

GALLIPOLI SCHOOLS DAY PERFORMANCE

IMPORTANT INFORMATION

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| Date: | Wednesday 13 th August 2008 |
| Venue: | Sydney Theatre |
| Pre-performance forum | 10.30 am |
| Lunch Break | 11.15 am |
| Performance commences: | 12.15 pm |
| Performance concludes: | 3.15 pm |

We respectfully ask that you discuss theatre etiquette with your students prior to coming to the performance.

Running Late?

Please contact Sydney Theatre Company's main switch on 9250 1700 and a message will be passed to Front of House.

Booking Queries

Please contact Marietta Hargreaves on 02 9250 1778 or mhargreaves@sydneytheatre.com.au

General Education Queries

Please contact Helen Hristofski, Education Manager, on 02 9250 1726 or hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au

Sydney Theatre Company presents the STC Actors Company in



GALLIPOLI

Written and Devised by Nigel Jamieson in association with the Cast

Teacher's Resource Kit

Written and compiled by Elizabeth Surbey

Acknowledgements

Sydney Theatre Company would like to thank the following for their invaluable material for these Teachers' Notes: Laura Scrivano (STC) Helen Hristofski (STC)

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Front Image of Alec Campbell used by kind permission of the Campbell family.

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Sydney Theatre Company

Sydney Theatre Company (STC) produces theatre of the highest standard that consistently illuminates, entertains and challenges. It is committed to the engagement between the imagination of its artists and its audiences, to the development of the art form of theatre, and to excellence in all its endeavours.

STC has been a major force in Australian drama since its establishment in 1978. It was created by the New South Wales Government, following the demise of the Old Tote Theatre Company. The original intention was to better utilise the Drama Theatre of the Sydney Opera House and the new Company comprised a small central administration staff, technical staff, workshop and rehearsal facilities. Richard Wherrett was appointed Artistic Director from 1979 to 1990.

The Wharf opened on 13 December, 1984 by Premier Neville Wran, which allowed all departments of the Company to be housed under one roof for the first time. The venue was to become the envy of the theatre world. From 1985, the Company could perform in two locations throughout the year, the Drama Theatre and The Wharf. From 1990 to 1999, Wayne Harrison served as Artistic Director. A third regular venue, Sydney Theatre, administered and operated by STC, opened in 2004.

The predominant financial commitment to STC is made by its audience. Of this audience, the Company's subscribers make a crucial commitment. The Company is also assisted annually by grants from the Federal Government through the Australia Council and the New South Wales Government through the Ministry for the Arts. STC also actively seeks sponsorship and donations from the corporate sector and from private individuals.

Under the leadership Artistic Directors Cate Blanchett and Andrew Upton, STC's annual subscription season features up to 12 plays including: recent or new Australian works, interpretations of theatrical classics and contemporary foreign works. In addition STC regularly co-produces and tours productions throughout Australia, playing annually to audiences in excess of 300,000. STC actively fosters relationships and collaborations with international artists and companies. In 2006 STC began a new journey of artistic development with the inception of The Actors Company, the STC ensemble.

To access detailed information on Sydney Theatre Company, its history and productions please contact our Archivist Judith Seeff at jseeff@sydneytheatre.com.au

Sydney Theatre Company Education

Sydney Theatre Company is committed to education by programming original **productions** and **workshops** that enthuse and engage the next generation of theatre-goers. Within the education programme Sydney Theatre Company produces its own season of plays as well as collaborates with leading theatre-for-young-people companies across Australia.

Often a young person's first experience of theatre is facilitated by teachers. STC ensures access to all of its mainstage productions through the **schoolsdays** programme as well as produces and tours theatre specifically crafted to resonate with young people.

STC works to support educators in their Drama and English-teaching practices. Every year dynamic **workshops** are held by leading theatre practitioners to support curriculum content, detailed resources are provided for all productions and an extensive work-experience programme is available to students from across the state.

The annual Sydney Morning Herald and Sydney Theatre Company **Young Playwright's Award** continues to develop and encourage young writers. The winning students receive a cash prize and a two-day workshop with a professional director, dramaturg and cast – an invaluable opportunity and experience.

Sydney Theatre Company has an extensive **on-line resource** for teachers and students. Visit www.sydneytheatre.com.au/education.

We encourage teachers to subscribe to regular e-news to keep informed as well as access **heavily discounted** tickets and special offers.

For further information on STC Education programme, please contact the Education Manager Helen Hristofski at hristofski@sydneytheatre.com.au

Production Credits

Creative Team

| | |
|--------------------|--|
| Director | Nigel Jamieson |
| Co-Designers | Brad Clark and Alexandra Sommer |
| Lighting Designer | Trudy Dagleish |
| Composer | Alan John |
| Sound Designer | Steve Francis |
| Video Artist | Antonia Fredman |
| Assistant Director | Mark Haslam |
| Dramaturg | Damien Millar |
| Movement Director | Gavin Robbins |

With the STC Actors Company and Third Year Acting students of NIDA

From the website

Gallipoli

Directed and Devised by Nigel Jamieson in association with the cast

Plot Synopsis

In this epic production internationally-acclaimed theatre director Nigel Jamieson brings a cast of over 40 performers to the stage of Sydney Theatre in one of the most ambitious productions ever staged by Sydney Theatre Company.

Combining spectacle, mass choreography and choral work, aerial performance and huge projected images across multiple tiers of set, this is a truly explosive work.

Each year we pledge to remember the Diggers, but is this a clear-eyed remembrance or a sentimental version in convenient soft-focus?

Drawn from letters, diaries, contemporary reportage, film footage and official documents, Gallipoli features the STC Actors Company on stage with the third year acting students of NIDA.

Gallipoli re-examines a story at the very bedrock of Australian identity, with seismic results. Unmissable!

Nigel Jamieson is one of Australia's most distinctive theatre creators, specialising in large-scale ceremonies and events. His creations have included the unforgettable Tin Symphony for the Sydney 2000 Olympics Opening Ceremony. His award-winning Adelaide Festival hit Theft of Sita has been seen in New York and around Europe, and his recent work Honour Bound, about the incarceration of David Hicks at Guantanamo Bay, was performed in Australia, New Zealand and through Europe.

The Writer/ Director - Interview

New Perspectives

Nigel Jamieson discusses the creation of *Gallipoli*

Why Gallipoli? What inspired you to theatrically explore this piece of Australian history?

Apart from its rich Indigenous culture, Australia does not have a lot of collective mythologies. Gallipoli, for what ever reason, seems to have found a unique and seemingly ever growing, place in our culture and society. We have been involved in far more costly and far more important wars and battles, but the perception that it was on the beach head of Gallipoli that our national character was formed seems to have stuck. Each year the ceremonies at Anzac cove and the ANZAC Day march attracts more and more young people and Gallipoli is freely spoken of as the 'birth place of the nation'. God help us if that be so!

