

'Diverse' year for literature boosts City of Culture bid

LIMERICK'S bid for European Capital of Culture has been strongly boosted by the success of its literature pillar, according to committee member James Lawlor, reports Marie Enright.

"The main thing that we wanted to do was to bring the writers to the audience. Workshops were held in the city but we travelled all over the county bringing writers to schools and libraries and the feedback has been very positive," he says.

The legacy project aimed at honouring and continuing Limerick's literary achievements saw a series of free workshops and talks from established and local writers take place throughout Limerick.

According to Mr Lawlor, the idea behind this was to make these available to people who may have a talent or interest in literature but wouldn't normally be able to af-

Flight of the Birdwatchers

Limerick band fly the nest and thrive in Germany, reports Fiachra McKernan

BUCKING the trend - that's the Birdwatcher way. 18 months ago, they were being watched by some of the biggest labels in music, including Sony.

Now they are touring Germany's thriving independent scene and loving every minute of it. Frontman Adam Haugh spoke to the *Limerick Voice*. "There are so many great bands in Limerick, you have to be a god to stand out. So I just thought 'I want to try something else.'"

Adam made the brave decision to leave his comfort zone and to try and crack the German music scene. As if that wasn't rock 'n' roll enough, he left in the middle of his Leaving Cert. "I was doing well in school, too. My parents weren't happy but I said 'that's what I want to do'. They eventually came around."

Adam would not want to embark on this journey alone. He asked his friend and guitarist Ian Brew to join him and he did. "It was a lot to ask a best friend but he was well up for it. I owe him a lot."

Upon arriving in Germany, the lads recruited locals; bassist Christoph Ull and drummer Max Spieler and began touring around Germany from their base in Fürstfeldbruck.

"I wanted to achieve something," says the avid Birdwatcher. "I came here in a school



The Birdwatchers' Ian Brew, Max Spieler, Adam Haugh and Christoph Ull performing on stage in Munich
Picture: Kitty Williams

exchange and fell in love with the music scene. Music sites are blocked here so you have to go see live bands and tape and DVD trading is thriving."

The band has recently signed with south Germany's biggest label, Flower Street Records and have already recorded their EP, *Pretentia*. The band is about to embark on their upcoming tour with dates in Germany, Poland and

Austria, before coming to Ireland for five dates.

Adam blames it all on his granddad, Tony Haugh. "I both thank and blame him. He's always been my biggest supporter. He bought me my first guitar and showed me how to play. It's all his fault."

Adam is optimistic about the future of the Birdwatchers, too. "If all goes well

we'll hopefully be signed by a major label," adds Adam. "We're still young but we might come home someday but for now we're happy."

"Germany's worth tenfold of what we expected."

Pretentia will be released on January 15 on Flower Street Records.

Check out the band at Facebook.com/TheBirdwatchersIreland.

