

**R**ISING star Kelli Maybank is following in the footsteps of legendary actors Grace Kelly, Lauren Bacall, Kirk Douglas and Robert Redford after impressing teachers at the prestigious American Academy of Dramatic Arts in New York.

Kelli, 20, from Christchurch, has just graduated from the New York based school, responsible for so many stage and movie greats, with flying colours.

And of the 190 students on the course she has been selected as one of only 22 talented individuals to now join the AADA company.

This means she will spend the next year presenting plays and showcases to casting agents in America along with other top graduates of the school.

During her time at the school, right in the heart of Manhattan, Kelli has managed to get lead roles in every production and teachers have commented on her strong stage presence.

But Kelli was convinced she had not been selected for the company after failing to receive a phone call on the day all the other successful candidates were contacted.

She admits she was in floods of tears and shaking when another student told her, in a transatlantic phone call, that everyone had been called.

It was only when her boyfriend realised she was on the plane back home to England at the time that she was persuaded to phone the school and discover the truth.

Kelli told the Echo: "I'd like to make it on the stage - film would be a bonus but theatre is my passion and I don't mind if I am put at the back or how much I am paid for it. I'd prefer to make it in the West End but there are more opportunities in America



**BANK ON IT:** Kelli Maybank returned to her primary school to hand out a hundred certificates

# Kelli's dramatic entrance

for young actors to get work especially if you're English and can speak with an American accent."

Kelli is now back home for two months before returning to New York.

During her time back home she will be spending some time assisting at rehearsals for *Oliver Swish of the Curtain*.

This week she went back to her primary school The Park where she spoke to students about her experiences and presented a hundred LAMDA certificates.

The school was celebrating after achieving its best LAMDA results ever - with 66 out of a hundred achieving top marks of distinction and 30 receiving high merits.

Hilary Porter