Just about every Australian knows the bare bones of the myth – the heroic landing on the wrong beach, the humour and larrikin mateship with which our boys faced hardship and death, making the 'ultimate sacrifice'. The story has not changed much in nearly 100 years since it was first reported in the heavily censored Australian press, by a journalist from the *British Daily Telegraph* who was on a ship a mile off shore. Our own war correspondent was muzzled by British censors. The telling of this story was very driven by the desperate need to increase recruitment and meet the devastating demands of the Western Front and Gallipoli. 56 dead were reported rather than the real figure of 2000. As the bells rang and the nation celebrated our boys bravery, 8000 wounded competed for 350 hospital beds and gangrene was endemic. The charge on the beach was only the beginning of a nightmare for the young Australians, living covered in flies, in trenches made of dead bodies, with little water and a severe crippling dysentery effecting 85% of the men. Gallipoli was not a birth place. It was a place of death. Of slow horrific, pointless death. In latter years, rather than take responsibility for the carnage, we blamed it on the idiotic British generals. But ultimately they were Australians committed to the campaign by the Australian parliament and their fate was our responsibility.

Myths have been both the stuff of national values and theatre since the beginning of time, but if these myths are not continually re-explored they become calcified and regressive. The Greeks, would re-explore their myths each year for new meanings in the face of new history. A story told by Sophocles would be then be turned up side down by Euripides – theatre as a court of the people where the issues confronting society and the underlying its values would be re-examined again and again.

At a time when Australia is at war what other lessons might we learn from Gallipoli? Does a celebration of courage, humour, and larrikin bravery help us much? Does our support of an Imperial power, without proper national supervision, to invade a Muslim county who posed no threat to us ring other bells? The fate of Churchill's belief that all you needed was to hit them with enough shells from the air and they would embrace the arrival of western values and power, might have cautioned us about Donald Rumsfeld's similar beliefs. Similar lessons might have been learnt from the ferocity with which the Turks defended their homeland. Might Churchill's decision to ignore his generals and not supply the army with the

men and resources they believed necessary to sustain an occupation, again mirror more recent events? And if we are to commit our troops to war then should we not look hard at what it means for the soldiers on the front? A focus on mateship and heroism is easy. Has our theatre, cinema and culture, given us more truthful images to ponder when we pledge to 'remember them' on ANZAC Day and watch the Australian flag flutter in the wind – images that reflect the true horror of what we committed them to, and its pointless, horrific waste.

What kind of research did you do for *Gallipoli*? Where did you start your process?

I began with reading Les Carlyon's excellent *Gallipoli* and then buried myself at the State Library reading the newspapers from the outset to the war until withdrawal of Gallipoli - the divergence between the events as they unfolded on the battlefield and their reporting in the press was truly amazing. The jingoism, fabrication and almost unbelievable pressure on any man who had not signed up, ranged from the hilarious to the shocking. I then read as many diaries, letters and testimonies as I could, from Sir Ian Hamilton - the Commander-in-Chief of the operation - to the truly shocking and horrifying descriptions from the soldiers on the front line. It's an incredible story with an incredible range of characters and of course the more one reads, the more hooked one becomes. I was particularly struck by Charles Bean's work – the man who founded the Australian War Memorial and wrote the official history. His diary is full of harrowing stories from the battlefield – of waste and horror which then would be retold in the press focusing on the lads laughing and joking and making yet another successful charge. The terrifying eloquence of the soldiers I found remarkable. I read everything I could get my hands on then went to Gallipoli and visited the battlefields and some of the 100 cemeteries that pock mark the landscape. I spent about four months on the script – which began much longer than it ended up in the theatre.

I have tried to treat the script as just one of many inputs, to provide us with a clear structure – but with the actual dialogue and words being often moulded or told through other media.

Prior to rehearsals I also did a number of workshops with the NIDA students, and the STC Actors Company, developing a language to tell the story and doing lots of improvisation. It's wonderful to have so many heads working on the imaginative framework of the piece and the cast have been inspirational in their input.

How did you decide which perspectives you would tell the *Gallipoli* campaign from?

That was one of the biggest challenges. Very early on, I sat down and made a list of what seemed to be the crucial scenes. I got it down to 76. I started asking myself how economically the story could be told. How short can each scene be? How can the different worlds overlap one another? How can we find an incredibly fluid storytelling technique that would catapult us from London to Australia to the trenches and back again in the space of four or five minutes? We found that combining those worlds was very effective.

I wanted to try and tell as much of the story as I could through the voices of those involved. Most of the words come from those who took part in the campaign. It would have been too

easy to invent a world of horror. But 90% of what we hear is through the mouths of those who were there.

I wanted to capture just a little of what it was like to live through such a hell and find a way of using the photographic images from the trenches which I don't think we are familiar enough with as a people. I tried not to focus on the elements of the story we all know but on the bits that are not told in the classroom. Of the 36 actors in the room, few had anything but the most cursory knowledge of the story and in the first days of reading the testimonies of those involved there was a deep sense of shock.

How do you work in the rehearsal room as a director?

I try and be as well prepared as possible. The more solid you are in your research and ideas, the braver and more flexible you can be when you hit the rehearsal room floor. I try and keep my head, heart and imagination open, the actor's imaginations open, and maintain a sense of energy and excitement in the room – the belief that there is nothing we cannot tell, however epic, however far removed from a 12-metre stage.

The particular challenge of this production is there are nearly 40 actors on stage most of the night and have been through-out rehearsals. Standing up each morning and calling everyone on stage certainly had a sense of 'going over the top'. I always have butterflies in my stomach. I am never quite sure how we will end up telling the story and often throw away my first thoughts. But what I love is being challenged, having to think on my feet and finding a way of using my imagination, the imagination of the actors and of the audience to create the most visceral experience possible.

“Churchill believed that if we hit the Turks with 15 inch guns and they would surrender. Rumsfeld believed shock and awe in Iraq would make them fall over. Kitchener believed that the Turkish populace would welcome western civilisation. George Bush believed that the Iraqis would welcome us with open arms. If the Gallipoli story was told more vividly, from the perspective of the people involved and less on the descriptive pen of journalists who weren't even on the beach that really might have changed our history.”

What is it about the theatre that entices you to produce work for the stage?

The magic of the theatre is that we are all in a darkened room together, gathered for some form of communion, something which will hopefully effect our emotions, our understanding of ourselves, our society and our shared humanity. It is not a real world however clever the sets and props – it is a place of magic where worlds are conjured up through the force of the imaginations of all those in the room – both cast and audience. Unlike the television, cinema or internet, it is a live experience, different each night with each audience and effected by each person in the room. At its best we get to breathe as one, and that is thrilling.

I think our theatre has become too bogged down in naturalism – dominated by dialogue based plays. There are a thousand ways of telling a story and in this production I have tried to use as many as I can! Perspective is everything in the Gallipoli story – as in all history and I have wanted to keep the audience seeing this world through different lenses. In military campaigns surprise is the most successful of tools (albeit poorly used in Gallipoli) and I never want the audience to settle back into thinking they know what is coming next. As an audience member, if you don't quite know what space you are in, your nerves and sensory perception is heightened. You aren't comfortable but you are more alive.

