

An Anzac Duo: world premieres of Dolls From The Sky and Armistice Day

TWO world premieres by local Perth playwrights will take place at the Old Mill Theatre this September, as part of the short play season "An Anzac Duo" with both looking at the after-effects of war.

Written by Yvette Wall and directed by Mary Wolfla, *Dolls From The Sky* ponders whether the war is really over when a Polish migrant works as a housekeeper for an Australian ex-serviceman.

Set in 1953, the play explores bigotry, racism, grief and various struggles as the former serviceman is visited by local parishioners who cause tensions to rise as various truths are revealed.

Dolls From The Sky was inspired by Yvette's parents' journey as post-war immigrants to Australia.

"Some of the Polish character's journey is based on my mother's actual story," she said. "She came out from east Africa on the *General WC Langfitt* to Fremantle in 1950.

"My father arrived from British India in 1948 and had a keen interest in World War II history that he passed on to me.

"I did some historical research to write this play - it's dedicated to my parents."

Director Mary Wolfla said *Dolls From The Sky* focuses on a woman's struggle with loss after losing a partner in the war and explores how three different women are living with the war's aftermath.

"You meet a war veteran affected by post-traumatic stress disorder who, although an alcoholic and recluse, still believes in the power of closure when struggling with loss," she said.

"I like the play because it talks about war from a woman's eyes and examines the emotional toll it took on women and small communities after the men didn't come home from the war.

"It looks at a woman's need for closure after the loss of her husband on the battlefield - something that was very real for women left behind after World War I and II."

Mary said directing a play that had never been performed was her main challenge.

"I am thrilled to be working closely with the playwright Yvette Wall, both as an actress [she plays Margaret] and as the creator of this work," she said.

"I am lucky Yvette is taking this opportunity to workshop the script, making the rehearsal process a valuable time for her and I to really examine the layout of the play and make sure all the parts fit neatly together.

"In working collectively, I hope my directorial decisions fit Yvette's



Kerry Goode, left, Andrew Watson, playwright Yvette Wall and Natalie Aung Than are appearing in *Dolls From The Sky*.

ideas, as well as give her and the rest of the cast the opportunity to feel as though they own a small part of this never-performed play.

"When directing a work that has never been performed before, it's a first time for everything, allowing me to make creative choices from my own experiences and not being informed by a previous director's work."

Joining *Dolls From The Sky* is *Armistice Day*, written by Noel O'Neill and directed by Valerie Dragojevic.

The play features three World War I soldiers meeting a year after November 11, 1918, to celebrate peace - but they find out the price of peace is far too high.

"Post-traumatic stress disorder is an important issue to talk about and bring awareness to," Valerie said. "It's as relevant today as it was 100 years ago but now we have a name for it.

"The main challenge with *Armistice Day* is making it believable - how do you even begin to understand what war is like when you've never experienced it and then do justice to those who have?"

Performing since her high school days at John Curtin College of the Arts, Dragojevic studied theatre and drama at Murdoch University and has spent the past 12 years as an actor, stage manager and director.

In 2013, she brought Noel's *Snow and Ash* to life, winning several awards at Dramafest, the annual state drama competition - and achieved a similar feat with Noel's *It's All Greek To Me* last year, receiving recognition for best director and best production at the Milly Awards.

Earlier this year, she also worked as assistant director and appeared in Noel's comedy about nuns, *Hail Mary*.

"My involvement with *Armistice Day* came about when Noel basically said 'I'm in Europe - you gotta direct my play!'" Valerie said.

Dolls From The Sky and *Armistice Day* play at 8pm September 2, 3, 4 and 5 under the collective title An Anzac Duo (look for this when you go to book).

The short play season is the fifth in a year of all-Australian plays at the Old Mill Theatre to commemorate the centenary of the Gallipoli landing in 2015.



Three returned soldiers, played by Phil Barnett, left, Travis McCurry and David Partridge, find the horrors of World War I still haunt them a year after peace is declared in *Armistice Day*.

All tickets are \$20 - book at
<http://oldmilltheatre.com.au/tickets>
or call 9367 8719





WE WANT YOU

THREE men, age range 20-35, are needed for the Old Mill Theatre's production of *No Names, No Packdrill* in December.

For more details, contact director Tim Prosser at mr.prosser58@gmail.com.

Information about the play can be found at <http://oldmilltheatre.com.au/plays-2015>.

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Review: WOLF LULLABY

“...most admirable and highly recommended...”

Extract by **GORDON THE OPTOM**

Source: www.ita.org.au

WOLF Lullaby is a haunting play for adults, written by Australian playwright Hilary Bell while in her early 30s.

