

Next Broadway Billy Elliot is an Aussie

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By Katherine Field

A young Australian has scored the part of a lifetime - playing Billy Elliot on Broadway.

Dayton Tavares, 13, from Sydney, has been revealed as the next lead star for the Tony Award-winning show Billy Elliot The Musical and is set to hit the stage in December.

It'll make him the youngest Australian to play a lead role on Broadway.

Tavares, who starred in the Sydney and Melbourne productions, said he couldn't believe he scored the dream part in the Broadway production, which won 10 Tony Awards this year.

"I had my last show in Melbourne and I thought that was it for Billy and then all of a sudden we got this big call saying, 'We want you to go New York', and it all just went from there," Tavares told AAP.

The year eight student from Penrith in Sydney's west left for the US to begin rehearsals this week, accompanied by his mother.

He admitted he was "a bit nervous" but was sure he would be fine for the demanding role.

Tavares is one of two new faces for the part, with a 14-year-old from Canada also getting the call-up.

Due to the physical demands which sees the star on stage for most of the performance, four boys play Billy Elliot during a season.

Tavares has only been dancing since the age of nine when he stumbled on performing thanks to his sisters, but now is set to be compared to Australians like Hugh Jackman.



Young Australian performer Dayton Tavares has scored the lead role of Billy Elliot on Broadway.

"I wasn't going to dance, I was playing soccer at the time and my sisters had changed dance schools and there was a boys class on, they're like, 'Oh just try it,'" Tavares said.

"So I was like, 'Alright, I'll just try it'.

"They said, 'If you don't like it you can just come back out,' but I didn't come out I just loved it.

"All the adrenaline, it's just really fun and then I gave up soccer for it."

The live musical adaptation of the Oscar-winning film tells the story of a northern England miner's son who dreams of being a dancer despite his father's disapproval, set to music by Sir Elton John.

The show opened on London's West End in 2005, and the Broadway production opened in November 2008.

The Sydney season began in November 2007, before running in Melbourne until earlier this year.

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