I do try and create a new form of storytelling for each new subject I approach and this is partially what keeps me engaged. This allows everything to be thrown up in the air. How are we going to represent the journey of landing craft across an ocean, their grounding on a beach and the wounding of 8,000 men? This feels an infinitely more exciting question to tackle than how to get someone to walk through a pair of French doors. I try to set no limits on the mediums we might use.

Gallipoli is an extremely intense story. It is about people pushed to the very edge of endurance. It's a dark story. I think the darker the subject matter the more celebratory the imagination needs to be. The energy of forty people, their commitment and focus allows us to delight in the storytelling at the same time as our heart is torn by the terribleness of it. I've tried to create a sense of exhilaration while confronting the terrible vision of what man can do to man.

Interview by Laura Scrivano

Context of the Play / Historical reference points

Chronology of the Gallipoli campaign

1914

- Aug 4 Following German invasion of Belgium, Britain declares war.
Aug 5 Australia joins Britain in declaring war.
Sept 27 Turkey closes the Dardanelles, denying Russia access to the Mediterranean via the Black Sea.
Oct 31 Turkey enters the war on the German side (official declaration in November).
Nov 3 Allied warships bombard Turkish coastal defences at Dardanelles.

1915

- Jan 2-13 Allies plan naval expedition to force the Dardanelles and capture Constantinople.
Feb 19 Allies bombard Turkish fortifications at entrance to the Dardanelles.
Mar 18 Allied fleet fails to force the Dardanelles; retreats after heavy losses.
April 2 "The Battle of Wazzir"; ANZAC troops revolt in Cairo, burning brothels and clashing with British Military Police.
Early April The Mediterranean Expeditionary Force (MEF), including ANZAC Corps, assembles at Lemnos.
April 25 Allied landings at Cape Helles, Kum Kale and Anzac Cove.
This is followed by heavy continuous fighting at Anzac Cove.
May 2/3 Unsuccessful attempt at break out at Anzac Cove; attacks on Baby 700.
May 4 ANZAC attack on Gaba Tepe beaten off.
May 6-8 Australian troops take part in Second battle of Krithia at Cape Helles.
May 12 Advance parties of Australian Light Horse arrive at ANZAC.
May 18/19 Turkish offensive fails, with heavy losses.
May 24 Formal truce for recovery of dead and rifles. Turkish and Australian soldiers fraternise.
Aug 6 Allied offensive begins.
Attack on Lone Pine; four-day battle rages.
Aug 6-10 ANZAC efforts to take Hill 971 and Chunuk Bair fail.
Aug 7 British forces land at Suvla Bay. ANZAC charge at the Nek.
Aug 21-22 Suvla offensive fails at battle of Scimitar Hill. ANZAC attempt to take Hill 60 fails.
Aug 27-29 Second attack on Hill 60: lower slopes captured. August offensive ends in stalemate.
Sept 25 Keith Murdoch writes letter damning Gallipoli campaign.
Oct 15 General Sir Ian Hamilton is removed from command of the MEF. Hamilton and Braithwaite are replaced by Kitchener.
Oct & Nov Storms hit Anzac Cove.
Oct 28 General Sir Charles Monro arrives at Gallipoli to assume command of the MEF.
Monro recommends evacuation three days later.
Nov 27/28 Blizzards at Anzac Cove; thousands evacuated due to frostbite and exposure.
Dec 7 Evacuation of Anzac Cove, Suvla and Helles ordered.
Dec 8-17 Preparations for withdrawal. Sick, wounded, surplus troops, stores and vehicles removed from Anzac Cove. Cricket game on Shell Green.
Dec 18/19 10,000 troops taken off Anzac Cove and 10,000 off Suvla.
Dec 19/20 Last troops withdrawn, 10,000 from Anzac Cove and 10,000 from Suvla with no loss of life.

1916

- Jan 8/9 Allies evacuate Helles; Gallipoli campaign ends.

The Battle of Gallipoli took place at Gallipoli peninsula in Turkey from 25 April 1915 to 9 January 1916, during the First World War. A joint British Empire, most notably the Australians, and French operation was mounted to capture the Ottoman capital of Constantinople (now Istanbul), and secure a sea route to Russia. The attempt failed, with heavy casualties on both sides.

The Gallipoli campaign resonated profoundly among all nations involved. In Turkey, the battle is perceived as a defining moment in the history of the Turkish people—a final surge in the defense of the motherland as the centuries-old Ottoman Empire was crumbling. The struggle laid the grounds for the Turkish War of Independence and the foundation of the Turkish Republic eight years later under Atatürk, himself a commander at Gallipoli.

In Australia and New Zealand, the campaign was the first major battle undertaken by a joint military formation, the Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC), and is often considered to mark the birth of national consciousness in both of these countries. Anzac Day (April 25) remains the most significant commemoration of military casualties and veterans in Australia and New Zealand, surpassing Armistice Day/Remembrance Day.

The significance of the Battle of Gallipoli is perhaps most strongly felt in Australia and New Zealand where it was the first great conflict experienced by these nations. Before Gallipoli the citizens of these countries were confident of the superiority of the British Empire and were proud and eager to offer their service. Gallipoli shook that confidence, and the next three years on the Western Front would damage it further. The ANZACs are revered as heroes and, in Australia are stereotyped as typical tough Australians betrayed by incompetent and callous British superiors, impressions re-affirmed by films such as Peter Weir's *Gallipoli*, even though "The scale of the tragedy of the Nek was mostly the work of two Australian incompetents, Hughes and Antill." Popular Australian history asserts that while the Federation of Australia was born in 1901, the country's true psychological independence was only achieved at Gallipoli. ANZAC Day is commemorated every year on the landings' anniversary, 25 April, and is a national holiday in both Australia and New Zealand.

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Gallipoli

Memorial of Anzac Cove; commemorating the loss of thousands of Turkish and Anzac soldiers in Gallipoli.

Those heroes that shed their blood and lost their lives... you are now lying in the soil of a friendly country. Therefore rest in peace. There is no difference between the Johnnies and the Mehmets where they lie side by side here in this country of ours... You the mothers who sent their sons from far away countries, wipe away your tears. Your sons are now lying in our bosom and are in peace. Having lost their lives on this land they have become our sons as well.

—Mustafa Kemal

ANZAC Spirit

The **Anzac spirit** or **Anzac legend** is a concept which suggests that Australian and New Zealand soldiers possess shared national characteristics, specifically the qualities those soldiers are believed to have shown on the battlefield in World War I.

These qualities cluster around several ideas, including endurance, courage, ingenuity, good humour, and mateship. According to this concept, the soldiers are perceived to have been innocent and fit, stoical and laconic, irreverent in the face of authority, naturally egalitarian and disdainful of British class differences.

