

DAVE ARMSTRONG'S

ANZAC

3/3

directed by JAMIE McCASKILL



A N Z A C

EDUCATION PACK



CONTENTS

About Anzac Eve

About the Company

About the Director

Workshops – opportunities for further engagement

Curriculum Notes

Historical context

Writing Anzac Eve

Bibliography and Links



ABOUT ANZAC EVE

Two Kiwi guys meet two Aussie girls... *the rest is history.*

Anzac Eve is an exciting new play about a disparate group of twentysomethings on their big OE, who happen upon each other the night before Dawn Ceremony commemorations at Gallipoli.

National pride and other issues are at stake as tempers flare, romance sparks, myths are busted and ghosts uncovered. As each character sees historical events through their own lens, we ask if they are really there to solemnly commemorate the occasion or for a boozy party and possible hook-up.

Directed by Jamie McCaskill and written by Dave Armstrong, *Anzac Eve* is highly entertaining and takes an honest and unflinching look at the Anzac experience.

This fresh and contemporary take on a significant time in our nation's history is a must-see for every young New Zealander.

- **Duration: 60 minutes**
- **Commissioned by the Festival of Colour and funded by NZ WW1 Centenary Fund.**
- **Contains a small amount of coarse language.**
- **Age Recommendation: 13+**

Anzac Eve is uniquely suited to high school students. With elements of humour and romance combining with history and politics, the work highlights historical events in a relatable way. Students have said that they "believed the characters" and could identify with them. They appreciated the humour and historical significance of the story without feeling "bogged down" by it. With each character having vastly differing views of the same story, the work explores principles of understanding others, individual beliefs and the personal experiences that help formulate them. *Anzac Eve* is a highly

tourable production and is easily able to be performed in schools.

Teacher endorsements:

"For a piece of theatre to hold an audience of year 11-13 boys right through their precious interval, without any sense of restlessness, it has to be good. The boys were engaged by close-to-home characters, the humour, and the fresh and contemporary take on a bit of history they are familiar with." Wellington College (Kirsty Jazledine, Arts Director)

"Anzac Eve was exceptionally well-written and performed. It provided a great balance of historical perspectives, engaging character development, and current issues, presented in a relevant, authentic, and powerful way." Scots College (Claire Hall, Learning Area Coordinator)

Synopsis

Anzac Eve is a contemporary play about four Australasians in their twenties. They are on their 'OE' and find themselves at Gallipoli to attend commemorations the night before Anzac Day. This story of the growing relationship between the four young people mirrors the Gallipoli campaign itself: landing, digging in, mateship, an epic battle and evacuation.

Ben Porteous has recently finished an MA in History and is finally seeing the place that he wrote about for his thesis. Phil Hebblethwaite, who went to intermediate school with Porteous, is a London IT worker and in the middle of a boozy European OE. He has travelled to Gallipoli to commemorate the event and retrace the footsteps of an uncle that he didn't know he had. He is waiting for his other mates to turn up. Ben and Phil plant themselves on the large lawn area at Anzac Cove and meet two girls who have travelled from Australia. Despite their reservations, the girls reluctantly agree to share a camping spot with the two Kiwis – Anzac Cove is filling up fast.

To book, contact your local theatre contact or Tour-Makers Schools schools@pannz.org.nz

Maia Greunwald works in an insurance office in Brisbane and has special reasons for coming to Gallipoli. She has dragged along her friend, Lizzie Te One, a 'Mozzie' (Māori born in Australia) and who works in the same office as Maia. Lizzie knows very little about any family connection to Gallipoli and would much rather be in Phuket.

Initially the Kiwi boys, especially Phil, try to chat up the Aussie girls. He has smuggled in some alcohol and wants to party. As the night wears on, the group reveal their various relationships to Gallipoli and their views on it. They find they have very different opinions.

