

Press Release January 2016

ANCIENT JAPANESE PUPPETRY REVIVED FOR AMBROSE'S EPIC LORD OF THE FLIES

Master puppeteer Will Cousins gave St. Ambrose College actors and back stage crew a lesson in the ancient art of Banraku puppetry as they plan a visual feast for their version of the 20th Century classic 'Lord of the Flies'

The Hale Barns Catholic Grammar School has recruited the London based actor manager, who is a member of the Board of Punch and Judy artistes and has produced shows worldwide, to teach the boys the medieval Japanese style of puppetry most recently evident in the stage version of War Horse.



Head of Drama Mair Bull is planning a show stopper early on in the play when a dead parachutist floats down from sky to be entangled in the jungle canopy subsequently looming over the proceedings as the desert island school boys descent into savagery.

Maya said: “To be effective the puppet must be managed with skill and precision and that is what Will is here to teach the boys. “Matthew Leigh, 14, who will be one of the stage hands pulling the strings, said: “It is the art of making the inanimate animate and it's been a privilege to attend this master class.”

Actor James Mackenzie, 15, who plays Piggy, said: “We have also had dance lessons from a professional choreographer as we aim to make this the best St. Ambrose play ever.”

He added: “It's a fantastic play and an honour to play Piggy; he is the most insightful of all the school boys on the island, but increasingly the target for others' contempt which says so much about human nature and group fever.”Mrs Bull added: “The aim is to show our boys just what makes up a stunning theatrical production both on and off stage and by giving them access to top professionals and allowing them to see how much can be achieved with technical ingenuity, hard work and attention to detail.”

The extra lessons have been funded by the St. Ambrose College Parents' Association.