Bell, who writes for stage, radio, screen and musical theatre, has numerous awards, accolades and fellowship links with prestigious companies throughout the world.

Despite being in the upper echelon of writers, Hilary is often described as generous and affable to community theatre.

When one of the Old Mill actors took the expression “break a leg” a little too far and damaged her knee, Hilary permitted modifications to the script to allow for the actor to use crutches, kindly stating her scripts are “road maps awaiting life, rather than definitive”.

This confronting 105-minute presentation was based on an American girl but it could just as easily have been based on James Bulger, murdered in the UK just before his third birthday.

The simple set represents several locations. The hard flats, painted matte black, provide the harsh atmosphere required.

A large cut-out of a child's rocking horse (Tim Prosser) filled the back wall, a constant reminder of poor Toby, the murdered child.

Other than a couple of chairs, the stark set comprised mainly of a Rubik's box, which was slickly converted into a bed, wall and desk (Alan Markham's ingenious work) by stage manager Caroline Kaye.

John Woolrych's clever lighting design has most of the set warmly lit but with a steely cold beam of light on Lizzie.

The horrifying soundscape (designed by Alida Chaney and Dylan James) was operated by Elizabeth McAskil.

The scene is of a typical sitting room in a remote Tasmanian home, a couple of weeks before Christmas. Nine-year-old Lizzie (Tessa Bevilacqua) is lying on the floor, drawing a picture and writing poetry.

She eagerly shows her creation to her father Warren (Dylan James) who nods but he is busy having an acrimonious discussion



Sergeant Ray Armstrong (Dean McAskil, right) tries to get to the bottom of what happened by asking Lizzie (Tessa Bevilacqua) a few questions.



Lizzie (Tessa Bevilacqua, centre) with parents Warren (Dylan James, left) and Angela (Julia Hern) in *Wolf Lullaby*.

with his ex-wife Angie (Julia Hern).

Lizzie, desperately seeking admiration for her art work, then tries – unsuccessfully – to attract her mother's attention. Lizzie's little world is a lonely one, filled with nightmares.

A few days later, a two-year-old boy, Toby is found dead. Circumstances point to Lizzie. A visit from caring police sergeant Ray Armstrong (Dean McAskil) throws doubt on Lizzie's story, but is the poor child being wrongly accused?

The skilful writing and good solid direction (by Alida Chaney) creates some truly disquieting moments, as the cold attitude of the parents absorbed in their own petty squabbles clash with the love-seeking troubled child.

The whole cast gave superb performances, packed with poignant, tear-jerking emotion. You could feel the audience desperately hoping that Lizzie would open up so the truth could be released.

Tessa, in her first adult stage performance, has captured Lizzie's innocent and withdrawn expressions perfectly – you really wanted to give the poor girl a big, desperately-needed hug. The powerful deliveries by Julia and Dylan made you gasp at their disinterest in their child and the subsequent confusion between loyalty and honesty.

The director has chosen a subtle delivery, which makes the disturbing atmosphere even more insidious and disturbing. A creepy and chilling play, presented by a first-class team.

With adult themes the advice is “not suitable for children under 15” so, not surprisingly, the adjective “enjoyable” is hardly suitable – but certainly this play is most admirable and highly recommended.

Colour your world: check out the colour version of this edition at www.oldmilltheatre.com.au

Membership renewal



OLD MILL THEATRE
 PO Box 1390, South Perth WA 6951
 ☎ (08) 9367 8719 /e: oldmilltheatre@iinet.net.au

Membership fees are due on **October 1** each year. Please complete ALL areas of the form below and post to the above address to receive information on the interesting mix of plays and theatre activities planned for 2016.

APPLICATION or RENEWAL—NEWSLETTER/ACTIVE MEMBERSHIP 2015-2016
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We appreciate people completing this form, even if you are a long-time member, because it helps us maintain up-to-date records. Please write email addresses LEGIBLY. If no change, write "as before". If you're a new member, welcome aboard!

SUBSCRIPTIONS from October 1, 2015, will be unchanged:
 Newsletter only: \$12 per year, full membership: \$20 per year (double \$30)
 [Full membership entitles you to act, direct and be an active member of the theatre. Our "membership year" runs from October 1 to September 30]

FOR ALL MEMBERS: If you would like to assist with front-of-house during a season, please tick this box and we will contact you.

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WHAT'S ON ELSEWHERE?

