

## Fringe Festival. Goya Bennett reports ...

# Jade on a high note

ESSENDON singer Jade Leonard hopes a grant recently awarded by the Southbank Theatre Company could lead to her big break.

Jade, 19, intends to use the money to fund a self-titled promotional CD for release towards the end of the year.

With time in a recording studio costing about \$1000 a day, she has learnt that getting heard in the music industry amounts to money.

The grant enables her to hire a professional studio and professional musicians for a demo of contemporary originals, which she will use to hopefully get a recording contract.

"My ultimate aim is for that to be a really high-quality professional CD for a record to be released, hopefully in November," she said.

"My aim is to use that CD to market myself to record companies and investors.

"I think you need one good break. You look at people like Vanessa Amorosi or Sister 2 Sister. I mean, they've all put in immense amounts of work, but they've had a break somewhere."

Her role models include



*Preparing her first CD ... Essendon's Jade Leonard*

Picture: BRENDAN MCCARTHY

acoustic songwriters such as Tracy Chapman, Jewel and Alanis Morissette, while she also admires performers with a message, like Stevie Wonder.

"More than just talking about broken relationships, I like to have more of a message," she said.

"A positive message: anti-drugs, living life positively and getting as much out of life as you possibly can."

Another of her influences is her mother, who runs the Karen Leonard Music School in Essendon.

Jade began singing at six and writing songs at 13, but didn't realise she might actually carve a career out of singing until she was about 15.

For a long time her goal was to get into the elite Victorian College of the Arts, where she is now studying a Bachelor of Music Performance.

She is also a regular performer

around Melbourne and is ready to take the next step into the recording world.

Without the grant, her dream of getting a CD out would have been a lot further away.

"It would have taken a lot longer and I would have had to self-fund it, which would have meant working at Safeway or something," she said.

"I wouldn't have gotten the quality of musicians and the quality of studio.

"And it's not like I have to work for another year to put another track on the record.

"With the grant, it's really a once in a lifetime opportunity that you get this sort of thing, and I'm certainly not letting this slip by."

Jade will debut her new material as part of the Melbourne Fringe Festival at Bar 44 at 44 Lonsdale St, Melbourne.

She performs on Tuesday, 10 October at 8.30pm.