The left-wing anti-military Ben hates the myth-making that is associated with the Gallipoli campaign, whereas the others think it is a heroic campaign that needs celebrating. Ben tries to bust the Anzac 'myth' about the shared mateship between Aussies and Kiwis. Lizzie and Phil argue that the fact they are all their together sharing illegal alcohol means that Aussies and Kiwis are natural friends and that their strong Anzac relationship still exists.

As the night wears on the campaign is discussed. Phil has a photographic memory for dates and numbers killed in battle but Ben, a trained historian, is appalled by Phil's lack of ability to analyse. As the night wears on, Ben, with his cynical left-wing view of the whole Gallipoli campaign, antagonises the group. This climaxes when he draws parallels between the battle of Chunuk Bair and the recent Australasian actions in Afghanistan, which causes Maia to storm out.

The group argue, fall out and then make up again as the evening continues. Eventually hatchets are fully buried and the four Anzacs go the way of those before them and evacuate the peninsula.

About **ARMSTRONG CREATIVE** The Company

Armstrong Creative is a theatre production company based in Wellington. Run by producer Caroline Armstrong and renowned playwright Dave Armstrong, Armstrong Creative has a reputation for combining high-quality artistic productions with outstanding box-office success. The company has a long and successful record of touring productions in New Zealand, often more than one at the same time, and has also toured productions overseas.

Armstrong Creative has considerable experience in education. Both Dave and Caroline have taught at primary and secondary level. Recently they held a series of writing and performing workshops at Porirua College, a Decile One school in Wellington and helped students create and perform their end-of-year drama production 'The Creek'.

Dave Armstrong is a trained secondary teacher and has run numerous playwright workshops through Playmarket and the Book Council's writer in school's team. He also worked as a writer on Te Papa's blockbuster World War One exhibition *Gallipoli, The Scale of Our War*, for which Weta Workshop's Richard Taylor was Creative Director. Dave also worked as a writer and audio director on Gallipoli segment of *Nga Tapuwae*, the app created by the Ministry of Culture and Heritage for visitors to the World War One battlefields, and wrote a story about Gallipoli for Te Papa Press's publication *The Curioseum*.

About **JAMIE MCCASKILL** The Director

Since graduation from UCOL Theatre School in 2000 Jamie has been working professionally in the arts industry as a writer, actor, director, musician and producer. Recent accolades are Best Supporting Actor for his role in *Seed* at Circa Theatre in 2015 and he also won the award for Best new, New Zealand Play with his play *Not in our Neighbourhood* in the same year. Recent directing credits are *Te Kuia me te Pungawerewere* for Taki Rua Productions, *Hinepau* with Capital E



and *The Biggest* with Tikapa Productions. Jamie was the recipient of the Bruce Mason award in 2013 for NZ Emerging playwright of the year and is a Producer/Director of Wellington based production company, Tikapa Productions. Jamie is creator of the Maori showband *The Maori Sidesteps* and co-creator of the popular 2016 webseries.

WORKSHOPS

Opportunities for further engagement

If you are interested in any of these workshop opportunities, they are available by arrangement. Please contact your local theatre contact or Tour-Makers Schools schools@pannz.org.nz.

WORKSHOP 1 – EXTENDED FORUM

Dave Armstrong and the 4 actors

Duration: 2 hours (one-hour performance and one-hour post-show discussion). Up to 200 students.

Dave will chair the conversation as he and the four actors discuss issues raised in the play and field questions from students. The workshop will cover issues raised in the play – such as interpreting history, commemoration, war and suicide – and will also look at topics such as how plays are written and rehearsed, how actors approach a script (how do they learn lines, what tools do they use for creating characters, what rehearsal techniques do they find the most useful etc.) and the process that the actors and playwright have been through to become a professional (e.g. doing plays at secondary school, attending Drama School, attending auditions etc). This workshop has already been undertaken with the *Anzac Eve* cast and playwright at schools in the Wellington region during 2016 and was highly successful.

