

8 August 2008

**PIONEERING LINK TO AUSTRALIA FOR BOOK FESTIVAL
MAJOR NEW AUTHOR BEAMED LIVE INTO CHARLOTTE SQUARE GARDENS**

In pioneering world first, the Edinburgh International Book Festival will exchange events live via a satellite link-up with the Melbourne Writers' Festival over 10,000 miles across the other side of the planet.

One of the most highly praised new writers of recent years, Vietnamese-born Nam Le, will speak in Australia in an event transmitted live onto screen in Edinburgh – and the Scottish audience will be able to participate in the question and answer session. 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, published by Canongate. International praise includes major Scottish author William Boyd who describes it as “breathtakingly assured”.

In this unique exchange, the Book Festival will then transmit three times Booker winner, and 2008 nominee, Salman Rushdie's Edinburgh event to Melbourne, with the Australian audience again able 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 Melbourne's ambition to become the second UNESCO City of Literature after Edinburgh – the world's first. An announcement is expected in a matter of weeks on the designation, part of what will become a network of Cities of Literature across the world, led by Edinburgh.

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. “

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.

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