

Fragments of Isabella at the Chapter

By IFAN PAYNE

HOLD on to the memory, for it is often more real than was the actuality.

So it is that some memories should not be tested, their selective experience more powerful than the reality which, revisited, can destroy the magic of that remembrance.

On the other hand, some memories demand to be relived, cry out for re-experiencing the original events so as to ensure that the selective filters of recollection do not

Keeping open war wounds

REVIEWS

romanticise and falsify.

Such are the events of the holocaust which like life under the armpits urge a constant scratching of reminder of the reality which lies with all its madness beneath the skin of civilisation.

In *Fragments of Isabella*, Gabrielle Reidy uses the words of Isabelle Leitner's memoir to peel back the collective memories in order to expose the reality and keep open the wound that was Auschwitz.

In this largely unhystrical, understated extended staged monologue, aided by Michael Scott's direction and

John Comiskey's lighting, Reidy holds their attention completely and creates a gripping reality on the bare stage.

The impact of the production might have been even more enhanced by a greater awareness and use of the power of silence, by a slower pacing perhaps. But this indeed is a successful piece of controlled acting and in the end, faced with these realities behind the memories, the only response can be the silence which comes from a mixture of collective guilt, gratitude and humility.

Fragments of Isabella continues at Chapter each evening for the rest of this week.