WORKSHOP 2 – ROLE PLAY

Dave Armstrong and the 4 actors (and Director Jamie McCaskill)

Duration: 3 hours (one hour performance and 2 hour role play session). Ideally 15–25 students

This session begins with a 15-minute general discussion about the issues raised in the play. We will provide students with primary source

historical material related to the Gallipoli campaign and *Anzac Eve*. This may take the form of letters sent home by soldiers, Māori Contingent members, nurses to family back at home, reports and newspaper accounts of the time, and letters from family back at home. The actors, writer and director will work in small groups with the students to create a story around the historical material. Each group will create a scenario and characters for the scene, work out the various attitudes a character might have, then perform it. If time permits, the groups may create a contemporary story which, as *Anzac Eve* does, relates back to the historical material (e.g. a young student asking their grandmother about a tūpuna who fought at Gallipoli but was never talked about).

WORKSHOP 3 – CONTEMPORARY PERSPECTIVE

Dave Armstrong and 4 cast.

Duration: 3 hours (one-hour performance and 2-hour workshop session)

This session is based on workshops Dave has been involved in tutoring at Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School.

Following a performance of *Anzac Eve*, students will be encouraged to identify a 'scene' that is not actually in the play, but might be mentioned in the play or happen 'off-stage'. Scenes could include:

- Phil visiting his father in his shop and asking to go to university to study history. 'No,' says Dad, 'you'll get a proper job in IT.'
- Maia and Lizzie agree to go on a holiday. Lizzie has her heart set on going to a resort in Thailand but Maia must persuade her come with her to Gallipoli.
- Maia farewells her brother as he heads off to Afghanistan. Both parents are proud of their son, but Maia's Mum has some nagging doubts.
- Ben at the university debating an older historian
- Ben and Phil at intermediate school competing for the school history prize.

Dave and the cast will work with the groups to create and rehearse the scene which will then be performed to other students. The cast may assist with performing "extra" characters if required, but the focus will be on the students performing their own creations.

CURRICULUM NOTES

Anzac Eve is directly related to many strands of the New Zealand Curriculum, especially in the areas of History, Drama and English.

History: Though a contemporary play, *Anzac Eve* is about a significant New Zealand historical event – the Gallipoli campaign. It draws on real events that occurred at Gallipoli and various historical interpretations of them. The play also surveys recent history, such as the New Zealand and Australian involvement in the invasion of Iraq and Afghanistan, and draws comparisons with the Gallipoli campaign.

Anzac Eve also discusses issues of national identity and national mythmaking, as well as various issues of historiography – asking why there are many different versions of the same event. Several primary source historical materials – including letters from soldiers, official documents, newspapers of the time – were used to help create *Anzac Eve*.

Drama: As well as being a contemporary New Zealand play by a well-known playwright, with scenes that would be easily performed by students of a New Zealand secondary school, *Anzac Eve* could also be used by teachers to inspire original scripted and devised material to be produced by students. Though a conventional play with a realistic style, it is also highly stylised and abstract in its presentation, relying on suspension of disbelief for its setting (a lawn with thousands of people sitting on it) and telescopes events taking place over an evening in 55 minutes.

English: The script of *Anzac Eve* will be available for those who wish to study it. The script provides many opportunities for literary analysis by teachers and students. It is also a good model to help students draw conclusions and personally respond (written and oral) to various issues raised in the play (e.g. do New Zealanders and Australians share a 'common bond', were the wars in Iraq and Afghanistan similar to the Gallipoli campaign?) and to find evidence to support their arguments.

***Anzac Eve* is directly related to the following strands of the New Zealand Curriculum:**

HISTORY LEVEL 1

- 91001 Carry out an investigation of an historical event, or place, of significance to New Zealanders.
- 91002 Demonstrate an understanding of an historical event, or place, of significance to New Zealanders.
- 91003 Interpret sources of an historical event of significance to New Zealanders
- 91004 Demonstrate understanding of different perspectives of people in an historical event of significance to New Zealanders.
- 91005 Describe the causes and consequences of an historical event
- 91006 Describe how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society.

