

Theatre

[Review]

All Right. Good Night. review – extraordinary show about dementia and a disappearing plane

★★★★★

Home, Manchester

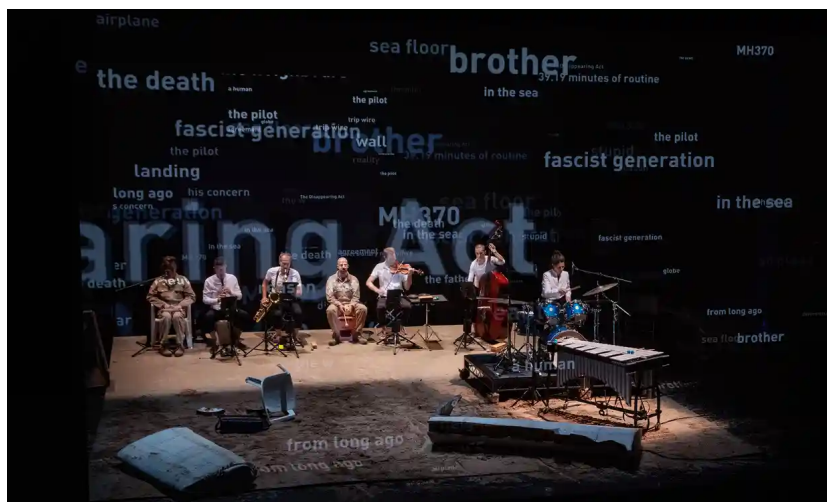
This hugely eloquent show weaves together the awful mystery of Malaysia Airlines flight MH370 with the tale of a father's slide into dementia



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📷 Arresting and meditative ... All Right. Good Night. Photograph: Andrew Brooks

This experimental drama takes us on two mysterious journeys, side by side. Both are meticulously sourced from life and plumbed to their depths. One is of the Malaysia Airlines flight that set off from Kuala Lumpur for Beijing with 239 people on board in 2014 and disappeared along its flight path. The other is the psychic voyage of a father's disappearance into dementia.

The parallels become more apparent as the German theatre company Rimini Protokoll perform this arresting, meditative piece, co-produced by [Manchester international festival](#). There are lacunae at the centre of both narratives: “Where are you?” and “Where did you go?” are repeated questions in Helgard Haug’s spare yet immensely eloquent script. Around the central fog in both stories are those left behind - witnesses and mourners, from the relatives of those on the flight to Haug herself, as the daughter of her unnamed German father. Metaphysical inquiries around uncertainty and death intersect, leaving lingering mysteries.

The production is also directed by Haug, and its stories are spoken out loud (by Emma Becker, Evi Filippou, Margot Gödrös, Ruth Reinecke, Mia Rainprechter and Louise Stölting) and also written on a gauze at the front of the stage, which leaves sentences hovering in the air, as if on their own invisible flight paths.

Barbara Morgenstern’s compositions are played by the stupendous Zafraan Ensemble, who reconvene across the stage in different formations for each passing year, often to a backdrop of ocean waves (projection and lighting by Marc Jungreithmeier).

 Lingerin... All Right. Good Night. Photograph: Andrew Brooks

As the story of a lost flight, it is alarming, and also the stuff of conspiracy theories born out of unfathomable shock, grief and desperation - but most of all, uncertainty. As a story of dementia, it is forensic, sometimes funny and deeply moving, pulling back from sentimentality so that we are left dry-eyed but deeply affected, both inside the father's dementia - he was an inveterate note-taker, which gives greater meaning to the floating ocean of words on the screen - and in the daughter's head. As someone whose father has lived with dementia, I have never before seen a dramatisation that gives such agency and lucidity to someone sliding into it and also someone watching that slide.

Occasionally the correlation between the two stories feels strained, but neither narrative feels sacrificed or cheapened for the sake of the other. There is a deliberate looping and it feels slightly too long at 140 minutes played straight through. But we cannot begrudge this and its uninterrupted pull drags us further down in its depths.

We know the outcome of this dual story, and yet hang on - waiting, in hope, like the relatives who return every day to the airport for news of their missing ones and the daughter waiting for glimpses of her old father.

At [Home, Manchester](#), until 8 July. [Manchester international festival](#) runs until 16 July.

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