



Three performances.

Three full houses.

Three standing ovations.

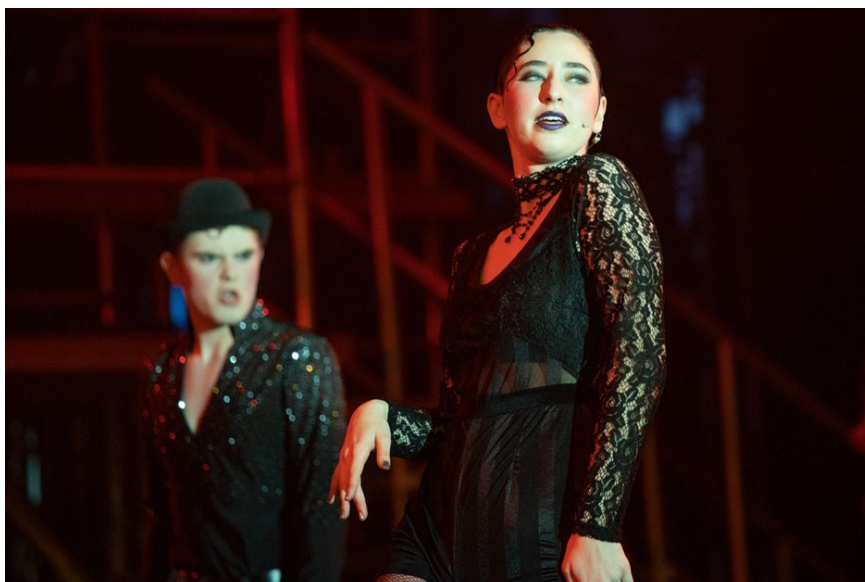
This is the story of *Chicago*...

***"A night to remember, an epic in the
annals of school drama productions"***

Chicago was a truly remarkable accomplishment: quite possibly the best show the school has ever delivered.

It is a fiendishly complicated musical containing some very challenging choreography (designed by Broadway legend Bob Fosse) and some complicated musical numbers by John Kander with brilliant lyrics by Fred Ebb.

To even take on such a show demonstrates the amazing ambition of our music and drama departments. It also shows the tremendous confidence that Mr Sell and his team have in our extraordinary collection of young "Triple Threat" (actor/singer/dancer) performers.





This was reinforced by the dramatic, minimalist staging.

There were no frills, no fancy tricks or backdrops. Just a big, bold, simple set that allowed our performers to express themselves and be the sole focus of the audience.

As always in a Sell-Sykes production, it was a remarkable interdependent ensemble effort, perhaps more than ever before. The complexity of the dance numbers meant that at times our dancers had to move as one fluid, professional unit.

And again, as always, everyone was in character and on point for the whole show. There were no passengers. Everyone played a critical role.

First of all, a massive thank you to our incredible cast. They gave us something exceptional last week. We were taken off guard by the sheer emotional force of the show.

The cast worked so hard and demonstrated astonishing skill and commitment. It was only fitting that they received three standing ovations.

At times, it felt like they were going to get standing ovations after individual songs.

The sustained applause after "Both Reached for the Gun" on all three nights must be unprecedented. I've never heard a reaction like that to a song halfway through the first act of a show. Maybe it was because that piece brought everything together: superstar performances from the leads, unbelievable choreography, the whole ensemble working as one, wit, invention and above all the joy of performing. The whole show, the arduous rehearsal process and the collective personality of the cast released through one explosive song.

CAST

CAST	MALE ENSEMBLE	FEMALE ENSEMBLE
Roxie Hart Lottie-Lou Smith	Matthew Bawtree	Edith Burton
Velma Kelly Isabelle Matharu	Henry Coupe	Abi Charters
Billy Flynn Rob Gain	Oliver Fletcher	Amy Lawrie
Amos Hart Alex Castle	Jonny Golding	Maddie Marsh
	Jude Lanstone	Annabel Murphy
	James Press	Jess Phillips
	Frankie Shepley	Freya Reilly
	Jasper Smallwood	Giorgia Vaccarone
	Will Vant	Lucy Walker-Reid

MUSICAL NUMBERS

ACT TWO	ACT ONE
#12 I Know A Girl	#1 Overture
#13 Me And My Baby	#2 And All That Jazz
#14 Mister Cellophane	#3 Funny Honey
#15 When Velma Takes The Stand	#4 Cell Block Tango
#16 Razzle Dazzle	#5 When You're Good To Mama
#17 Nowadays	#6 Tap Dance
#18 Hot Honey Rag	#7 All I Care About Is Love
	#8 We Both Reached For The Gun
	#9 Roxie
	#10 I Can't Do It Alone
	#11 My Own Best Friend

LEAD SINGERS

Isobel Kimber, Lizzie Bourne, Ruth Metcalf, Victoria Rowcroft
Peps Martin-Smith, Nic Yanni, Seb Coleman



Our leads deserve a special mention. Esme O'Connor gave us a funny and engaging performance as ace journalist Mary Sunshine.



Bea Paisley-Day, in her debut performance at St Edmund's, gave us a sultry and powerful Mama Morton and absolutely smashed her solo song "When You're Good to Mama" on all three nights.

Alex Castle provided a sympathetic, funny and moving performance as Amos. His rendition of "Mr Cellophane" was a real show-stopper (as was his heart-breaking lack of exit music!)

