

British Theatre Guide

News, reviews, features and podcast on theatre across the UK

The Adventures of Woundman and Shirley

Written and performed by Chris Goode

Queer Up North production

Ustinov Studio, Bath, and touring

(2009)

Chris Goode's latest one man show is the perfect antidote to pessimistic adulthood, lulling even the most jaded of us into recapturing something of the easy optimism of youth, in spite of ourselves.

Goode's genius lies in his storytelling. There's a beautifully evocative, almost child-like simplicity to his third person narrative which quickly draws you in: you like him, you care about his characters and before you know it, you're touched by the story. The surreal, fantastical elements Goode weaves into his story are seamlessly thrown into the mix with the yellowing wallpaper, the Blondie posters and the enforced cross-country running of adolescence. This, against the backdrop of Janet Bird's brilliantly evocative set - a retro attic bedroom with wallpaper all but obliterated by the artistic detritus of adolescence - seduces you into believing that maybe things really aren't so bad.

Goode's mesmeric performance is entirely without ego: he shares his story with his audience; he doesn't revel in it or triumph in its genius. And he captivates his audience with this tale of a troubled teenaged boy named Shirley, trapped by bereavement, sexuality and suburbia into a living a life of lonely monotony. Shirley is rescued by an unlikely Superhero - Wound Man - who helps him to see that lives can be touched without so much as the slightest bodily contact and who leaves him with the gift of courage, reassuring him that all will finally be well, "We'll get to where we're going, won't we?"

"All I have to do is put one foot in front of another, over and over and over again, for as long as it takes."

Touring to South Hill Park, Bracknell;; New Wolsey Ipswich; The Drum, Plymouth

Peter Lathan [reviewed](#) this production in Newcastle

Reviewer: [Allison Vale](#)