

Australia's Performing Arts

WE ALL PLAY A PART

Wednesday 9 July, 2008

CASE STUDY

Queensland Theatre Company

Queensland Theatre Company plays a part developing young Australian playwrights

Playwright Maxine Mellor of Caboolture was first discovered by Queensland Theatre Company at the age of 15. Maxine entered and won her age category in Queensland Theatre Company's 2001 Young Playwrights Awards, a state-wide competition for budding playwrights aged 12-26. The most exciting component of this award for writers is the experience of having their play workshopped by theatre professionals and performed in a public reading.

Maxine continued to enter the Young Playwrights Awards, winning three times in her age category with plays including *Boy Slaughter* (2002), and *Little Hitler's Ode To An Austrian Bentwood* (2003), both of which have gone on to be produced by Metro Arts and the Sheila's Shorts Festival, as well as by several universities including NIDA. The 2005 production of *Little Hitler's Ode to an Austrian Bentwood* won her the Playlab/ Matilda Award for Best New Work for Performance. In 2005 she won Queensland Theatre Company's George Landen Dann Award for writers aged 18 – 26 for *Magda's Fascination with Wax Cats*, which has since been produced by the Australian Theatre for Young People in Sydney and at Metro Arts in 2008.

In 2003, Maxine was selected as one of six writers to form Queensland Theatre Company's emerging writers network where she developed *The Cicada Movement* throughout the year. In 2006 Maxine became one of Queensland Theatre Company's Emerging Artists, undertaking a two-year development program to write *Fading Franky Knight with Wooden Eyes Watching / Handicraft* under the mentorship of the Company's Artistic Director, playwright Michael Gow.

Maxine acknowledges that the support of Queensland Theatre Company has allowed her style to develop and her work to reach wider audiences. She has also won a number of other awards, a grant from the Australia Council and a scholarship with QPIX as well as having three of her plays published by the Australian Script Centre and Playlab Press. Queensland Theatre Company has also allowed her to develop her teaching skills with her employment as a tutor at Theatre Residency Week and as a workshop leader in their Artist in Schools Program.

Now aged 22, and with her tertiary studies complete (a BA in Drama at Queensland University of Technology), Maxine continues to work as a freelance artist, undertaking commissions for other theatre companies such as Re-staged Histories and Backbone Youth Arts, facilitating play writing workshops for Queensland Theatre Company, as well as continuing to write her own intriguing and poetic plays. The performing arts facilitates the talent of many young Australians like Maxine, demonstrating we all play a part.

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