Rob Gain as hotshot lawyer Billy Flynn offered apparently effortless charm, wit and sophistication. It was a truly masterful performance that encompassed every component of the "Triple Threat" and even included some brilliant press conference "ventriloquism".





And then we come to our two stars: Isabelle Matharu and Lottie-Lou Smith. Such was their interaction and togetherness as Velma and Roxy, it seems unfair to separate them now.



They were simply astonishing. Brilliant vocal performances, first class characterisation and some extraordinary dancing. It was a joyous, exuberant tour de force from both of them. The audience was in awe.



A show as complex as this is a colossal team effort.

I am very grateful to Stuart Gain (Rob's Dad) who designed our lighting plot for us. It was a difficult task using new lights and technical equipment and he did a brilliant job, admirably supported by Jayden Lewis our lighting operator. Guy Hawkins provided invaluable work and expertise on the set, lighting rig and the extended stage. Billy Boarman-Powell also did an exceptional job behind the scenes as Stage Crew.

Tam Walker-Reid and Helen Golding did a phenomenal job on the costumes. The outfits were stylish, chic and sexy, epitomising the nature of the show itself but also were adapted to reflect the personalities of the performers, giving them the confidence to really go for it.





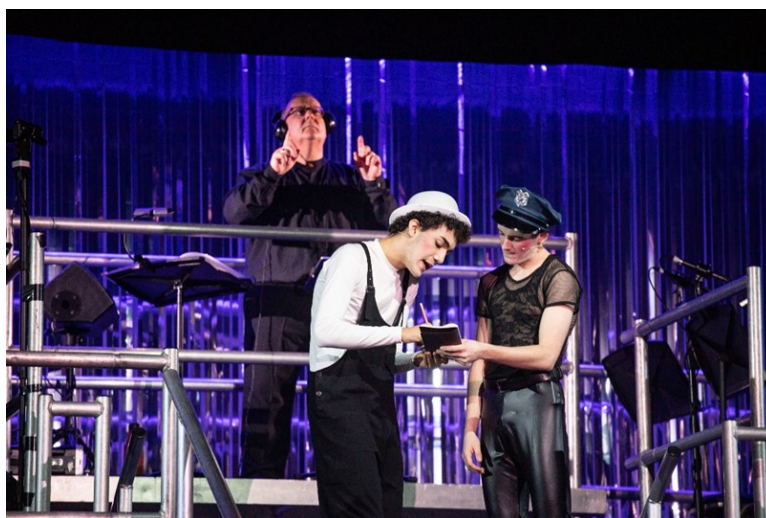
Howard Sykes and Tilly Glinn have worked intensively with our actors to develop their characterisation, confidence and self-belief.



It was simply fantastic to see our performers truly become their characters and, especially on Saturday, shine with confidence and professionalism.

Ian Swatman as Musical Director had a very challenging role; not least because he was perched 12 feet up in the air with the band split either side of him and 350 people watching his every move!

Ian and the band gave a brilliant performance of a challenging and complex score. Special thanks to our pupils who acted as band members: Will Inscoe, Stephen Brown, Jonty Harris-Harding, Olivia Harris-Harding, Gemma Humphries, Sophia Grundman, Josie Head and Fred Rupp. They were superb.





Lisa Jayn Gordon our choreographer was, in the words of Mark Sell, "the real star of the show".

She has worked tirelessly with our performers for weeks, teaching them Fosse's extraordinary choreography, driving them forward together as a cohesive ensemble. The final result was simply spectacular and Lisa should be enormously proud of her achievement.



Finally, of course, I have to thank Mr Sell. We are immensely lucky to have a Director of Drama who possesses expertise, ambition, kindness and inspirational leadership skills in equal measure. Pupils want to work for Mark Sell. They trust him and want to give their best. He is able, through support, advice, generosity of heart and tough love to make people achieve things they never thought they were capable of. That is a rare, rare gift.

"An event of excellence beyond compare"

"Stunning entertainment"

"West End or Broadway quality"

"If I had paid £100 a seat, I would have thought it worth every penny"

"Truly fabulous"

"An astonishing achievement"

"It was like watching the National Youth Theatre"





PRODUCTION TEAM

Director - Mark Sell
Assistant Director - Howard Sykes
Musical Director - Ian Swatman
Choreographer - Lisa Jayn Gordon
Assistant Choreographer - Seb Coleman
Set design and Construction - Guy Hawkins
Sound Design - Pete Brown
Lighting Design - Stuart Gain
Lighting Operator - Jayden Lewis
Costume Design - Tam Walker-Reid
Costume Assistant - Helen Golding
Programme - Marie Florence

STAGE CREW

Billy Boarman Powell

CHICAGO BAND

Musical Director - Ian Swatman
Assistant Musical Director – Will Inscoe
Vocal coach – Dr Victoria Rowcroft
Reed I - Tom Wust Reed II - Martyn Kime Reed III - Adam Rose
Trumpet - Jonty Harris-Harding, Kevin Dickens
Trombone - Josephine Head, Steve McIntyre
Tuba - Steve Wassell
Bass - Fred Rupp
Drums - Stephen Brown, Ross Underwood
Banjo/ Mandolin - Richard Rozze
Keyboards - Will Inscoe, Spencer Payne
Violin - Gemma Humphries, Sophia Grundman, Olivia Harris Harding