The Anzac spirit also tends to capture the idea of an Australian "national character", with the landing at Anzac Cove often described as being the moment of birth of Australia's nationhood.

The concept was first expressed in the reporting of the landing at Anzac Cove by Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett; as well as later on and much more extensively by Charles Bean. It is regarded as an Australasian legend, although its critics refer to it as the Anzac myth.

"The censorship has now passed beyond all reason... There are now at least four censors all of whom cut up your stuff. Maxwell starts it then Ward then General Braithwaite and finally Sir Ian Hamilton."

[Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett, excerpt from his diary]

Ashmead-Bartlett became increasingly frustrated with the military censorship of his reports on the Gallipoli campaign.

Historical Development of the Concept

The British war correspondent Ellis Ashmead-Bartlett provided the first reports of the landing at Anzac Cove by the newly formed Australian and New Zealand Army Corps (ANZAC). His report was published in Australia on 8 May 1915:

They waited neither for orders nor for the boats to reach the beach, but, springing out into the sea, they waded ashore, and, forming some sort of rough line, rushed straight on the flashes of the enemy's rifles.

Ashmead-Bartlett's account of the soldiers was unashamedly heroic:

There has been no finer feat in this war than this sudden landing in the dark and the storming of the heights... General Birdwood told the writer that he couldn't sufficiently praise the courage, endurance and the soldierly qualities of the Colonials (The Australians) were happy because they had been tried for the first time and not found wanting.

Also in 1915, in response to the reporting of the efforts of the Australian troops, the Australia poet Banjo Paterson wrote "We're All Australians Now", including the verse:

The mettle that a race can show
Is proved with shot and steel,
And now we know what nations know
And feel what nations feel.

The Anzac spirit was particularly popularised by Charles Bean, Australia's official war historian. Bean encapsulated the meaning of Anzac in his publication *Anzac to Amiens*:

Anzac stood, and still stands, for reckless valor in a good cause, for enterprise, resourcefulness, fidelity, comradeship, and endurance that will never own defeat.

Criticisms of the Concept

Professor Manning Clark, in his influential work *A History of Australia*, suggested a contrasting image of the innocent and honourable Anzac soldier. From a range of sources he provided evidence of the soldiers' bad behaviour. For example, he revealed that, as recruits, some indulged in sex orgies with an 18-year-old girl at the Broadmeadows camp before being shipped to war. Others confronted police in violent scuffles on the streets of Melbourne. Clark also recorded that in Egypt some soldiers burned the belongings of local people, brawled, got drunk and rioted, and spent sufficient time in the local brothels for many of them to suffer from venereal disease.

Other scholars such as professor of politics at La Trobe University, Robert Manne, have also questioned the veracity of the Anzac legend, arguing that it is more accurate to describe the concept as a mythology. Dr Dale Blair of Deakin University suggests that:

While traits such as egalitarianism, resourcefulness and initiative are assumed and maintained in the nation's popular memory as a truthful representation, not only of Australia's First World War soldiers, but also, of the national character, they were not sufficiently evident in the experience of the 1st Battalion [at Gallipoli] to justify their advancement as characteristics general to Australian soldiers or the nation.

According to Blair, the official war historian Charles Bean "advanced an idealised view of sacrifice to provide the nation with higher meaning and comfort as compensation for the death of its soldiers". Professor Verity Burgmann of the University of Melbourne argues that the prevailing picture of Anzac and later battles on the Western Front as the highest representation of national unity and shared sacrifice is a misrepresentation, because two conscription referenda were defeated in Australia, and many Australians were totally opposed to any participation in the war.

Other skeptics have questioned the idea that Australia's "national character" was forged on the beaches of Gallipoli. In 2008 an editorial in *The Sydney Morning Herald* stated:

But why should Australians now, 90 years later, be still so eager for some stereotypical reaffirmation of their character? Why the self-doubt? The danger in the transformation - as remembrance replaces memory, and nationalism replaces remembrance - is that the solemnity and the serious purpose of Anzac Day will be lost in an irrelevant search for some kind of essence of Australianness.

Similarly, journalist Mark McKenna disputes the notion that the character traits that supposedly define the Anzac spirit are uniquely and demonstrably Australian, arguing that these virtues are in fact universal, being "found in Palestine and Iraq, in Darfur and East Timor, in Afghanistan and Zimbabwe."

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/ANZAC_spirit

ANZAC soldier

Alec William Campbell (26 February 1899 – 16 May 2002) was the final surviving Australian participant in the Battle of Gallipoli during the First World War. His death broke the last living link of Australians with the Gallipoli story.

Alec Campbell was born in Launceston, Tasmania, Australia. At the age of 16, claiming to be two years older and enlisting without his father's permission, he left his job as a clerk with the Colonial Mutual Fire Insurance Company and lied about his age in order to enlist in the army.

He joined the 15th Battalion of the Australian Imperial Force in 1915. Not even being old enough to shave, Campbell gained the nickname "The Kid" during his training in Hobart. One of his cousins had died already at Gallipoli and the idea of Campbell's deployment terrified his parents. He landed at ANZAC Cove in early November 1915 and assisted in carrying ammunition, stores and water to the trenches. He received a minor wound in the fighting at Gallipoli. When he was evacuated from Turkey with the rest of the Australian forces in 1915, he became ill with a fever which caused partial facial paralysis. He was subsequently invalided home aboard the HMAT Port Sydney. He was formally discharged in 1916 -- a Gallipoli veteran at only 17. He only fought in the war for two months; and he later explained tersely,

"I joined for adventure. There was not a great feeling of defending the Empire. I lived through it, somehow. I enjoyed some of it. I am not a philosopher. Gallipoli was Gallipoli.

At some point between 1996 and 2002 as the ranks of Anzac survivors thinned and Campbell's own health failed, his name rose to prominence. Assertive nationalist and martial forces sought to turn him into an icon as "the last of the Anzacs." Campbell himself resisted the myth-making, observing that there was nothing really extraordinary in being the last; rather, he pointed out the simple fact that he had been one of the youngest at Gallipoli. With the passing of the last survivor of Gallipoli, the words of General Sir Ian Hamilton resonate with new meaning:

"Before the war, who had ever heard of ANZAC? Hereafter, who will ever forget it?"

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Alec_Campbell

NURSES

For Australians, the image usually associated with 25 April, 1915 is that of Australian soldiers charging bravely up the steep and barren slopes of Gallipoli. Less appreciated is the picture of an Australian nurse on that same day attending to hundreds of battered and bleeding men on the decks and in the confined wards of a hospital ship. Wounded men were ferried out to the *Gascon* lying off Anzac Cove.

The Gallipoli hospital ships deposited their cargoes of misery at general hospitals on the nearby Greek islands of Imbros and Lemnos, or at Alexandria, 1050 km away in Egypt. Among the tent cities on Lemnos was No 3 Australian General Hospital (AGH) where Matron Grace Wilson and her staff of 96 AANS nurses tended Australian and Allied wounded.

