

PRESS RELEASE SEPTEMBER 25 2015 – for immediate use



“The past is never dead. It’s not even past” – William Faulkner

NZ and Australian youth collaborate on new ANZAC Play

“How is ANZAC significant and relevant to young people in NZ and Australia 100 years on?”

This is the question explored in an exciting new trans-Tasman youth theatre collaboration **Dead Men’s Wars**, commissioned by BATS Theatre as the STAB production for 2015.

Wellington’s Long Cloud Youth Theatre and Canberra Youth Theatre are top theatre companies for young people in New Zealand and Australia. They are working together for the first time on a new script by award-winning playwright Ralph McCubbin Howell.

Dead Men’s Wars is a fast-paced contemporary perspective on the ANZAC tradition that boldly challenges how we remember the First World War. Brett Adam, Artistic Director of Long Cloud Youth Theatre and director of the work, has his own insights into the ANZAC relationship having moved to New Zealand from Australia in 2011.

“Young people of both countries lack personal connection to the events of WWI as the Gallipoli experience slowly retreats into memory” says Mr Adam “but they have the ability to question more and accept things at face value less. This is at the heart of Ralph’s play”

This is the 20th year of BATS Theatre’s annual STAB commission which has seen the birth of memorable productions like *Live at Six* and *Apollo 13: Mission Control*.

“This is the first time that a STAB production has been created internationally,” explains BATS Programme Manager Cherie Jacobson “It’s been really exciting to see the creative process taking place on either side of the Tasman, and this year’s WW100 commemorations make this an incredibly relevant new work. It’s a real ANZAC cultural exchange.”

Development workshops have been held in both Wellington and Canberra over the past 12 months. Three Long Cloud actors and their director are about to head to Australia for final rehearsals and the Canberra premiere, before heading back to Wellington ahead of the NZ premiere alongside members of the Canberra Youth Theatre company.

Dead Men’s Wars opens at BATS Theatre on Friday 23 October at 7.30pm. Tickets can be booked online at bats.co.nz. For more information and media enquiries please contact producer Adrienne Roberts, adrienne@showponynz.com | 021 222 8212.

Dead Men’s Wars was originally commissioned by Canberra Youth Theatre, Australia with the support of Australia Council and artsACT and the ANZAC Centenary Arts and Culture Fund, and Long Cloud Youth Theatre, Wellington, New Zealand with the support of BATS Theatre through STAB 2015 and WW100 funded by Creative New Zealand.

ENDS

DEAD MEN’S WARS

by Ralph McCubbin Howell

Performed by Long Cloud Youth Theatre (NZ) and Canberra Youth Theatre (Aus)

23-31 October, 7:30pm

BATS Theatre, 1 Kent Terrace

TICKETS: \$18/25

BOOKINGS: www.bats.co.nz | book@bats.co.nz | 04 802 4175