

# “Land of Milk and Honey” at Limerick

By Arthur Quinlan

LIMERICK has experienced its first fullscale complicated art performance with “The Land of Milk and Honey”, given by the Belfast-based Nicodemus Art and Production Ltd, in association with the Limerick City Art Gallery. This is a stark, anti-fascist attempt to highlight the problems facing a united Germany in the coming years, with a lookback into history. Nico Andreas Heller, the director, a 24-year-old German communications artist from Stuttgart, uses for his trilingual dialogue the poems of Baudelaire, Sylvia Plath and Paul Celan, the German poet who survived Auschwitz.

“The Land of Milk and Honey” is a collage of history and fiction set in a concentration camp, which raises questions rather than giving answers. Three performers develop the narrative through musical, visual and dramatic imagery. An opening musical statement by Keith McVeigh, a talented musician, gets the performance underway. The barefooted actor (David Worden) who is dressed in a red bodysuit, takes up the theme with the German narrative in rhythmic chant. Then the visual artist, Phil Nalty represents the feminine victim of fascism by her portrayal of the “birth machine” in an excellent but macabre performance.

The message of the 60-minute presentation, in which the audience plays an active physical and mental role, only begins to emerge when the interplay leads to a broader understanding of the theme.