On Lemnos, Matron Wilson and her nurses experienced the inefficiency of military administration in relation to the hospital. In her diary she described the steady flow of new patients during the August 1915 offensive on Gallipoli and the effect that lack of proper equipment and supplies had on the care of the wounded:

9 August — Found 150 patients lying on the ground — no equipment whatever ... had no water to drink or wash.

10 August — Still no water ... convoy arrived at night and used up all our private things, soap etc, tore up clothes [for bandages].

11 August — Convoy arrived — about 400 — no equipment whatever ... Just laid the men on the ground and gave them a drink. Very many badly shattered, nearly all stretcher cases ... Tents were erected over them as quickly as possible ... All we can do is feed them and dress their wounds ... A good many died ... It is just too awful — one could never describe the scenes — could only wish all I knew to be killed outright.

[Grace Wilson, in Bassett, *Guns and Brooches*, p.46]

I shall never forget the awful feeling of hopelessness on night duty. It was dreadful. I had two wards downstairs, each over 100 patients and then I had small wards upstairs — altogether about 250 patients to look after, and one orderly and one Indian sweeper. Shall not describe their wounds, they were too awful. One loses sight of all the honour and the glory in the work we are doing.

[Lydia King, in Goodman, *Our War Nurses*, p.39]

<http://www.anzacsite.gov.au/5environment/nurses.html>

Sources

Gallipoli has drawn upon many contemporary references in an attempt to accurately reflect the experiences of those involved in the campaign. These have included the diaries, writings and recorded recollections of:

Ashmead Bartlett
Charles Bean
Alec Campbell
C.J. Dennis
Bill East
Bert Facey
Tony Fagan
Bill Gammage
Joe Gasparich
Sir Ian Hamilton

William 'Billy' Hughes
Carl Janseen
Mustafa Kemal
(Ataturk)
Sister Alice Kitchen
Eric Longley
Ivor Margetts
Sir Keith Murdoch
Joe Murray
Harold Thomas

Songs List

All songs arranged by Alan John.

ANZAC – Tom Armstrong

The Australaise – CJ Dennis

For Auld Lang Syne (Australia Will Be There) – W.W. Francis

Britannia Needs You Like A Mother – Jean Schwartz / Grant Clark

Crucifixus – J.S. Bach

Glorious (One Keg Of Beer For The Four Of Us) – Arr. C Stanbridge

Keep The Home Fires Burning – Ivor Novello / Lena Ford

Libera Me - Anon

Mademoiselle From Armentieres – Arr. A. Dare

Mop It Down – Arr. Fred Hall

Our Boys At The Dardanelles – Robert H McAnally

Quotes

You come here and see the job and understand it and get out of your head the nonsense that is written about it. There is horror and beastliness and cowardice and treachery, over all of which the writer anxious to please the public has to throw his cloak. But this is the true side of war. But if I was to put that into print tomorrow the tender Australian public, which only tolerates flattery and in its cheapest form, would howl me out of existence.

Charles Bean, Official Australian War Correspondent.

Only someone who was actually there could understand our feelings. We had gone through so much together, the living and the dead. We belonged together.

Private Joe Gasparich.

At this spectacle even the most gentle must feel savage. And the most savage must weep.

Turkish Officer, 1915.

This is mass murder. Poor boys. If only the world knew how badly they are treated.

Sister Alice Kitchen, Australian Nurse at Gallipoli

On Gallipoli from first to last, I lived with fear all the time, 24 hours a day, not just in spasms. Sometimes you felt obliged to put up a fight against fear - you might start digging, digging madly, deeper and deeper, to get further down into the ground in the hope you might be free of fear. You didn't think of brave deeds at all. That was all gone.

Private Russell Weir

We have no responsibility of directing the campaign. Our business is only to carry out the instructions of the Imperial Government and to give it what assistance we can. At all events, we owe the Imperial authorities this duty to refrain from criticising their actions. I do not pretend to understand the situation but I do know what the duty of this government is, and it is to mind its own business.

William 'Billy' Hughes, Australian Prime Minister

It is without a doubt one of the most terrible chapters in our history.

Keith Murdoch, Australian Journalist

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ORDER OF SCENES /CHARACTERS

These are from the early rehearsal text and may support your review of the production post-performance. I have created my own titles for the scenes as delineated in the script by number. The list of characters may also help with discussions and devising further around the play in the classroom. The work is called an epic and has been described in the summary as 'one of the most ambitious productions ever staged by the Sydney Theatre Company.' This may very well be so.

Order of scenes:

PROLOGUE - soldiers

0.1 War in Europe / Tombstones

0.2 1914 No one really wanted the First World War. 1915

1 ACT 1 AUSTRALIA WILL BE THERE

War announced in Australia. Fight for liberty.

1.1 "Australia will be there". Billy Hughes

1.2 A matron of Empire – poem

1.3 Britannia needs you like a mother. Younger brothers go too.

1.4 Censor

1.5 Hughes and Bean a nation's manhood.

1.6 Burlesque: Lord Kitchener / the parting of couples

1.7 Farmer's wife

1.8 Hamilton. Soldier poet. Direct address to audience.

1.9 Hamilton to Kitchener

1.10 Hamilton buys dead flowers

1.11 Semaphore flags - chorus – boarding the ship – Nurse Alice Kitchen

1.12 Poem – and old man farewells

1.13 Lady Jean Hamilton – off to the Dardanelles – Jackson goes too

1.14 The War Office

1.15 Churchill farewells Hamilton – Shock and Awe

2 ACT 2 CAIRO: THE BATTLE OF WAZZIR

- 2.1 Pyramids covered in troops – projection – famous comic sand dance
- 2.2 Sam – letters from home, late – markets, cafes , brothels of sister street
- 2.3 Bean – the good name of Australia – drinking songs
- 2.4 Reviewing the troupes
- 2.5 Ben is tempted
- 2.6 Bean is censored
- 2.7 Inspection for VD – 500 sent home
- 2.8 Uprising against the locals
- 2.9 Revenge on Wazzir – CJ Dennis “Old Pharaoh, king uv Egypt, ‘e is dead”
- 2.10 Bean’s “truth” – ‘ Australians soldiers in Egypt are indignant at the statements made by Captain C. E. Bean (correspondent)
- 2.11 Birdwood and Bean – Bean meets Ashmead Bartlett
- 2.12 Rifle drill
- 2.13

