

PRESS & JOURNAL - AUGUST 05, 2008

GEORDIE - 1 August 2008

The musical stage adaptation of David Walker's novel, *Geordie*, is a clever choice of production for Scottish Youth Theatre.

The story of a young Scots lad overcoming adversity to become an Olympic champion expresses a topical air of national wish fulfillment.

Most of the show's audience will be familiar with the novel and the 1955 film starring Bill Travers in the lead role. The film was criticized for its condescending treatment of the Scots and for the worst attempts at Scottish accents ever to appear on screen.

The SYT's dynamic production, which opened at HM Theatre last night, cleverly directed by the company's artistic director Mary McCluskey, the national integrity of this wonderful work is beautifully restored and given a charming, child-like innocence.

Hampered slightly last night by gremlins in the sound department, the excellent cast took it in their stride and created a show that instantly drew the audience in and held them rapt.

Euan Patterson was so compelling as the young *Geordie* it was almost a disappointment when he was replaced with the larger, muscular Philip Napier.

However Napier soon made the part his own and *Geordie* became a fully-rounded character, full of couthy humour and pathos.

As you would expect from SYT this is a highly inventive, physical production that makes the most of very little in the way of staging of props.

It's stylish and the cast of principals and the ensemble are flawless and a joy to watch.