



From local 'brat to big league



EWEN Leslie has come a long way since he played "one of those brats" in *Ship to Shore*. From the time the 28-year-old Fremantle born and raised actor got his first break on Channel Nine's early 1990s local children's show, his career has continued to ascend.

After graduating from John Curtin College of the Arts and then the WA Academy of Performing Arts in 2000, Leslie headed for Sydney.

His big break came in 2007 when he auditioned for Academy Award winner Philip Seymour Hoffman, who was in Sydney to direct a play, *Riflemind*.

"He had long been one of my favourite actors, so when I found out I had the audition, I thought in my head that I had won already," he said.

"When I got the call two weeks later, telling me I had got the gig, I couldn't believe it," he said.

Riflemind marked Leslie's first role with the Sydney Theatre Company, his performance so impressive he was asked to join the prestigious STC Actors Company.

As a result, he is working alongside yet another Oscar winner, Cate Blanchett.

They appear with other applauded Australian actors, such as Robert Menzies, in acclaimed director Benedict Andrews' *The War of the Roses* – the centrepiece of this year's Perth International Arts Festival.

When *The Roses* hits the stage in Perth it will be the first time Leslie has ever appeared in a professional production in his former hometown.

■ *The War of the Roses* is at His Majesty's Theatre, February 27 to March 12.

Ross McRae



Cate Blanchett and Ewen Leslie in *The War of the Roses*, opening in Perth this month