3 ACT 3: LANDING

- 3.1 Hamilton
- 3.2 Disembark – oars
- 3.3 Scaling the cliffs – counter balance wall climb
- 3.4 Full silver service dinner for the officers
- 3.5 Early deaths of mates
- 3.6 The beach head
- 3.7 General Birdwood – “if we are to re-embark it must be at once”
- 3.8 Hamilton – dig, dig, dig
- 3.9 Digger – poem
- 3.10 Hamilton visits the field hospital
- 3.11 Newspapers back home “Now ours is the story, Now ours is the glory, write on history’s page, we have come of age.” “They are always cheerful, always cracking jokes, always laughing and joking and singing.”
- 3.12 Alice Kitchen
- 3.13 CJ Dennis – poem
- 3.14 Alice – ‘This is not a war but a mass murder.” Hughes”....answer the call” Yes! Yes! Yes! Australia will be there.
- 3.15 Child: “Why aren’t you a soldier daddy? – Poem

INTERVAL

4 ACT 4: OUR LORD’S THE FLIES

- 4.1 Song
- 4.2 Birdwood and Hamilton
- 4.3 Camera effect for live action replay on the projection wall Joe Gasparich, John Turnball, Bill East, Sam Coopins, Manikins.
- 4.4 Bean’s diary – the stretcher bearers would be along soon.
- 4.5 Newspaper editor
- 4.6 The ‘Mother’ and chorus
- 4.7 Sea of bloated bodies – Ataturk “I order you not to fight. But to die!
- 4.8 Bean, Tony Fagan – an armistice to clear the dead.
- 4.9 The flies – a fly dance
- 4.10 Soldier – Poem “oh lords the flies
- 4.11 Joe Murray – death in a latrine, death

- 4.12 Stopford burlesque – charge and die – no progress only death – on both sides – at the Nek the lighthorse were annihilated
- 4.13 Hughes – ‘the dark hour before the dawn is one by which even that of the Charge of the Light Brigade must pale its fire.’ A farewell letters read (v/o) – whistle blows - soldiers as puppets charge and die
- 4.14 Women respond – those who are lost and those who suffer upon return –women keening over the bodies.
- 4.15 Bean – reports on the Lighthorse – then the diary

5 Act 5: DEFEAT

- 5.1 Keith Murdoch – father of Rupert. Founder of an Australian Newspaper dynasty. A letter for London. Then to the Australian Prime Minister.
- 5.2 (letter projected behind the speakers)
- 5.3 Bean – winter and rain – rain dance by the chorus – rain, mud and then snow
- 5.4 Frozen to death
- 5.5 Murdoch’s push sees Hamilton sent home! Gallipoli campaign declared a disaster.
- 5.6 Hughes in parliament
- 5.7 Final Soldier – evacuation means leaving behind the ‘glorious’ dead
- 5.8 Ataturk – his future as the founding father of the Republic of Turkey
- 5.9 Wrap up from the major players – Hamilton, Kitchener, Bean, Murdoch, Hughes, Alice Kitchen, Soldier
- 5.10 Company with small boxes – fly lines raise form them scrolls of the dead, resembling tombstones, slowly rise off the ground. Images projected from contemporary battles – sharing the same horror – company sing ‘Remember Me’. Soldier introduces Alec Campbell – we hear his voice ‘I was a foolish young man to go off to war and I would never do it again.’

Characters

| | |
|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|
| Chorus / Singers | Braithwaite |
| Vaudevillian MC | Winston Churchill |
| Soldiers (all nations) | Carl Jensen |
| Billy Hughes | Women of Cairo – Whores & Purdah |
| A Woman | Birdwood |
| Sam | Ashmead Bartlett |
| Young man (sam's brother) | Lieutenant Nicholas |
| Their Mother | Bert Facey |
| Their Father | Tom Usher |
| Craven Spirit | Tony Fagan |
| Outrage | Spencer Westmacott |
| Censor | Lieutenant Derham |
| Bean | Eric Longley |
| Lord Kitchener | Alec Gilpin |
| Ben Rogers | Captain Mainwaring (medical officer) |
| Ben's Wife | Child |
| The Farming Couple | Joe Gasparich |
| Dressers (1-4) | John Turnbull |
| Sir Ian Hamilton | Bill East |
| Alice Kitchen (Nurse) | Sam Coopins |
| Old Man | Bill Gammage |
| Lady Jean Hamilton | Joe Murray |
| Jackson (valet) | Private Harold Thomas |
| Thursby | Ivor Margetts |

Design

Set: A huge grid – metal “scrim” dominates the back wall – doors open from it – gangplanks descend – markets stalls open up like garage door lifts. The actors work on three levels behind in illuminated silhouette and are ceremoniously revealed for different scenes. At one point the wall becomes the cliff face and performers are levered up by counter balance weighted on pulleys to scale the huge drop. It is also predominately a screen for a multitude of projections – the first announcing 1914 in bold. – Throughout images from every time comment silently on the war that is Gallipoli.

The raised and raked stage reveals at its front and below the trenches used in the second half. From the outset the incredible number of locations and ideas are played at times through a series of trapdoors that seem to reach across the length and breadth of stage floor – varying in size. Marvelously first identified during the prologue that introduces in comic fashion how each nation entered the war and on whose side with soldiers (identified for their uniform ‘helmet’) emerged from beneath with guns pointing at the various parties who had been revealed before them.

Costumes: They are immediately identifiable as period and many accurate (soldiers) almost to be replica. Then others times they have a simple piecemeal effect as so many actors (some 36) play an incredible number of doublings of roles. The chorus plays everyone else from those in the throws of battle to those left behind. There are bloated manikins added to the numbers of performers during the second half of the program to heighten the represented corpse cluttered battlefield. They are costume-less yet human enough with several missing limbs.

Lighting: The lights are much like any contemporary musical theatre show – with plenty of side lights – this works exceptionally well for the venue. Sydney Theatre is a ‘big’ venue. The huge proscenium has been utilised brilliantly for this production. There are follow spots and colour changes and of course projections for not only complementing scenes but supporting smooth transitions.

Sound: The music and songs from the era have been arranged by Alan John and he plays live from the orchestra pit. His head is seen on the theatres’ monitors to conduct the singing actors.) There are lots of songs; however it doesn’t play like a traditional ‘musical’ with the songs serving a straight narrative. They are an important part of the score and play their part in manipulating the tone as much as anything else. The play uses poetry as well as song and much of the chorus rhythms carry the tune with simple accompaniment. – More often than not, just John on the piano.

Reviews

Tribute to Horror Revisited

The Australian, 1 Aug 2008

IN the 1960s and 70s, it was common to deride the legend of Gallipoli as over-hyped jingoism. Since then, we have returned to it again and again in different contexts: one of the most moving being the 1987 Welcome Home parade for veterans of the war in Vietnam, which refocused attention on the horrendous experience of the individual soldiers, and paid belated tribute to them. Nigel Jamieson's powerful epic does that again, for a new generation.

The story is retold here at length, and the result again is moving. There is a huge cast: 12 performers from the STC's Actors Company augmented by 23 third-year acting students from the National Institute of Dramatic Art. The scale of Jamieson's production, and its theatrical articulation of complex events, is extraordinary.

In the large space of the Sydney Theatre, he and his company draw, in a sometimes laborious, documentary way, on the experiences of individuals and juxtapose them with the lies of the newspapers and the splutterings of the political and military leaders.

