

Martin will

see his name in lights



• FREDDIE COSTELLO

A 13-YEAR-OLD schoolboy with a Puckish expression has won the star part in Chelmsford Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society's production, "Oliver," next spring.

Martin Cook, who lives at White Hall Farm, High Road, Fobbing, Stanford-le-Hope, will play Oliver, the boy who dares to ask for more, in the musical to be staged in May at the Regent Theatre, Chelmsford.



• MARTIN COOK

Martin, a pupil at Palmers Grammar School, Grays, has so far only taken part in school productions. His first stage

appearance was at the age of 10 in "The Princess and the Sorcerer" at his junior school in Corringham.

Since then he has taken important acting and singing parts in "Iolanthe" and "The Gondoliers" at Palmers. He also belongs to the school choir and sings in a motet. At Southend Music Festival last weekend the motet won a first prize and Martin was commended for solo singing.

Yesterday, Martin said: "I feel marvellous about being chosen for 'Oliver'. In school productions I've always been nervous for the first couple of nights—but not after that. I expect I shall feel the same way in 'Oliver'."

LONDON SHOW

Martin hopes his parents will soon take him to see the West End production of the show at London's Piccadilly Theatre.

Martin, who has an eight-year-old brother, Simon, and a sister, Mandy, aged five, went along to the auditions for "Oliver" after a bit of prompting from his mother. "I was surprised and thrilled to hear that I'd got the part," he said.

Martin's understudy will be Kevin Bennett, aged 11, of Moorhall Lane, Danbury.

ARTFUL DODGER

The Artful Dodger is to be played by 14-year-old Charles Whebell, of Hutton Drive, Hutton, and he will be understudied by Phillip Dyer, 14, of Cowell Avenue, Chelmsford.

The grown-up leading roles of Fagin and Nancy will be taken by Freddie Costello and a newcomer to the society, Miss Pat Wilson.

Also taking part are David Flatt, Peter Smith, Stan Parsons, John Arnold, Robin Sampson, John Cave and Pam White. With producer Phil Payne they will start rehearsals soon.