Alan Seymour on *The One Day of the Year*

One Anzac Day during the mid-50s I was walking through the back streets of the Sydney suburb of Summer Hill. It was afternoon, and the celebrations were well under way. In lanes and alleyways near pubs I saw men lying around in what used to be called a drunken stupor. Broken bottles abounded in the streets.

Now I happen to like alcohol; living in England I deplore the fact that it is hard to get a really cold beer, and I enjoy discovering good French food and Spanish wines. But the beery haze which had settled over the most solemn day in the Australian calendar seemed to me then somehow excessive and dangerous in that tended to amplify the already heady sentimentality of that day. As long as men fuzzily exchanged rich, romantic memories with wartime colleagues, so long, it seemed to me, would any sensible analysis of the individual engagements of those wars and indeed of war itself, be delayed. Why not a play about the essential hollowness of the Anzac Day maunderings?

… [I]t was not until I gave up regular employment and began writing full time that I could get on with *The One Day of the Year*. In the meantime the theme had developed and the family in whom the central argument would rage was well and truly established in my mind.

But when I began work in earnest something unexpected happened. I found myself liking, almost loving, the older generation represented in the play. Originally these had been, at least at a philosophical level, the villains of the piece. The sheer persistence of their long and scruffy, somehow dignified battle to cope with the overwhelming facts of life of this century (war – depression – war) forced me to respect them. The young man, Hughie, as the play progressed, had to come to this too: not to agree with them, but at least to find some compassion. This is the real theme of the play: Hughie, reacting against his family's lack of intellect, is eager for the rigours of intellectual truth and so must acquire some education of his emotions before he can be said to step toward maturity…

[From the Author's Note to *The One Day of the Year* Angus & Robertson: North Ryde, NSW, 1962]

Wyong Drama Group Incorporated

Proudly Presents

Alan Seymour's

The One Day of the Year

Cast (in order of appearance)

Alf Cook ... ... … …	Laszlo Weidlich
Wacka Dawson … … …	Don Moran
Dot Cook … … … …	Julie Bailey
Jan Castle … … … …	Annishka Oska
Hughie Cook … … … …	Duncan Mitchell

Setting

The Cook's family house in one of Sydney's inner suburbs in 1960..

Synopsis of Scenes

Act One	A week or so before Anzac Day

There will then be a fifteen to twenty minute interval

Act Two Scene One	Dawn on Anzac Day
Act Two Scene Two	A few hours later
Act Two Scene Three	Anzac Day Evening

There will then be a five to ten minute interval

Act Three	Several days after Anzac Day