Above all, this production stages viscerally the experience of the notorious landing, the scramble under fire up the hill and then the rolling months in the trenches.

With his co-designers, Jamieson has created a stage in which multiple trapdoors are used to evoke first the battlefield and then the earth to which the bodies of the soldiers return. The sheer size of his cast enables him to stage the terrible stalemate of that campaign on a scale that makes quite clear its human cost.

Large-scale image projection, on a vast screen that completely fills the space behind the actors, is used to bring in a great deal of background but also part of the created world of Gallipoli. In one extraordinary scene, the screen shows an aerial view of the ground between the lines of Anzacs and Turks, as the actors, performing vertically on ropes, appear to duck and weave their way across it, dying all the time.

This is also a musically complex production, with arrangements by Alan John of patriotic songs from the period, while incorporating J. S. Bach and, for the second time in the STC's Actors Company, Henry Purcell's *Dido's Lament*. It includes a wonderfully updated version of C. J. Dennis's *The Australaise*.

But there is still the lingering question: why tell the Gallipoli story again? There is a final nod to the fact that we have Australian soldiers presently fighting abroad, but not much is made of that. Perhaps Gallipoli has become so much of a legend that great artists and Jamieson is one need to revisit it in each generation.

Mateship amid the mayhem

Sydney Morning Herald, 1 Aug 2008

THE ghostly sight of young Australian men boarding a ship destined for uncertain adventure and later nestled in a boat, their oars pointing to the heavens before ploughing the cruel sea, are among Gallipoli's unforgettably stirring images.

Devised and directed by Nigel Jamieson, the epic is drawn from firsthand accounts of the 1915 campaign which would become a defining moment in Australia's history a much mythologised time and place where many believe our national character was formed and out of which our true psychological independence grew.

Jamieson never loses sight of the big picture or of the social conscience driving the ambitious work. He and the splendid creative team, notably Trudy Daigleish (lighting), Alan John (composer, musical director) and Antonia Fredman (video artist), have crafted a lyrical, tough, entertaining and wrenching account not just of the mateship, fragility and skylarking but the carnage and disease that turned trenches into horrific deathbeds.

It throws into stark relief the romanticised heroism and propaganda of the censored reports and what Charles Bean, the official Australian war correspondent, exposed in his diaries to be the truth of the matter: horror, beastliness cowardice and treachery.

Performed on a raked stage with an amazing, albeit deceptive, simplicity, *Gallipoli* incorporates the rough hewn delights of music hall, a fluid form of expressionist theatre with its clever and convenient trapdoors, the social awareness of Joan Littlewood's political theatre and a muscularity and wryness that seems purely Australian. It is vigorously and skilfully played by the cast.

The Sydney Theatre Company's permanent acting ensemble has manned the trenches several times to explore the bloodbath and cost of war but this is by far the most gripping and powerful to date. The consistently fine actors John Gaden, Pamela Rabe and Peter Carroll, among others, afford necessary depth alongside the third year acting students from NIDA. The meld of movement and music invites comparison with The National Theatre of Scotland's exhilarating and affecting *Black Watch*, but Jamieson's (*Honour Bound*, *Dead Man Walking*) flights of fancy further reveal his own clear sighted stage mastery.

Apart from a couple of didactic history-lesson patches in the second half, the epic sweeps the audience into its dovetailing vignettes of political expediency, military incompetence, misery and sacrifice with great immediacy, musicality and force. There is occasional pause for reverie amid the spectacle and when such moments arrive they are genuinely moving and tragic, none more so than the fury of flies swarming around bodies or the rising roll-call of the dead at the climax.

Gallipoli is a landmark production.

It deserves a wide audience.

Resources for Teachers (web links etc)

www.anzacsite.gov.au/ A major award-winning educational site containing text, documents, graphics, timelines, video and audio about Australians in the 1915 World War 1

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Battle_of_Gallipoli

<http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Gallipoli>

www.awm.gov.au/encyclopedia/gallipoli/index.htm

www.nla.gov.au/gallipolidespatches/ Charles Bean, Keith Murdoch, Phillip Schuler and Charles Smith were four Australians who went to **Gallipoli** as journalists during World War 1

www.anzacday.org.au/education

<http://www.answers.com/topic/battle-of-gallipoli>

<http://www.abc.net.au/news/video/2008/07/30/2318832.htm> The Sydney Theatre Company is recreating Australia's most sacred **battle** on stage in an all singing, all dancing production of **Gallipoli**.

Questions Before and After the Play

I think the students who come to this production will have many questions and comments after they see it. Before hand they might be at least encouraged to investigate the Gallipoli story (use the websites included above). I have included some prompting activities but I hope these notes are more than sufficient to prompt workshops and discussions before and after the excursion.

- What do your students know already about the Gallipoli story?
- What is the 'Epic'? A musical or a genre all its own?
- The content of the production is all historically correct and fact – comment.
- There is a special lift out for Anzac day in the weekend edition of the Sydney Morning Herald April 25-27, 2008. Read the articles.
- Discuss what is 'verbatim' theatre and if this qualifies as the words are predominantly directly taken from history. (see *extra article at end of notes – verbatim or documentary theatre*)

Writing a Theatre Review

Before attending a dramatic performance at a theatre, there are a number of questions you might consider. This guideline is far from prescriptive. It is only meant to be a starting point. In order to write a good review, it is important to stay focused.

Please remember to provide specific examples to back up your claims. Reviews are written to convey your specific insights and to inform the reader about the artistic merits of a production. Readers want to be able to "visualise" the play and this is usually accomplished by providing pertinent and interesting detail.

- What is the play called? Who is the director? Where is it playing? For how long? Who wrote it? Sometimes one of the actors "acts" as director, too. Is this important, and if so, why? Who are the main actors, the supporting actors? Do you want to focus on one well known actor, or on specific performances? Who are the main characters of the play – if any? It doesn't matter how inventive or creative you are in your writing, your reader will want to know most, if not all, of this information within the first few paragraphs if it is not included as an introductory framework. Most of this technical and biographical information is included in the program, so make sure you keep it if you're planning on writing a review.
- What is the play about? What are the main ideas it presents, the issues it confronts? What abstract idea, theme, concept, or topic do you want to emphasize the most? In effect, you are asking, "How would I go about summarizing the main points and then what would I choose to focus on?" You might also ask yourself whether you think the playwright has something original or profound to say about the human condition.

What the play is "about" is usually tied to the plot (although plot structure can be completely disrupted in some modern and contemporary theatre). Most readers will want a summary of the plot, if it's possible to provide that and many will want to know whether the play moved forward steadily or at uneven pace - something that is also tied to plot, action, etc.

