

2009-2010 SEASON

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## ANNOUNCING THE WINNER OF THE RBC TARRAGON UNDER 30 NATIONAL PLAYWRITING COMPETITION

Tarragon Theatre and RBC Foundation are pleased to announce the winner of the inaugural RBC Tarragon Under 30 National Playwriting Competition: ***Mother of Him* by Evan Placey**.

***Mother of Him* by Evan Placey** was selected as the winner from a shortlist of eight plays that included:

- *My Purple Wig* by Jessica Anderson
- *Living With the Dead* by Jessica Beaulieu
- *Map of the West* by Dave Deveau
- *Lily and Fred* by Christine Horne
- *The Billyville Smalls* by Christopher Murray
- *Tumaini* by Stephen Neufeld
- *Supernova in B Minor* by Jordan Tannahill

***Mother of Him*** traces the journey of a mother coming to grips with her teenage son's violent act and the media circus that surrounds it. The play was highly praised by the Competition's prestigious panel of jurors, **Lise Ann Johnson**, Artistic Director, Great Canadian Theatre Company (Ottawa), **Michael Shamata**, Artistic Director, Belfry Theatre (Victoria) and **Daniel MacIvor**, Tarragon Theatre Playwright-in-Residence, and recipient of the Governor General's Literary Award for Drama and the Siminovitch Prize.

Lise Ann Johnson remarked "*the characters are well drawn, complex and real*" and was impressed that "*a young playwright was able to effectively capture the complicated dynamic of the mother-son relationship from the mother's point of view*". Daniel MacIvor observed that the play boasts a "*compelling story-line and complicated characters*" while Michael Shamata admired the fact that "*the writer was reaching for something large and important*" in his storytelling.

Winner **Evan Placey** will receive a cash prize of **\$3,000** as well as a timeslot to showcase his play in Tarragon Theatre's annual **Play Reading Week** in November 2009.

**Evan Placey** is a Canadian-born, London-based playwright. He graduated with a B.A. (first-class honours) from McGill University, followed by an M.A. with Distinction in Writing for Stage and Broadcast Media from the Central School of Speech and Drama, University of London.

Evan was a member of the Young Writers Programme at the Royal Court Theatre (London), and then invited into their Invitation Writers Group as well as the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art's advanced playwrights' group run by Stephen Jeffreys.

Evan's comedy, *Dinner on the Fourteenth Floor* was part of the International Reading Series at Harbourfront Centre for the Arts, and was produced in Seoul, South Korea in 2007. *Rainbowbright23* was performed during Rough Cuts at the Royal Court Theatre in 2008. *Mother of Him* was workshopped at the Finborough Theatre and was shortlisted for the Rod Hall Memorial Award 2008 (Rod Hall/Paines Plough Theatre Company, London) and longlisted for the King's Cross Award. It recently had a staged reading produced by ATC and The Writers Company in London.

Evan is currently working on *Beit* for which he received a Toronto Arts Council Playwrights Grant, and *Dyspr@x[sic]* which he began at the Royal Court. He also runs theatre and writing programmes for the Hackney Empire Theatre, and works as a project manager and artist facilitator on youth projects for the Hampstead Theatre, Greenwich and Lewisham Young People's Theatre, and Rewrite.

Upon being named the winner of the RBC Tarragon Under 30 National Playwriting Competition, Evan remarked "*I'm thrilled to have the opportunity to work with and begin a relationship with Tarragon Theatre, and to have the opportunity to hear the play read in front of a Toronto audience – the city which is a key character in the play.*" He also acknowledged that the substantial award will "*afford me the time to continue working on my next play.*" Evan will be in Toronto for his November reading.

The RBC Tarragon Under 30 National Playwriting Competition is generously supported by the RBC Foundation. The RBC Emerging Artists Support Project helps young artists, such as dancers, painters, writers, musicians and singers bridge the gap from the academic to the professional world. Currently, RBC supports over 30 organizations across Canada that inspire and educate the next generation of stars. In 2008, RBC committed \$785,000 to support the RBC Emerging Artist Project.

Gayle Longley, Director of Corporate Donations, lauded Tarragon Theatre as an ideal partner in such a project, saying "*RBC's arts support is pillared on long-term partnerships with mostly national organizations which help bridge the gap from academic excellence to professional careers in all aspects of the arts. Tarragon Theatre is recognized as a small powerhouse of support for new Canadian works; through this new partnership we can help them identify and nurture the next generation of playwrights.*"

Tarragon Theatre wishes to acknowledge the ongoing support of the RBC Foundation to emerging playwrights.

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