

Arts

the arts

Photographed - Island children relive the Hannah Parr grief

ODD, the link between Island Theatre Company and the Hannah Parr, the Norwegian emigrant ship forced to dock at Limerick in 1868 because of Atlantic storms.

Some of the children on board died during the respite here and are buried in unmarked graves at St Munchin's cemetery where the theatre company is based.

In a CREATE project Artist in the Community, funded by Arts Council, theatre practitioner Niamh Bowen devised a play with school children from the St Mary's Park area, using historical records.

Since staged, photographer and artist Deirdre had chronicled rehearsals and the children involved on a weekly basis. Her photographed portraits of the children's faces have a resonant quality, naked and haloed with a spare simplicity. They now form an exhibition, which was launched at the Belltable gallery by Norwegian Ambassador Truls Hanevold last week.

"I'm very impressed with the work [on the Hannah Parr event] and the photographs. They are fantastic and so professional on the artist's part," he told Arts page. "Some of them have the quality of a painting, that of a Vermeer effect. The children and their parents must be delighted with having a copy each to take home, as well as their involvement at the theatre workshops".

Later, on behalf of St Mary's Local Women's Group, Carmel Duggan presented Mr Hanevold with a copy of the manuscript of Bowen's play, and paid fulsome tribute to the artist Power's weekly presence at the Island workshops while the play was in progress.

The city turned out to support St Mary's Local Arts Group: Alice Kennelly, chief executive of Island Theatre Group; artist Andrew Kearney, whose mother is Norwegian; Impact Theatre Company, cllr John Gilligan, and Mayor

Diarmuid Scully who paid tribute to Deirdre Power as to how she cultivated the story into photographs.

Ambassador Hanevold mused on the link between Limerick and Norway, "two countries

better life across seas was not fulfilled".

Niamh Bowen, who created the play inspired by this voyage with the St Mary's Children, made special mention of Clair Haugen, a Minnesota based descendent of the Hannah



CREATE Artist in the Community, Deirdre Power (left) had her photographic exhibition of St Mary's Parish children involved with the Hannah Parr stage project launched by Norwegian Ambassador Truls Hanevold. Supporting the Belltable gallery night was Alice Kennelly of Island Theatre Company, who instigated the community/theatre/ exhibition project.

which in the 19th and 20th centuries had high rates of emigration and which today, are among the most prosperous in the EU.

Referring to the traumatised crossing of the Hannah Parr, lucky to arrive at our docks, he noted that "the dream of the dead children of a

Parr, who provided her with stories and detail of the adventure - down to the folksong invoked at the children's burial in St Munchin. A DVD of the play and this same haunting music was screened after the exhibition opened at the gallery.

Double whammy for Anything Goes

THE Limerick Musical Society has once been rewarded for their high standards in production, twice over at national award ceremony for musical theatre. Choreography and Comedy were its twin peaks for 2006. Only

LMS has been an active member of the national Association of Irish Musical Societies (AIMS) for the six years of its existence and has been successful in musical direction, acting, singing, comedy and visual content awards for many of their past shows. They can now add choreography to that growing list of awards - five in total. Not bad for only half a dozen years on the road.

Their recent production of Cole Porter's *Anything Goes* at the LIT Millennium Theatre, which played to packed houses, received the Des Byrne Trophy for Best Choreography - tribute to Niamh O'Connell, choreographer - against tough competition at the national AIMS Volkswagen/ Finance Matters awards ceremony in the INEC, Killarney.

Over one thousand musical

theatre performers, directors, producers, technicians, singers and actors were in attendance for what is the highlight in the national musical theatre annual calendar.

LMS also received runner-up Best Comedian Award, this going to Richie Ryan as Moonface Martin who was artistic director of the show that filled LIT Millennium Theatre.

"We don't go out to win trophies," commented Richie. "The

cast of *Anything Goes*, are to be applauded once again and my congratulations to Niamh on her magnificent win".

Limerick Musical Society is looking for new members for its next production *It's Broadway II*, taking place in the LIT Millennium Theatre from September 27 to 30. Log on to www.limerickmusical.com for further details



Ger Ryan (centre) from Limerick Musical Society receives the Best Choreography Award for Niamh O'Connell from Fiona Shirran, president AIMS for their show 'Anything Goes'. Pictured with joint sponsors Tom O'Connor, Volkswagen, left and John McNally, Finance Matters, at the annual AIMS awards in Killarney.



It was a full house for the launch event of The Hunt Museum's Allegory & Legend exhibition of Louis Le Brocqy's work. The major assembly of his works concerning myth and legend will continue daily at the Custom House until September. Here, the artist is pictured with his artist wife Anne Madden on opening night.