



SHOWBIZ: Jamie Farnell (Cromer), Ellie Oldfield (Wood Dalling) and Chris Woodhouse (Holt) in action during Gresham's School's production of Chicago. Picture: ANDREW MIDGLEY PHOTOGRAPHY

Chicago show's murder dance - and all that jazz

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A potent cocktail of murder, jazz, dance and humour was poured into a public school theatre when students brought Chicago to Holt.

More than 80 pupils at Gresham's School were transformed into killers, gangsters, reporters, and court officials.

They told the story of Velma Kelly and Roxie Hart, seeking to escape execution for murder in 1920s America

- a tale dressed up in catchy jazz songs and a script laced with cutting wit.

The young cast tackled demanding songs and dance routines, against a clever minimalist set of scenes that switched from bedroom to court house - accompanied by a 14-piece orchestra sitting under art deco illumination.

The school's director of drama Bridget O'Brien said the show was chosen to match the talents of pupils who provided a strong set of dancers and female leads.

Two groups switched the main roles, to share experience and save voices.

Velma was played by Emily Johnson and Emily Yorke, while Roxie by Ellie Oldfield and Claudia Scott.

Lawyer Billy Flynn was played by Chris Woodhouse and Jacob Jaggard, while Roxie Hart by Jamie Farnell and Harry Fogerty.

The show was watched by 1,000 people over four performances - with an extra performance added to cope with demand for tickets.

