

## New musicals find their first stage

by: **Sally Bennett** From: Herald Sun January 31, 2012

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Sam Ludeman says he understands the ups and downs of a life in showbiz. Herald Sun

**MUSICAL theatre hunk Sam Ludeman will be back on the boards this week when three new shows are given their first run at Arts Centre Melbourne.**



Ludeman, 26, who performed the male lead in *Xanadu the Musical*, is in the cast of one of the chosen works, *DreamSong*, a tongue-in-cheek musical about religion.

The Ballarat Academy of Performing Arts graduate has managed to stay on his feet since *Xanadu* was abruptly shut down and the national tour cancelled just weeks after opening in Melbourne last year.

He immediately landed a role in the Doris Day show, starring Melinda Schneider, and is in the running to be on Channel Nine's new reality TV show *The Voice*.

"I've got a positive outlook on life and as long as I stay there I'm fine," he says. "I just say that phrase in my head, 'That's showbiz'. I expect anything to be possible and that's the beauty of it but also what lets it down."

*DreamSong*, along with *The New Black* and *Cautionary Tales for Children*, make up this year's New Music Theatre Series, also known as Carnegie 18.

The series aims to unearth "bold, innovative and compelling new Australian work" from independent artists and ensembles.

Ludeman says a spot in the final three is hotly contested ensuring the highest quality work makes the cut.

He describes *DreamSong* as a musical comedy - "it's kind of a piss-take of Hillsong" - in which he plays Fake Jesus.

Pastor Richard Sunday and his "Evangelical Megachurch" are in financial strife following the Global Financial Crisis, so he invents the second coming of Christ to raise cash and keep saving souls.

"Religion is such an interesting debate so I think this show appeals to all ages," Ludeman says. "But if you're Christian or a Catholic you might not like the message it's sending."