



# Leading Man Darragh Returns to Former School for Master Class

Musical theatre leading man Darragh Cowley returned to his old school St. Ambrose College to give a masterclass in the dramatic arts.

Darragh, 20, is currently starring as the leading man Melchior in the acclaimed pop rock romp *Spring Awakening* at the Hope Mill Theatre in Ancoats but took time out to lecture the aspiring thespians at the top Catholic grammar school in Hale Barns.



Darragh is pictured with from left to right Mark Festus, Ben Liversage and Dylan McLaren.

Darragh, 20, from Heaton Chapel, who left St. Ambrose in 2013 to take a BTEC in Musical Theatre at Pendleton College, before going to the Guildford School of Acting from where he is hoping to qualify with a first class degree in Musical Theatre in the summer, said: "The best piece of advice I could give is that acting is a serious career choice. It is very achievable but you can't just dabble in it and hope you will hit the big time. You have to study, you have to train and you have to think of it as a career path."

One of the St. Ambrose's top athletes and rugby players, Darragh brings his athleticism to his work, but says acting is far more cerebral than physical. "The best actors are behavioural psychologists. You can learn about the history of the theatre, about stage craft and projection in the classroom but the best actors engage with people and see how they click outside the classroom and bring that to their work."

Darragh starred in many St. Ambrose productions, notably *Bugsy Malone*, but further developed his passion for the stage at the Ohana Youth Theatre, formerly Plaza Youth Theatre in Stockport and was full of praise for those teachers, directors and producers who inspire the next generation.

"All the great actors were inspired to pursue their dreams and I had great teachers both at St. Ambrose and at the Plaza."

*Spring Awakening* is a satire on stuffy, old fashioned educational practices which suffocate rather than foster talent and individuality, but Darragh added: "That certainly wasn't true of my education; I was encouraged to explore and extend myself."

St. Ambrose College's Head of Drama Mair Bull, who was one of Darragh's most influential teachers, said: "Darragh always had star quality not just as an actor but as a young man and we all think he's a star for taking time out of an incredibly busy schedule to inspire the next generation."