



Music tutor Jonathan Venner honoured with Mayor's Civic Award

Dedicated College music tutor Jonathan Venner has been rewarded for 35 years as Director of Music at St Edward's Church, Romford, with a Civic Award for Services to the Community.

Jonathan, who is team manager for Creative/Performance Arts and Media at Havering Sixth Form College, has, over the years, trained hundreds of children and adults to sing and play instruments.

He was presented with the London Borough of Havering Mayor's Civic Award by Mayor Cllr Roger Ramsey at a ceremony at Langtons House, Hornchurch, on April 28.

From his early days as a choirboy at Ashford Parish Church, Kent, he had his heart set on being a music teacher and has fulfilled his dreams with teaching posts in Havering since 1979 at The Royal Liberty, Frances Bardsley and Emerson Park schools, before taking up his position at the sixth form college in 1991.

He was appointed as church organist while still a student at the Royal Academy of Music and has gone on to establish a fine tradition of choral music. Jonathan's first major task was to oversee the build and installation of the new Walker organ at the west end of the church, in Market Place, Romford.

He directs the church choir and in addition to singing at the two Sunday choral services, they perform regularly in major cathedrals around the country, most recently in April of this year at Westminster Abbey.

The choir, under Jonathan's direction, have made a number of commercial recordings as well as taking part in major events in Romford, including the visit of Her Majesty the Queen and HRH The Duke of Edinburgh in March 2004 and more recently, in February of this year, for Dr Rowan Williams, Archbishop of Canterbury, at the service of thanksgiving for the 600th anniversary of St Edward's Church and 300th anniversary of St Edward's schools.

This talented musician, who plays the oboe, organ and piano, is also the founder and music director of St Edward's Music Society, a charity which was formed in 1991 to promote music-making in Romford and the surrounding area.

He is married to Debbie Venner, who works at College as part-time PA to Principal Paul Wakeling and PA to Pat McConalogue, Assistant Principal Resources. Debbie and Jonathan are pictured together.

On receiving the Mayor's award, Jonathan said: "I was very surprised and indeed honoured to be presented with this award. I share it with all the talented students and adults I have had the pleasure to teach and to collaborate with in music making, over many years."