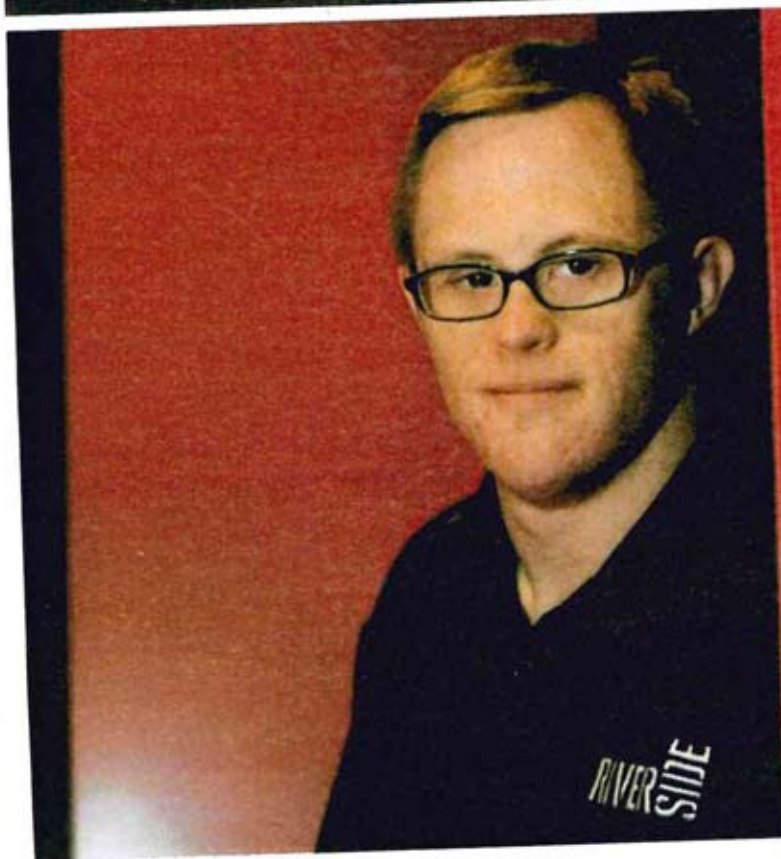


RISING STAR

Gerard O'Dwyer

AMBITION: To spread his message through acting.

Words: Sally Willoughby



“Everyone wants to be seen and heard and given a voice.”

Actor Gerard O'Dwyer has an important message — and he uses the stage and film to express it.

The accomplished thespian, who recently penned a monologue and duologue in Riverside Theatres' production *See in Me* which explored feelings of invisibility, said his community presence allows him to voice his mandate.

“I tell everyone we are what we are in life,” Mr O'Dwyer, who is a member of the Ruckus Ensemble — an actors group for people with Down Syndrome — said.

“We're no different to anyone else because we are all equal.”

In 2009 Mr O'Dwyer, 28, won best male actor at Tropfest short film festival for his leading role in *Be My Brother* which was also awarded Best Film.

More recently he received the Emerging Young Leaders award at last year's National Disability Awards and received a \$10,000 grant under the Amplify Your Art program for skills development in digital media, voice and film production.

With Alan Rickman and Kiefer Sutherland

among his favourite actors, Mr O'Dwyer said he doesn't have a preference between stage and screen — “I love it all”.

With hopes to secure funding to tour the *See in Me* production throughout the state, the Guildford resident said he will continue his passion for acting through stage productions and short films.

He also works for Riverside Theatres' creative arts program for people with a disability *Beyond the Square*.

Details: beyondthesquare.org, 8839 3359.