HISTORY LEVEL 2

- 91229 Carry out an inquiry of an historical event or place that is of significance to New Zealanders
- 91230 Examine an historical event or place that is of significance to New Zealanders
- 91231 Examine sources of an historical event that is of significance to New Zealanders
- 91232 Interpret different perspectives of people in an historical event that is of significance to New Zealanders
- 91234 Examine how a significant historical event affected New Zealand society

HISTORY LEVEL 3

- 91434 Research an historical event of place of significance to New Zealanders, using primary and secondary sources
- 91435 Analyse an historical event of place of significance to New Zealanders
- 91436 Analyse evidence relating to an historical event of place of significance to New Zealanders
- 91437 Analyse different perspectives of a contested event of significance to New Zealanders
- 91438 Analyse the causes and consequences of a significant historical event

DRAMA LEVEL 1

- 90006 Apply drama techniques in a dramatic context
- 90011 Demonstrate understanding of the use of drama aspects within live performance
- 90997 Devise and perform a drama
- 90998 Demonstrate understanding of a drama theatre form
- 90999 Use features of a drama/theatre form in a performance
- 91000 Demonstrate understanding of a significant play

DRAMA LEVEL 2

- 91213 Apply drama techniques in a scripted context
- 91214 Devise and perform a drama to realise intention
- 91215 Discuss a drama or theatre form or period with reference to a text
- 91217 Examine the work of a playwright
- 91219 Discuss drama elements, techniques, conventions and technologies within live performance
- 91220 Script a scene suitable for drama performance

DRAMA LEVEL 3

- 91512 Interpret scripted text to integrate drama techniques in performance
- 91513 Devise and perform a drama to realise a concept
- 91514 Interpret a text from a prescribed playwright to demonstrate knowledge of a theatre form or period
- 91516 Demonstrate understanding of the work of a drama or theatre theorist or practitioner.
- 91518 Demonstrate understanding of live drama performance

ENGLISH LEVEL 1

- 90849 Show understanding of specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), using supporting evidence

- 90850 Show understanding of specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), using supporting evidence
- 90851 Show understanding of significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, using supporting evidence
- 90852 Explain significant connection(s) across texts, using supporting evidence
- 90853 Use information literacy skills to form conclusion(s)
- 90854 Form personal responses to independently read texts, supported by evidence
- 90856 Show understanding of visual and/or oral text(s) through close viewing and/or listening, using supporting evidence
- 90857 Construct and deliver an oral text

ENGLISH LEVEL 2

- 91098 Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence
- 91099 Analyse specified aspect(s) of studied visual or oral text(s), supported by evidence
- 91100 Analyse significant aspects of unfamiliar written text(s) through close reading, supported by evidence
- 91104 Analyse significant connections across texts, supported by evidence
- 91105 Use information literacy skills to form developed conclusion(s)
- 91106 Form developed personal responses to independently read texts, supported by evidence
- 91107 Analyse aspects of visual and/or oral text(s) through close viewing and/or listening, supported by evidence

ENGLISH LEVEL 3

- 91472 Respond critically to specified aspect(s) of studied written text(s), supported by evidence
- 91478 Respond critically to significant connections across texts, supported by evidence
- 91479 Develop an informed understanding of literature and/or language using critical texts.

HISTORICAL CONTEXT

In August 1914, war broke out between the United Kingdom and Germany. New Zealand was quick to support its 'mother country' and the Turks – part of the once-vast Ottoman Empire – eventually sided with Germany.

New Zealand troops originally expected to join British forces fighting on the Western Front in Europe. However, late in 1914, British authorities decided to offload Australian and New Zealand soldiers in Egypt to bolster the British forces guarding the Suez Canal.

In April 1915, New Zealand soldiers were transported to the Greek island of Lemnos to prepare for the invasion of the Gallipoli Peninsula. The peninsula was important because it guarded the entrance to the Dardanelles Strait. The Allied plan was to break through the straits, capture the Ottoman capital, Constantinople (now Istanbul), and knock the Ottoman Empire out of the war.

