



Victorian College of the Arts
Media Release 2008
Monday 1 September

Founder of *The Hayloft Project*, VCA graduate Simon Stone awarded George Fairfax \$20,000 Scholarship

VCA Drama is proud to announce that Simon Stone has been awarded the prestigious \$20,000 George Fairfax Memorial Award. The biannual award is open to VCA Drama graduates (within ten years of graduating) and is intended to "...assist and encourage a young artist in the development of their professional career in the theatre industry".

In May 2007, Simon established The Hayloft Project, a professional company dedicated to investigating the forms and practises of theatre, and staging new Australian works alongside reinterpretations of classics. With The Hayloft Project, Simon has directed *Spring Awakening* and *Chekhov Re-Cut: Platonov* both of which sold out and received critical accolades.

Simon will use the George Fairfax Scholarship to develop his first original text – devised, workshopped and performed by members of The Hayloft Project.

"I see this award as an opportunity to further my investigations into the process of generating a piece of theatre within an ensemble atmosphere. Until now, the pieces created by The Hayloft Project have been reinterpretations (to a greater or lesser degree) of original texts. I would like to take a classic text – and the various texts and other pieces of art suggested by this text – as the thematic structure for an entirely new play written with my fellow collaborators and generated entirely from workshops.

"This piece, as with every Hayloft project, will be developed completely by graduates of the Victorian College of the Arts. The work we do is an extension of the practices that we learnt at the VCA and therefore reflects the uniqueness of the training that the VCA provides...and is a vindication of the principles of the VCA's training, its technical rigour, imaginative scope and its dogged determination to keep theatre alive and kicking..."

Simon graduated from VCA Drama in 2005. His acting career has included television roles on *Blue Heelers*, *MDA* and *Secretary* and two feature films *Jindabyne* and *Kokoda*. In 2007 he performed in Benedict Andrews' production of *Who's Afraid of Virginia Woolf?* at Belvoir St in Sydney. Recently Simon directed Mark Ravenhill's play *Pool (no water)* for Red Stitch and produced and adapted Stravinsky's *The Soldier's Tale*. He is currently acting in *Balibo* directed by Robert Connelly.

Previous winners of the scholarship include Luke Mullins, David Symons, Chris Bendall (artistic director of Deckchair Theatre, WA) and Chris Kohn (director of Stuck Pigs Squealing).

For further information or interview contact Lisa Montague 03 9685 9371