LOVE, LOSS & WHAT I WORE
 Melville Theatre



Memories, mothers and material from Hollywood hit-makers.
 8pm Sep 4, 5, 10, 11, 12, 17, 18 & 19; 2pm Sep 13. Book on 9330 4565 or at www.meltheco.org.au.

ZOMBIE PROM
 Phoenix Theatre, Hamilton Hill



Atomic comic musical radiating '50s-style tunes
 8pm Sep 10, 11, 12, 17, 18, 19, 24, 25 & 26; 2pm Sep 20.
 Book at www.darkpsychicproductions.com or on 0422 394 749.

FOLLOWING THE BLACK SHEEP/THE WARDROBE
 Playlovers, Floreat



A look at family life after World War II and 530 years of history seen through a wardrobe.
 8pm Sep 11-12; 2pm Sep 13
 Book at www.playlovers.org.au

NEVER EVER/MOVE IT!
 Rigby's Bar, Perth CBD



From Blak Yak Theatre: A play about the truth and lies we tell and three Kiwis try to enter their play in various festivals. Book at www.trybooking.com/ITTP

FREE SPIRIT FUSION FESTIVAL
 Perth Waldorf School, Bibra Lake



Celebrating all things bellydance.
 September 27. Book at freespiritdancecommunity.yapsody.com

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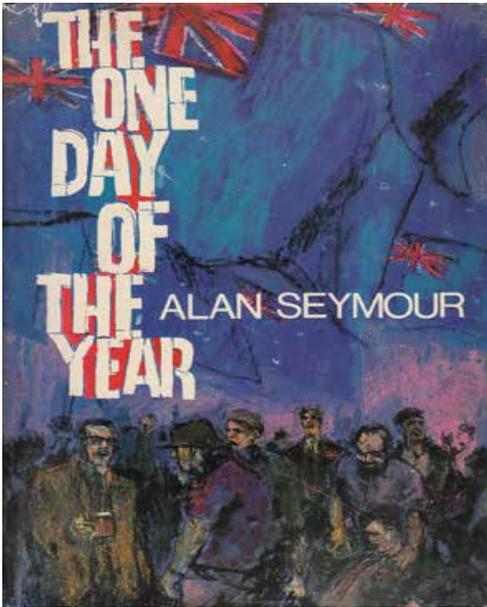
DID you know there is free parking after 5pm, just a couple of minutes' walk from the theatre?

Off Mill Point Road, opposite Darley Street and Soprano's Restaurant, is a large car park where many zoo visitors park during the day.

But after 5pm, you don't have to buy a ticket – that's right, it's free to park there! And then it's just a hop, skip and jump to the Old Mill (park where shown on the map to the right, then walk to the theatre as indicated by the arrow).

Other good free spots include some of the side streets off Labouchere Road, including Bowman, Lyall and Hardy Streets.





THE ONE DAY OF THE YEAR

"I'M a bloody Australian, mate, and it's because I'm a bloody Australian that I'm gettin' on the grog. It's Anzac Day this week, that's my day, that's the old Diggers' day." – Alf

The One Day of The Year follows the Cook family during the week of Anzac Day. While ex-WWII soldier Alf Cook and his friend Wacka Dawson are preparing for Anzac Day celebrations, they reminisce over a few drinks, much to the ire of Alf's wife Dot.

Hughie, Alf's son, is a university student; his higher education means he finds it difficult to communicate with his working class parents.

While Alf clings to Anzac Day with pride, seeing it as the one time of the year old Diggers can get together and be commemorated, Hughie regards it merely as an excuse

for them all to get drunk.

Hughie and his new North Shore girlfriend Jan set out to do an article for the university paper with Hughie taking photographs of intoxicated Anzac Day revellers.

When Alf sees the article, even Dot cannot bring peace to the family and the chasm between the two generations grows even more unbridgeable.

The story raises poignant questions around class, education, inter-generational communication, free expression, respect for people and history and our attitudes towards war.

Written by Alan Seymour and directed by Brendan Ellis, *The One Day of the Year* runs from October 9 to 24.

Updates available at www.oldmilltheatre.com.au.

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THIS year's Dramafest, the annual state drama festival, is being held at Melville Theatre from September 23 to 28.

It has been running for more than 25 years and continues to be the largest showcase of WA talent on stage.

Dramafest allows performers, directors, producers and technical crew to come together to produce works between 20 and 50 minutes in length in a friendly competition that is enjoyed by audiences.

Both the Old Mill's *Dolls From The Sky* and *Armistice Day* have been entered (see page 1).

2014 was a huge success with more than 20 plays being staged over the course of the week.

For more details and to find out what shows are on when, head to www.ita.org.au.

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