natalie Holden*
2015	Sylvie Hayere		Tess Minogue	David Park-Ballay	Maud Bagnall Natalie Holden*
2016	Jean-François Rochecouste		Ken Orange	Clémence Demouzon	Sylvie Hayere Natalie Holden*
2017	Clémence Demouzon		Tim Vale	Daniel Wright	Margaret Coleman Judith Bêlot Natalie Holden*

Tableau d'Honneur de l'Alliance Française de Toowoomba – 2018-2021

YEAR	PRESIDENT	VICE-PRESIDENT	SECRETARY	TREASURER	COMMITTEE
2018	Archie Tait		Judith Bêlot	Margaret Coleman	Jean-Paul Wattiaux Charlotte Wattiaux Cécilia Jaume Natalie Holden* Valma Dyer*
2019	Alexis Tacey		Judith Bêlot	Margaret Coleman	Archie Tait Neil Hegarty Valma Dyer*
2020	Alexis Tacey		Valma Dyer	Avril Herdon	Neil Hegarty Julia Ballinger
2021	Alexis Tacey		Valma Dyer	Valma Dyer	Kelly Buchanan Michael Murtagh Neil Hegarty Naomi Hughes

The earliest documentation relating to the Alliance Française de Toowoomba is dated February 1963. This honour board has been prepared using information from the minutes of the annual general meetings.

* Administration Officer

Tableau d'Honneur de l'Alliance Française de Toowoomba Conseiller à vie et Patron

YEAR	CONSEILLER À VIE
1978	MISS GWEN DOWSON Miss Dowson was a founding member and President for 3 years, Vice-President for 9 years and a committee member for 3 years. She remained active in the Alliance until her sudden death in 1980.
1981	DR PETER GUASTALLA Dr Guastalla was a founding member and President for 15 years and Vice-President for 13 years. He retired from the Alliance Presidency in 1991 and continued to have a keen interest in the Alliance until his death in the mid-1990s.
	MRS NORMA THOMAS Mrs Thomas was a founding member and President for 2 years, Secretary for 4 years, Treasurer for 1 year and a Committee Member for 9 years. She remained active in the Alliance until her death in 2000.
YEAR	PATRON
1989	ALDERMAN CLIVE BERGHOFER Mayor, Toowoomba Regional Council
1993-1996	EMERITUS PROFESSOR BARRY LEAL Vice-Chancellor, University of Southern Queensland
1997	PROFESSOR KEN GOODMAN Deputy Vice-Chancellor, University of Southern Queensland

La Marseillaise

*Allons enfants de la Patrie!
Le jour de gloire est arrivé!*

*Contre nous de la tyrannie,
l'étendard sanglant est levé!
L'étendard sanglant est levé!
Entendez-vous dans les campagnes,
mugir ces féroces soldats?*

*Ils viennent jusque dans vos bras,
égorger vos fils, vos compagnes!*

*Aux armes, citoyens!
Formez vos bataillons!*

*Marchons, marchons!
Qu'un sang impur,
abreuve nos sillons!*



*Arise children of the Fatherland!
The day of glory has arrived!*

*Against us stands tyranny,
the sanguine standard is raised!
The sanguine standard is raised!*

*Do you hear in the countryside,
the roar of these ferocious soldiers?*

*They come into our midst,
to slay your sons, your companions.*

*To arms, citizens!
Form your battalions!*

*Let's march, let's march!
So that the impure blood,
waters our fields!*

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