

21 August 2008

**PIONEERING LIVE LINK BETWEEN THE WORLD'S TWO
CITIES OF LITERATURE – EDINBURGH AND MELBOURNE**

In pioneering world first, the Edinburgh International Book Festival will exchange events live via a satellite link-up with the world's second UNESCO City of Literature this weekend, when Nam Le, one of the most highly praised new writers of recent years, will speak at the Melbourne Writers' Festival in Australia and will be broadcast live to an audience in Charlotte Square.

At 10am on Sunday 24 August in Charlotte Square Gardens, this special free event will feature Nam Le launching *The Boat*, his hugely acclaimed debut collection of stories. The audience in Edinburgh will be able to ask Nam Le questions live at the end of the event. In this unique exchange, the Book Festival will then transmit three times Booker Prize winner, and 2008 nominee, Salman Rushdie's Edinburgh event to Melbourne, over 10,000 miles across the other side of the planet, with the Australian audience able see the event on screen and again to participate in the question and answer session at the end of the event.

The link between the two festivals and cities is strengthened by the announcement this week of Melbourne's designation as the second UNESCO City of Literature after Edinburgh – the world's first.

Catherine Lockerbie, director of the Edinburgh International Book Festival said: "We are passionate about making possible things which would otherwise be impossible – as we did last year with our LongPen long-distance signing with Norman Mailer. This is another way of bringing writers together with readers, even if they are literally on the other side of the world. I have been very excited about Nam Le since I first heard about his work - and I am delighted that even though he is in Australia, we will be able to bring him into the heart of our festival. I'm equally pleased that the Melbourne audience will be able to be part of our event with Salman Rushdie and we can link these two World Cities of Literature on opposite sides of the globe."

Free tickets for the Nam Le event can be reserved through the Book Festival Box Office on 0845 373 5888 or on-line at www.edbookfest.co.uk.