

Arts a Go Go! winner cast in Thebus show

Thirteen-year-old Arts a Go Go! drama student Calin Dale from Trentham has been selected to be part of Toi Whakaari: New Zealand Drama School's production of *Welcome to Thebus*, a passionate exploration of an encounter between the world's richest and poorest countries in the aftermath of a brutal war.

Toi Whakaari is New Zealand's foremost training establishment for the dramatic arts – training actors, directors, technicians and designers nationally and internationally.

It boasts many well-known graduates including Robyn Malcolm (*Outrageous Fortune*) and Erik Thomson (*Packed to the Rafters*).

Arts a Go Go! drama teacher Debs Rea said Calin would get an incredible amount out of the experience.

"Calin will be working with Toi Whakaari director Annie Ruth, who is top of her field in performing arts, along with the programme's second year acting students."

Calin received Arts a Go Go!'s highest award in drama in 2010, the senior drama cup.

If he needs support in the adult environment, Rea will be there to give it to him.

"Calin will be playing the part of Scud, a 13-year-old soldier character, and I have actually been cast in the role partnered with him," she said.

Rea, who already holds an advanced diploma in performing arts, was accepted into Toi Whakaari last year and suggested Calin for this role.

Arts a Go Go! director Rachel Main said she was thrilled for Calin.

"Toi Whakaari's aim is to ignite the creativity in each student and provide them with the skills of their craft, something that sits along perfectly with the aims of Arts a Go Go!'s performing arts classes," she said.

Students at Arts a Go Go! have drama teachers of high calibre come to Upper Hutt to



Selected: Calin Dale is a little nervous about working on *Welcome to Thebus*.

teach. All are tertiary qualified and work in professional theatre, radio and film.

Calin's teacher, Phoebe Smith, was one of three directors recently nominated for most promising director at the Chapman Tripp Wellington Professional Theatre Awards.

"It means that if students are showing particular talent and want to take their drama studies further, they are in excellent hands to be able to do so," Ms Main said.

And how does Calin feel about this opportunity?

"I'm a little nervous about working on an adult play but mostly excited and looking forward to it," he said.

"I think someone up there must have tipped over a pot of luck and it landed on me."

Welcome to Thebus, by playwright Moira Buffini, runs from March 23 till 26 at Toi Whakaari in Newtown.