- Is the play typical of one particular genre? Is it a comedy? A tragedy? A combination of both? Does it fall under the category of "theatre of the absurd" or "postmodern" or naturalistic drama? In the case of Gallipoli – can you outline or articulate what is this form of 'Epic' theatre? Does it make a mockery of the genre or deconstruct it? Is the

writer following any particular manifesto or tenet? In answering this question, you are also asking whether the play undermines the viewer's assumptions, what the viewer might be expecting from the play, and how that is fulfilled or challenged.

- What effect does the work have on the viewer? In order to write a good review of anything, you must be able to take a critical position. This can be positive, negative, apparently indifferent, or some combination of these, but where you stand on certain issues should be clear to your reader. You might consider what's missing, what's worth seeing, what it is you value the most. It's also important to observe the rest of the audience and the effect of the evening as a whole. Some theatre is "interactive." You might look at how the audience responded to the actors who addressed them directly. How did they feel during the re-enactments of the battles and the brutalities of such a war?
- Is it compelling, difficult, complex, simple, overwhelming, aesthetically appealing, vague, dry, humorous, inviting, cryptic, stale, enigmatic, logical, edible, delectable, tasteless, warm, frightening, too theoretically based, too abstract, tactile, dark, invigorating, gossipy, mechanical, predictable, metaphysical, winsome, sophisticated, grotesque, ingratiating, flamboyantly energetic, dizzyingly enjoyable, energetic, full of noisy panache, painful, devastating, too civilized, abrasive, too subtle? ? ? Does it overwhelm you, 'go against the grain,' 'evoke pity or fear,' 'invoke a furious response'?
- If you done some historical research, it might be a good idea to analyze the performance in light of the actual facts. Does the performance realise its potential? Do the actors fit the description of the characters you had in mind? Gesture and voice are extremely important when it comes to delivering a performance and capturing character. What did you think of Winston Churchill's appearance on stage?
- How does this play contribute to the actor, director, or designer's portfolio? How does the work relate to a previous play, to the kind of work they do in general? Who has the director chosen to work with? Why?
- What information can you glean from other reviews, academic essays in journals, interviews? How does this information affect your response? What expectations are set up? Are they fulfilled? Remember that although professional reviewers don't provide a works cited list or Bibliography, your teacher will expect you to document your sources properly.
- Who are you, the responder? What is your background? What are your values? How does your experience influence your response? Are you familiar with the playwright, the actors, the theatre? Have you acted yourself? Do you know anything about lighting, stage or costume design.
- What tone, structure, voice or form do you want to adopt? How and why does this choice reflect the content of the work or the performance itself? This is a little trickier

than it seems, but if you can speak ironically of an ironic piece (or in a gossipy tone when the issue of private or trivial communication is at stake), it can sometimes help the viewer understand the response the play may be trying to evoke in the viewer.

- If you've got the necessary background, you might want to ask yourself how the blocking, lighting, stage design and costumes influence the outcome of the play. If you choose to take this tack, you should probably take your audience into account. Will they be familiar with the terminology, theory, or references? If not, it might be important to provide some definitions or to tone down the language. Is the play based on a novel, film, or short story? If so, was the script written by the author of the original text? Is the script faithful to the original text? Is the script further complicated or complimented through the use of special effects, flashbacks, recurring image motifs, lights, staging, or other visual language? Has the play been made into a film? How does the screenplay compare to the stage production?

Practical Tasks

- Using freeze frames, chart one or more characters' emotional journeys through the play.
- Playbuild around the representation of the conflict of loyalty as it relates to the play. What social comment would you make about the decisions of the characters presented? How would you organise the dramatic structure of the piece to reveal the inner turmoil of the characters?
- Are there other ways to present this historically accurate performance piece?

VERBATIM OR DOCUMENTARY THEATRE

This piece was written by Elizabeth Surbey for the teachers kit of *Permanent Way* an STC production from 2005.

There has been a real rise in this form of **investigative theatre** over recent years – writers are turning to it as are the audiences of our times. We are questioning a lot - where do you think 'reality TV' has arisen from. We like to think it's not only based on fact but an even truer truth – if there is such a thing. The distinguishing features – or what might set the two forms apart – depend on definition. **Documentary** we understand from its nature on television and film. It will still rely on a somewhat laboured telling of some significant event, or the life of some notable personality – or group of peoples. Whether natural or social or historical or even political, there is an attempt at times for some neutrality by the original story-teller or writer – yet for its success I think there will still need to be evidence of some bias or slant on the behalf of the writer.

Verbatim theatre has arisen by the utilization moreover of the actual words of the characters / the victims - those really involved. There will still need to be behind all of this an experienced narrator – the constructor of the script is still the chief manipulator. Where s/he places each speaker – next to who in the re-telling will have a manifest impact on the audience and assist in their learned response. Sounds like another form of theatrical manipulation – but having the master story teller David Hare create this journey allows it to live as if it were real time (at times) and these people told their story to the 'one' and this is shared directly back to us.

Here for *The Permanent Way* the actors were also in on the research (remember *the Laramie Project*?) they were as much a part of the selection process, as to which characters' stories were a part of the re-telling. Not seating those they had interviewed for the company to hear their report.

David Hare also recently, personally told his story before audiences in *Via Dolorosa*. He crafted a tale for the telling of himself, as a journalist and writer – not so much a playwright this time – yet it too was still very theatrical. Audiences demand this in theatre. We still wish to be entertained?

The examples in Australia across the last 10-15 years have seen much through the Company B Belvoir St Theatre – *the Laramie Project*, (originally and American piece) *Aftershocks* set around the Newcastle Earthquake disaster and *Run Rabbit Run* is another very recent example surrounding the South Sydney Leagues removal and then reinstatement to the NRL.

Often a re-telling of a disaster as this form of theatre has gained credibility in a form of almost – therapy, for those directly involved. To see and hear themselves up on stage and for others to bear witness – so-to-speak. This theatre can be very therapeutic and at times didactic – where we might have lessons to learn. Not that it is hammering or hitting us on the head – but where the voice of the playwright might also be evident. I heard in *The Permanent Way* the characters at times refer directly to David as they spoke – he was never too far away - a clever reminder that he was a controlling influence? – Or was it there to remove the potential for us (the audience) to doubt the authenticity of the words of the characters.

David Hare was inspired by what he might call "Hysterical Friendships". A particular and unique bond between people and in particular the families of those who lost lives. They form the core of the story of the British Railways and the aftermath. They grouped themselves

under an incredible project – that which would demonstrate the demise of railways safety. Telling all before them – not to forget. He notes that the play is as much about grief as railways – why did it happen? Was it avoidable? How different people are drawn together by a single event that can say so much to as many others over and over again – through theatre. “the personal is political.”

Verbatim theatre I think is different from **docu-drama** or indeed **documentary**. It does a lot more to recreate in such a personal way the response and the direct impact. Max Stafford-Clark still allowed for a certain theatricality in his device for the prologue, for one example, as well as the simple set design and the mobile backdrop. He also allows the resonance of each individual story to unite David’s discoveries of ‘Hysterical friendships’ that can unite us all.

Elizabeth Surbey, 2005