

Fruits of Labor review: An exhilarating riot of music and madness

Miet Warlop returns to Dublin Theatre Festival in typical explosive fashion

**[Laurence Mackin](https://www.irishtimes.com/profile/laurence-mackin-7.1837396)**



**Venue:** Samuel Beckett Centre

**Date Reviewed:** October 14th, 2017

**Website:**[dublintheatrefestival.com](https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/dublintheatrefestival.com)

**Phone:** 016778899

**First published:**Sat, Oct 14, 2017, 10:58

[Samuel Beckett](https://www.irishtimes.com/topics/topics-7.1213540?article=true&tag_person=Samuel+Beckett) Theatre, Dublin

★★★★★

Drum beats are tricky beasts at the best of times. But they are even harder to nail when the different elements of the kit are three paces apart. Here, a drummer brings his groove together at an increasingly frantic pace, and Miet Warlop’s latest theatrical creation coalesces into a punk-rock riot of sound and joyful, physical fury.

Those who caught Warlop’s last show at [Dublin Theatre Festival](https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/dublin-theatre-festival) in 2012, Mystery Magnet, will know better than to come with expectations. Just when you think you have a handle on what’s about to happen, out will bounce another theatrical curveball.

Here, a giant polystyrene box plays a central role. It becomes a raging bull charging about the stage as Warlop’s ramshackle band play some frantic flamenco; slain by drums sticks, its carcass becomes a harp; as a flag billows from the roof, it briefly becomes a lectern, from which a dictator growls out his new world order; and later on it’s used to crucify a cast member. Water also plays a central roll, whether drumming from the roof or being pumped across the stage.

The show itself is punctuated by a chaotic history of music, as Warlop, her three-piece band and one punishingly overworked roadie barely keep the show on the road. There are Pink Floyd-esque diversions, some brilliant punky riffs, a little bit of*Jungle Boogie*, and a terrific, reggae-style call to action.

It's much more than just a riot though. Having a character move swiftly from an entertainer to a fascist is a potent point. Idols are built up and ripped down. Warlop seems to be testing the boundaries of the stage and what we consider our own realities.

And all of this is barely the half of it. There are companies with five times the budget of Warlop, who wouldn’t dare take a 10th of the risks. The result is a stunning display of chaos and coordination, the precision of the show hidden under a cloak of fearless performance and unalloyed entertainment.

After 55 exhilarating minutes, filled with music and almost empty of words, the stage is destroyed, the audience is delighted, and the only shame is there will be no encores.

Source: <https://www.irishtimes.com/culture/stage/fruits-of-labor-review-an-exhilarating-riot-of-music-and-madness-1.3256449>