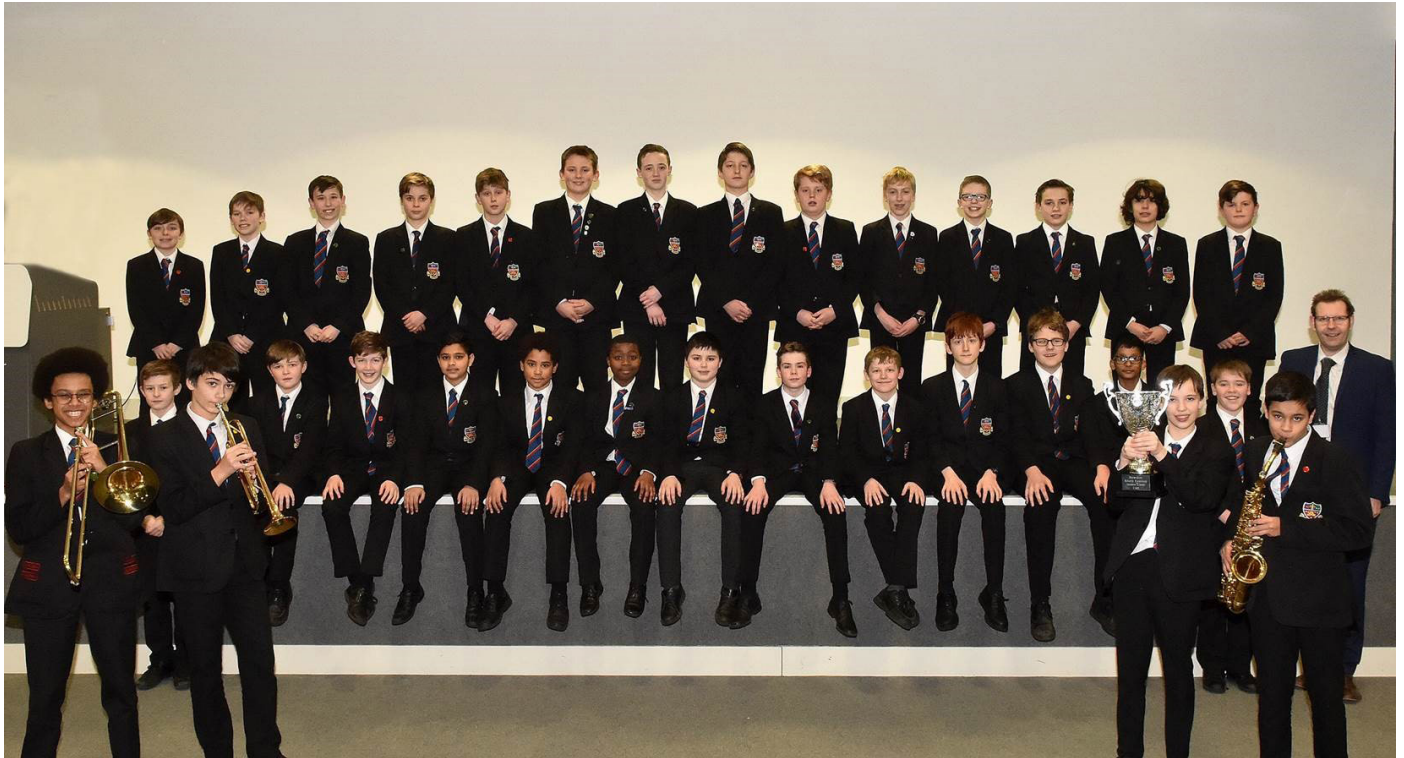




# Cool to Be in a Choir Says Top Music Director



'It's finally cool to be in a choir' according to St. Ambrose College's Director of Music Aled Phillips who oversaw a hat trick of top prizes at the Bowdon Music Festival.

His superbly drilled 40 strong junior choir won the senior choir category even though they are all aged just 12 years and under. Brilliant 12-year-old pianist Barnaby Simpson then won the grade 8 piano solo, while St. Ambrose also won the junior ensemble, with their tight but powerful five piece ensemble who practise together every day.

Aled said: "The popularity of choir programmes on the TV has shown the younger generation it is finally cool to be in a choir and I have no problem finding volunteers. We are also able to mix traditional choral music with some popular tunes of the day, which the boys love to sing."

He added: "The judges seemed so pleased to hear an all boys choir which they had thought was a thing of the past and gave us so much praise for our projection, clarity and harmony."

Pianist Barnaby Simpson, pictured holding the big cup, practises for at least an hour every day using time before school, at lunch time and after school to hone his skills and is already at Grade 8.

He said: "I really want to become a concert pianist and know I will have to work even harder. I love Mozart in particular and can't imagine ever tiring of playing his music."

The five piece ensemble of Mele Gadzama on Trombone, Harvey Richardson on trumpet, Joseph Oates on saxophone (all pictured) with James Allen on violin and Jamie Dwan on flute, also won playing both classical and popular tunes. They also practise for at least an hour every day both together and individually, with Mele saying the secret to success was simple, "we listen to one and another and respect what we all trying to do."

Aled Phillips concluded: "Everyone involved in music at St. Ambrose thanks the volunteers at the Bowdon Music Festival for giving our boys a chance to air their skills in a competitive public arena. It's a vital part of their musical development and the festival organisers show true community spirit."