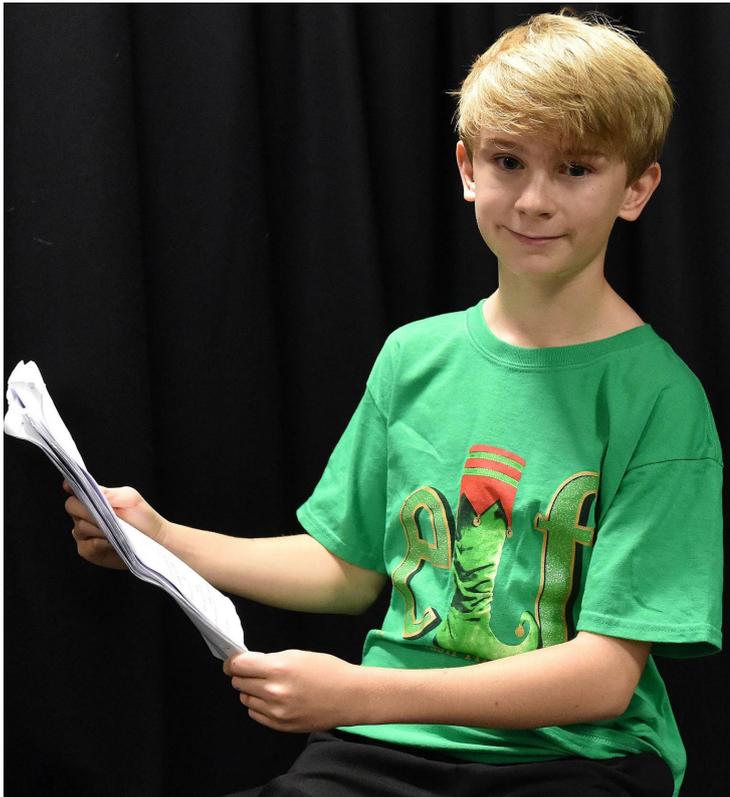




# JAMES STARS IN ELF AT THE LOWRY

Gifted young actor James Allen says working with a professional cast makes him feel 10 foot tall, even though as one of the stars of Elf the Musical that is definitely not what is needed.



The hugely popular 12-year-old St. Ambrose College pupil from Woodsmoor in Stockport has just landed the part of Michael Hobbs in Elf the Musical which will run at the Lowry through December and into the New Year.

James has previously appeared alongside Maxine Peake in Hamlet at the Royal Exchange and had a principal role as Benji in the touring production of production of Priscilla Queen of the Desert alongside Jason Donovan with another lead role in the National Theatre's Husbands and Sons at the Royal Exchange. However Elf is his biggest part yet, with many lines to master.

James, who is one of four young actors rotating the part and is learning his craft at the Television Workshop in Salford, said: "I have really enjoyed all my roles so far. You're made to feel just like any other member of the cast and part of one big team. There really is a strong community in the theatre."

James, whose brother Matthew is also an emerging talent, will begin the production's run in Plymouth in November and said: "I will miss quite a lot of school time, but we will be getting special tutors to make sure we won't miss any work." He added: "The secret is just to try hard and enjoy every second. Try and have fun with it. My friends at St. Ambrose all think it's pretty cool and I know most of them will be coming see the show when we reach Manchester."

Elf is based on the 2003 Will Ferrell film and as a musical gives James a chance to test his singing skills, "I love singing and I am delighted that I will get an opportunity to sing in the show but I wouldn't say I was going to be the next Harry Styles. My ambition is to work in the theatre and I admire Benedict Cumberbatch so much because he seems to play such a wide variety of parts and all with such ease."

St. Ambrose College's Head of Drama Mair Bull said: "James is a natural talent and it will be wonderful to work with him as he progresses through the school and I know we will all learn much from all his experience on the professional stage."