

St Albans actor finds success in New York

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MOVING to New York proved just the ticket for a budding actor with roots in the St Albans area, who is now enjoying success across the pond.

Tom Hatton, 32, moved to the Big Apple in 2006, after studying at the prestigious Old Vic in London on the suggestion of his mum.

"The direction I was originally heading down was more business orientated and I started working in finance," said Tom.

"However, whilst I realised that I may get richer in a monetary sense, I also realised that I was not going to get any richer spiritually. The arts were my way of expressing myself."

Tom originally started on a part-time course at the Old Vic, but was advised by art director, Kevin Spacey, to go full time.

This led to his move to New York, where he trained at the Lee Strasberg Institute and has never looked back.

He has since starred in *Law and Order* and *Life on Mars*, as well as becoming the face of a successful billboard campaign.

One of his biggest gigs has been as the host of popular technology show *In the Qube*, which airs in 60 countries around the world.

Tom said: "At first, it was a strange feeling being recognised by people I don't know. But I'm really grateful for this opportunity."

A keen football player in his spare time, Tom is now looking towards a career in new media and has already made inroads by becoming the host of the official Harry Potter channel on YouTube and lending his voice to the *Grand Theft Auto V* video game.



Tom Hatton

He explained: "New media is a big market to capitalise on and I am now hoping to star in a web series."

Whilst Tom admits it has been difficult to be away from his family he says he could see himself staying in New York.

"The lifestyle and interactions just

feel so unique here. My family have been very supportive and I come home twice a year to see them."

Summing up his experience, Tom continued: "The whole thing is challenging and exciting at the same time; I'm just enjoying riding the wave right now."

Dance duo celebrate success in national dance competition



National Dance winners Elise Percy and Jude Ireland

WHEN it comes to rhythm and dance, 10-year-old Elise Percy is a budding star according to her proud mum, a singer in St Albans band Soulfish.

Elise was placed in the top three of eight categories after competing recently in the biennial All England Dance Competition at the Peacock Theatre, in London's West End.

Mum Maxine Percy, of Hazelwood Drive, said: "She was very excited, over the moon. You couldn't take the smile off her face. She has the X factor."

Elise won the junior song and dance duet, nine years and under, with partner Jude Ireland, also of St Albans, was placed second in the Greek duet, 21 and under, with Sophia Melvin, of Aston, and third in the Peter Pan (nine years and under) group.

Maxine explained that Elise, who was aged just nine during the competition, comes from a family of dancers. Maxine is a former dancer who performed in *West Side Story* and *The King and I*.

She said that Elise and Jude have a strong rapport and solid technique when on stage.

Maxine is a backing vocalist for popular group Soulfish, and has recently set up Tiny Mites Music in St Albans, which provides music, movement and drama sessions for babies and children.

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