



Ewen truly among the stars

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 subsequently the West Australian Academy of Performing Arts in 2000, Leslie packed his bags with dreams of acting success and headed to 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.

"But when I got the call two weeks later, telling me I had got the gig, I couldn't believe it."

Being cast in this play meant Leslie would also get to star alongside prevalent Australian actors Hugo Weaving, Susie Porter and Jeremy Sims.

"It was a gift of a gig," he said.

"Obviously I have been a huge fan of Hugo's for years, and to sit in a room and watch Philip direct a scene with myself and Hugo was an unbelievable experience."

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 has been given the opportunity to work alongside yet another Oscar winner, Cate Blanchett.

Blanchett and Leslie will appear alongside other applauded Australian actors, such as Robert Menzies and Pamela Rabe, in acclaimed director Benedict Andrews' Shakespearean epic *The War of the Roses*, which is the centrepiece of this year's Perth International Arts Festival.

"Cate is fantastic and really great to work with," he said.

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

Ross McRae



Fremantle actor Ewen Leslie can be seen alongside film superstar Cate Blanchett.