



Paul is climbing his amazing learning curve.

WHILE many stage-struck youngsters can only dream of putting on their very own musical in public, a 17-year-old South Derbyshire student is doing just that.

Paul Syrstad has not only written the script and 15 songs for *Intertwined*, his thought-provoking musical with a message at Burton's Brewhouse next month, he is also directing and acting in the performance.

Paul, from Willington, a performing arts student at Burton College, told the *Independent Trader*: "It is not about making money, it is about putting on your own show". That is very special and it is also a challenge — and I am always up for a challenge. There is also the strong message that is behind the performance as well as it being entertaining." *Intertwined* follows in the wake of shootings and stabbings involving young people and evolved from one of Paul's songs which says that it is okay to 'say no.' It is a story about gang culture and knife crime and how conscience and love can lead youths away from a life of

crime.

And Paul is hoping that it can be toured around schools and colleges with the support of local education authorities. *Intertwined* is the latest in a strong line of dramatic achievements by Paul, even at his tender age.

During the summer, he had one of the main-parts in a new feature film 'The Perfect Burger', directed by Todd Carty (*The Bill*, *East Enders*), set to be released next year. And he is also the main character in a new musical, the Gothic love story *Scarlett*, by Robert Scott, founder of Utopian Artists and who is also from Willington. The filming for this is set to start in the spring.

Paul is also writing 'A Dream's Reality', which he describes as an 'experimental' musical, about the havoc created when the real world and the dream world collide.

He said: "This is where nightmares can run loose. We have a musical where we can do anything; complete freedom from a writing perspective. It is about a boy who meets a girl in his dreams. It opens with an atmospheric 'dream weaver' who links the dreams and reality."

Back to the present and *Intertwined*, some of the cast for which comes from among Paul's fellow students at Burton College where Paul held open auditions. The former pupil at John Port School in Etwell is also hoping to enter *Intertwined* in to arts festivals next summer.

Paul's immediate ambition is to get into drama school in London, but says his hopes encompass music, acting and direction.

He says he learnt a lot from his experience on 'The Perfect Burger' but admits that it made him realise "how hard" acting is. "I would love to act in films and have had a taste of that. But, at the same time, I would love to write and put on my own musicals as well as appear in musicals." About the upcoming performance in Burton, he added: "I hope audiences will be entertained by *Intertwined* as well as understand its moral. It has been an amazing learning curve."

**Intertwined*, The Brewhouse, Burton. Friday, December 11, 7.3 pm. For tickets call the box office on 01283 508100. For more information visit www.intertwined.ws



AD



Steps along the way in Paul's path to the footlights

* Last year Paul had his first West End experience, a musical production by Robert Scott called *Moonlit Sky* at Her Majesty's Theatre.

* He took the leading male role in *Truth of a Lie* after joining Utopian Artists, founded by Robert Scott.

* Paul has appeared in *This is England*, by Shane Meadows.

* He was one of the Lost Boys in the pantomime *Peter Pan* in

Derby with Gary Wilmot four years ago.

In 2007 he played the lead role of Tony Manero in *Saturday Night Fever* at the Brewhouse.

Paul also played the Argentinian in Burton Youth Theatre's adaptation of *Moulin Rouge*.

* Through Burton College Paul has played the leads in *One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest* and *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead*.