The Allies invaded the Dardanelles on 25 April 1915. While British troops made the main landing at Cape Helles on the southern tip of the peninsula, the Australian and New Zealand troops landed at Anzac Cove, about 2 km north of their intended landing site. Instead of encountering flat stretch of coastline, the ANZAC troops encountered a narrow beach overlooked by steep, rugged hills.

Although the Allies managed to secure footholds on the peninsula, the fighting quickly degenerated into a stalemate. Troops on both sides endured heat, flies, the stench of unburied bodies, insufficient water and disease.

In August 1915, the Allies launched a major offensive in an attempt to break the deadlock. The plan was to capture the high ground in the Sari Bair Range. New Zealand troops briefly captured Chunuk Bair, one of the highest hills. But the massive Turk counter-attack and forced the troops who had relieved the New Zealanders, who had suffered severe casualties, off the summit.

The failure to hold Chunuk Bair, and the failure of other August battles meant a return to stalemate. In December 1915 the British decided to evacuate the peninsula. The evacuation began on 15 December, with 36,000 troops withdrawn over five nights, with no casualties. It was the best planned and most successful manoeuvre of the entire Gallipoli campaign.

Gallipoli was a costly failure. 44,000 Allied soldiers died, including more than 8700 Australians and 2700 New Zealanders. The Turks lost 87,000 men.

In New Zealand and Australia, Gallipoli helped foster a developing sense of pride and national identity. Anzac Day grew out of this pride. First observed on 25 April 1916, the date of the Gallipoli landing has become a time for remembering not only those who died at Gallipoli, but all New Zealanders who have served their country in times of war and peace. Anzac commemorations at Gallipoli have also become a popular place for young Australian and New Zealand backpackers to stop off while doing their OE (overseas experience).

Adapted from nzhistory.govt.nz



FURTHER DISCUSSION

Question 1

Maia: Gallipoli was nothing like Afghanistan

*Ben: Gallipoli was **exactly** like Afghanistan!*

- What do you consider are the differences and similarities between the Gallipoli and Afghanistan wars? Do you think Maia or Ben is right?
- Ben uses the phrase “whoop whoop pull up, pull up” in the play. This links to the mistakes of the Gallipoli campaign to a more recent national disaster for New Zealand. Do you know what it is? Do you think Ben is being fair linking the Gallipoli campaign to other national disasters?

Question 2

Maia: Face it, there's a super-strong bond between Aussies and Kiwis. I know we compete in sport and make jokes about each other, but there's no hatred.

- Is Maia right? Do you think Aussies and Kiwis have a strong bond that was forged at Gallipoli or is it a myth? Do Aussies and Kiwis still have unfair prejudices about each other?

Question 3

Phil: Travelling by yourself?

Ben: Yeah, I'm sort of finishing off my OE

Ben and Phil have been on their Big OE (Overseas Experience) – what is that and why do you think it is important to young Kiwis and Aussies? What are some of the things you would like to do on your OE, if you have one? Would a visit to Gallipoli be part of your OE? Why or why not?

WRITING ANZAC EVE

How does a play like *Anzac Eve* get written? For playwright Dave Armstrong, the play started after a conversation with the director of an arts festival. ‘I was rung up by Philip Tremewan, the Director of the Wanaka Festival, who knew about a fund sent up by the government (WW100) on the 100-year anniversary of the First World War. It would support artistic projects about the war.’

‘I didn’t want to write a play set in 1915 as I’d already done that,’ explains Dave, ‘but I liked the

idea of a play about people in their 20s who visit Gallipoli. I was interested how, over the last few years, a very solemn commemoration has turned into a big party full of young Aussies and Kiwis.’

‘As I wrote, I realised there were very few plays about the relationship between New Zealanders and Australians and that people had differing opinions about our relationship with each other. We are big rivals in sport, and every older Kiwi sports fan remembers the infamous “Underarm Incident” where an Aussie cricketer bowled underarm in order to guarantee New Zealand could not hit a six and win the game. We love bagging each other, yet we often hang out together when we find ourselves on the other side of the world.’

