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Dublin Dance Festival 2015 – White lies in a digital snowstorm

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Blanca by Maria Nilsson Waller and Co
José Miguel Jiménez

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Rating: ★★★★★

Blanca by Swedish born, Dublin based choreographer and performer, Maria Nilsson Waller, is described as a clash of raw sound and physicality, where compelling choreography meets cutting edge jazz. With such promises in the air expectations were high. But these promises weren't made good upon and *Blanca* fell short of its ambitious aims.

Inspired by video games, psychology, creation myths and hours of improvisation *Blanca's* journey through the land of Scandinavia's indigenous, Sami people featured little clashing or rawness, with neither the jazz music nor video sequences being particularly cutting edge. Indeed, the whole moved at a ponderous pace with overly long repetition sequences. *Blanca's* often robotic choreography, contrasted with long periods of walking, looking outwards or lying still, was visually and physically less compelling than it might have been. The performance struggled unsuccessfully against a sense of claustrophobia, a feeling not aided by musicians Magnus Vikberg and Klaus

Henrik Hörngren, flanking either side of the already tight space. Looking cramped within its surroundings, *Blanca* lost much of its power as a result.

The use of computer generated imagery projected onto the floor and screen was something of a mixed blessing. Graphically and technologically there was nothing ground breaking here. A graphic rendering of the interior of a house looked basic and dated. In contrast, some beautifully executed sequences involving countless small dots of white light, which Waller interacted with, were absorbing, reminiscent of an old Windows screen saver, where stars raced outwards from a black screen. Waller's clever interactions with a comet like pattern, a kind of playful Tinkerbell, was wonderfully engaging, with these sequences feeling retro rather than dated. Similarly, as she moved through a digital snowstorm, walked among the stars or lay bathed in blood red light, the simplicity and directness of execution was enjoyable to watch.

Blanca has moments of stark beauty, along with moments when Maller seems about to release something extraordinary. In one short sequence an overpowering feeling of exuberance begins to course through Maller's robotic movements, hinting at layers of depth and richness beneath. But there are simply not enough such moments and the depths remained hidden beneath the snow. Yet if *Blanca* doesn't do what it says on the tin, Maller does enough to suggest there are greater possibilities yet to come.

Blanca runs at the [Project Arts Centre](#) – Cube until Saturday, May 30th as part of the [Dublin Dance Festival 2015](#).

Tickets €15 Concession €13 Early bird €12

Show begins at 6.30 p.m.

For more information go to:

<http://www.dublindancefestival.ie/>



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