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For immediate release

2008 Keith Michell Performing Arts Award Winner

Mark Fantasia, an up and coming actor in Adelaide, is the winner of this year's Keith Michell Performing Arts Award.

Mark will be presented with the \$2,000 award at a reception at Waverley Homestead, St Peter's Terrace, Willunga, at 6:30pm on Friday 21 November.

First established in 2003, the Keith Michell Award is a joint initiative of the Helpmann Academy and the Southern Theatre and Arts Supporters (STARS). The award is presented to encourage emerging performing arts talent, recognising the importance of individual excellence in a highly collaborative art form.

Since graduating from the Flinders University Drama Centre in 2007, Mark has firmly established himself as a successful performing artist in Adelaide. His first film, *Destinations*, was the recipient of a 2005 Raw Nerve first filmmaker grant. Mark also wrote, directed and acted in a 7-minute short film called *Bread Story*.

31-year-old Mark is a founding member of Accidental Productions. This new theatre company staged the Australian premiere of Falk Richter's *Seven Seconds (In God We Trust)* at the Adelaide Fringe in 2008, assisted by a grant from the South Australian Youth Arts Board.

His latest performance was as the lead role of Adam in Neil LaBute's *The Shape of Things*, which played at Higher Ground on Light Square in August 2008, assisted by a Helpmann Academy grant.

The Keith Michell Performing Arts Award celebrates the distinguished career of Adelaide-born stage and screen legend Keith Michell. The Award is open to dance, music and drama graduates from Helpmann Academy partner schools in their first year following graduation.

Each year, a selection panel comprised of representatives from the Helpmann Academy, STARS and the arts industry determines the recipient of the award, based on recent productions and the graduate's academic and performance record.

The judges were particularly impressed with Mark's strong stage presence and performance skills and commended him for a great start to a promising career in the theatre.

For further information contact Chris Bull, Helpmann Academy Marketing Manager (08) 8463 5015