Shannon Murdoch, an Australian playwright, has won the 2011 Yale Drama Series competition for her play New Light Shine, a work about four small-town lives linked through a violent crime and their hopeless attempts to erase the past and build new lives.

Award-winning playwright John Guare chose New Light Shine from submissions received from twenty countries on six continents. When announcing this year's winner Guare said, "The raw, haunting, richly poetic, deeply emotional, New Light Shine affected me as no other entry did."

The Yale Drama Series is an annual international competition for emerging playwrights. The winner receives the David C. Horn prize of $10,000, publication of the winning play by Yale University Press and a staged reading at the Yale Repertory Theater in New Haven, Connecticut. The Yale Repertory reading of New Light Shine will take place on September 12, 2011.

The 2011 runners-up are Bethany by Laura Marks and We Three by Mary Elizabeth Hamilton.

Shannon Murdoch is a legal assistant and writer living in Footscray, Victoria, Australia. Of winning the prize she said, "This award gives me time to focus on my writing and I can't think of anything more precious. I feel incredibly fortunate to be awarded this honour."

Yale Drama Series judge John Guare received the Obie, the New York Drama Critics Circle Award and Tony nominations for both House of Blue Leaves and Six Degrees of Separation, which also won the Olivier Award for Best Play. In addition, he is a Tony Award winner for his libretto for Two Gentlemen of Verona. The Broadway revival of House of Blue Leaves begins performances on April 4, 2011 at the Walter Kerr Theater and features actors Ben Stiller, Edie Falco and Jennifer Jason Leigh.

This is John Guare's first year as judge for the Yale Drama Series. He will also serve as judge in 2012 and 2013. David Hare was judge for the 2009 and 2010 competitions, selecting Lidless by Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig and blu by Virginia Grise respectively. Edward Albee was the inaugural judge and selected The Boys from Siam by John Connolly in 2007 and Grenadine by Neil Wechsler in 2008.

The 2009 Yale Drama Series winner, Lidless by Frances Ya-Chu Cowhig debuted at High Tide Festival in the UK last year and also won the 2010 Edinburgh Festival Fringe First Award. Lidless opened on March 15, 2011 at the Trafalgar Studios in London's West End.
Submissions for the 2012 Yale Drama Series

Submissions for the 2012 Yale Drama Series competition must be postmarked no earlier than June 1, 2011 and no later than August 15, 2011. The competition is open to any original, unpublished and unproduced full-length play in English. For complete contest rules please visit http://yalepress.yale.edu/yupbooks/drama.asp

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The David Charles Horn Foundation

The David Charles Horn Foundation was established in 2003 by Francine Horn to honour the memory of her late husband. David Horn was the publisher and CEO of Here & There, the leading international forecasting and reporting publication for the fashion industry. Francine Horn created the Foundation to support new initiatives in the literary and dramatic arts to commemorate her husband’s lifetime commitment to the written word. www.dchornfoundation.org