

Potter's

RIEF-stricken little Luke Rabbito, from Highcliffe, painted his face almost every day for three-and-a-half years. His grandad and uncle both died from cancer within a short time of each other when Luke was only four, and the little clown wasted no time slapping on the face paint and fancy dress in an effort to get a laugh. He kept on doing it because he knew he would always get laughs," says his mum, Shirley. He was a little comedian from the day he was born and I had to keep a permanent supply of face paints for years. Luke, now 15, traces his showbiz ambitions back



Rising stars: Members of the Swish of the Curtain stage school who are making a name for themselves

to those sad days a decade ago and is already making his way towards the limelight. A member of Swish of the Curtain Drama School, he has just filmed scenes in the forthcoming Harry Potter film and recently appeared in a new BBC1 sketch show called TV To Go, alongside top comedians Bill Bailey and Sean Lock. A one-off pilot, it appears to have gone down well and if a series comes out of it Luke is likely to be included. The producer and director told Shirley that Luke's comedy timing is excellent and he has a natural ability for come-

dy: "He just seemed to know what was required of him without being told," they said. Filmed before a live audience it only had to be re-shot once – and that was because a beer bottle label was showing. It has been a busy year for Luke that has already seen him invited to join the National Youth Music Theatre. He sings, dances and plays guitar in a newly commissioned musical called Creation, which has been staged in Bury St Edmunds and Chelmsford cathedrals and is scheduled for Peterborough and Canterbury in the autumn.

A pupil at Ballard School before winning a scholarship to Durlston Court School, Luke was also a member of the Highcliffe Junior Choir and shared in their success when coming second at the international Eistedfodd contest and winning the Sainsbury's Choir of the Year Junior Section. Encouraged by being short-listed for a part in Oliver at the London Palladium, he took singing lessons with April Goulding in Southbourne. Luke's talent for dancing was discovered by Jayne Cooper of the Starstruck school at Hulbury, who used to teach his sister Chiara.

He auditioned and offered places with UK's three main dance schools, winning county award for children and being offered bursaries and scholarships. He accepted a place at Elmhurst School Dance and Performing Arts and is currently appearing in performances for the Summer Dance celebration, produced by the school. Meanwhile, Chiara graduated from the famous Italia Conti Academy of Performing Arts in London where her performer's diploma appeared in performances and musicals in London and Woking.

KEVIN



They're all wild about Harry

ONE of the most eagerly-anticipated children's films ever, everyone associated with Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone is keeping extremely tight-lipped about the production. Chris Witham says security staff even topped tourists snapping pictures of Maggie Smith when he was on set with the first batch of Swish of the Curtain youngsters filming scenes at Harrow School. And national newspaper caused a rumpus when it claimed to have speared a photographer on to the set. Warner Brothers, the studio behind the film, dismissed the pictures saying they were only of the stars' filming doubles. The film is to be directed by Chris Columbus, whose track record includes Mrs Doubtfire and Home Alone. Gloucester Cathedral is doubling as Hogwarts, the magic school Harry attends. The grown up stars include Robbie Coltrane,

Maggie Smith, Richard Harris, Richard Griffiths and Ian Hart. Although American child stars Haley Joel Osment (from The Sixth Sense) and Jake Lloyd (from Star Wars: The Phantom Menace) were widely touted to play Harry Potter, author JK Rowling held out for a British actor. Daniel Radcliffe (who plays Harry) is best known from TV's latest adaptation of David Copperfield. Rupert Grint (Ron Weasley) and Emma Watson (Hermione Granger) play Harry's closest friends. Different versions of the film are being shot for British and American audiences as the book is known as Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone in the US. All references to the artefact of the title will be filmed twice. Before Harry Potter, Daniel Radcliffe will be seen opposite Pierce Brosnan in The Tailor of Panama, the film version of John Le Carré's novel. nick.churchill@bournemouthcho.co.uk



Stars line-up: Daniel Radcliffe, Rupert Grint and Emma Watson