

# Show of the week **Bill Perrett**



**Shout! The Legend of the Wild One. To Nov 18. Williamstown Mechanics Institute, corner Melbourne Road and Electra Street. Tel: 1300 881 545. \$28/\$25.**

★★★

Johnny O'Keefe, archetypal Australian rocker, undoubtedly had a fascinating, complex and eventually sad life; the version of it in *Shout!* misses a deal of the complexity. The book, by John-Michael Howson, David Mitchell and Melvyn Morrow, never reaches any great heights, but it gives

Williamstown Musical Theatre Company a chance to do something they do well, which is to stage a highly energetic, colourful and thoroughly entertaining production. Chris Hughes, as the Wild One, is terrific. His stage presence is equal to the task of representing the O'Keefe dynamism, he moves well and he sings well (too well — his version of *So Tough* lacks



also in possession of a fine instrument. She's impressive in duet with Hughes doing *I'm Counting On You* and later, as the marriage breaks up, with a moving version of *Crazy*. Johnny's backing group, the Delltones, do a remarkably good *Get a Job*; the band is a cookin' little unit that drives the whole thing.

The strength of the show is undoubtedly in the music and particularly the big production numbers. O'Keefe's mentor, American Lee Gordon (Nathanael Hueppauff), hosts a drag version of *Shout* in the second half that has to be seen to be believed, but it's the extended version of *Shout*, which closes the show, that is, appropriately, the stopper. There's more movement and glitter and silk on stage than tango night at the Moulin Rouge.

There are reminders occasionally that these are not all professional

... but occasionally, this show is