Armstrong also concedes that there have been issues in the last couple of years that have increased tensions, with New Zealanders suddenly being deported from Australia because they have criminal records, even though they may have spent most of their life in Australia. ‘Yet we are told Aussies and Kiwis love each other,’ explains Armstrong, ‘because of the Gallipoli campaign, where they fought side by side.’

‘As I did further research I learned that there are a lot of myths about our two countries and about the Gallipoli campaign, though it’s also true that many Aussies and Kiwi fought very bravely at the time.’

Though *Anzac Eve* is a serious drama about war, it also has a lighter side. ‘It’s also a romantic comedy,’ explains Armstrong. ‘On one level it’s about what we have learned, if anything, over the last hundred years, but it’s also about two Kiwis guys who try and chat up two Aussie girls, with interesting results.’

Dave Armstrong is a big fan of workshopping. ‘I actually wrote the first draft over about a week,’ he explains. ‘Then we had a two-day workshop, after which I did a lot of rewriting. Then we had another two-day workshop about three months later, with even more rewriting after that.’ Armstrong welcomes feedback from actors. ‘They all had really constructive things to say about their characters and really helped with the language. It’s a long time since I was twenty so I often changed lines if the actors felt they didn’t ring true for a twenty-year-old to say them.’

FURTHER DISCUSSION

Question 1

Lizzie describes herself as a 'Mozzie'. What is a "Mozzie"? Do you think Lizzie would be the same sort of person if she had been brought up in New Zealand? How is Lizzie similar to Maia? How is she different?

Question 2

Do you think there is such a thing as 'Anzac Spirit' or is it a myth? We have many 'national concepts' that some New Zealanders think are real and that others think are a myth. Do you think the following terms and statements below are 'myths' or real?

- New Zealand 'punches above its weight' overseas.
- New Zealanders are practical people and have a No. 8 wire and 'can do' attitude.
- New Zealand is a very egalitarian (equal) society
- In New Zealand we have a 'tall poppy syndrome' where we 'cut down' people who are successful.
- New Zealand is 'Godzone' country – a quarter-acre paradise.
- New Zealand is a great place to bring up kids.
- Despite all our differences, deep down New Zealanders and Australians love each other.

Question 3

Is Reuben a character in the play? He is important but we never see him. What function does he have? Can you think of another play or TV show where there is an important character you never see?

Question 4

In recent years, thousands of young Aussies and Kiwis have gathered at Anzac Cove to commemorate Anzac Day. In the play there are only four actors. How does the writer and director deal with this problem?

Question 5

Dave Armstrong has said that the structure of the play mirrors the Gallipoli campaign itself. Can you find where in the play the main phases of the Gallipoli campaign (Arrival, Digging In, Daily Life, The Major Battle, Evacuation) occur?

BIBLIOGRAPHY AND LINKS

Gallipoli – The New Zealand Story by Christopher Pugsley, Libro International

Anzac's Dirty Dozen – 12 Myths of Australian Military History, edited by Craig Stockings, University of New South Wales Press

The Great Wrong War – New Zealand Society in World War 1 by Stevan Eldred-Grigg, Random House.

King and Country, a play by Dave Armstrong, available from Playmarket.

<https://nzhistory.govt.nz/war/the-gallipoli-campaign/introduction>
Culture and Heritage New Zealand history webpage. Provides a good background to the Gallipoli campaign.

<http://ngatapu.wae.govt.nz/explore-gallipoli>
An award-winning app and website for people wanting to visit Gallipoli. Contains maps, commentaries and dramatised letters and other information about the Gallipoli soldiers and nurses.

<http://www.gallipoli.tepapa.govt.nz/>
The website for Te Papa's blockbuster Gallipoli exhibition. Full of interesting additional information.



To book, contact your local theatre contact or Tour-Makers Schools schools@pannz.org.nz
