



Focus on talent: Dion Beebe meets aspiring local artists.

Picture: Natalie Spiteri

Lens trained on west

By Monica Heary

THERE was a touch of Hollywood glamour at Harris Park last Friday when Oscar-winning cinematographer Dion Beebe visited a new high school there.

The Australian, who this year won his gong in front of a worldwide TV audience of millions before partying until 4am with Nicole Kidman and Heath Ledger dropped into the Australian Performing Arts High School.

His fans at the school were possibly no less enthusiastic about Mr Beebe's appearance than those who saw him win his Oscar.

The youngsters prepared a musical tribute to honour some of the films with which he has been involved.

His Oscar was for *Memoirs of a Geisha*.

Brisbane-born Mr Beebe visited the high school to speak about talent in the west. Mr Beebe said Australia's rich

tradition of cinematographers had been an inspiration.

"You're inspired to think beyond local borders: you think on a global scale," he said.

He spoke to the school's performing arts and film students about the importance of sticking to their goals, turning dreams to reality and the need for good support and training during their early years.

The school and the Australian International Conservatorium of Music presented Mr Beebe with an honorary diploma. School principal Mark Hopkins said Mr Beebe's visit showed the cinematographer's "awareness of giving people a shot".

Mr Hopkins said he was an inspiration for the students at the school, which opened in 2005 and, this year, had 70 enrolments (almost treble the first intake).

The conservatorium was founded about 10 years ago, Mr Hopkins said.