

British Theatre Guide

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Going Dark

Hattie Naylor in collaboration with Sound&Fury

Sound&Fury

Young Vic

4–22 December 2012

Sound&Fury's tender exploration of one man's journey to blindness is subtly performed by John Mackay and expertly crafted by writer Hattie Naylor and creative team Mark Espiner, Dan Jones & Tom Espiner.

The Maria space at the Young Vic is covered with heavy black drapes, every chair is fitted with dim lights underneath the seat and audience members peer through the gloom to find a vacant place.

Then when it goes dark, it really does go dark. In the pitch blackness, sound (design by Dan Jones) is expertly used to direct our mind's eye to create vivid pictures, whilst Max (John Macaky), an astronomer, loses his vision and must rely on hearing and touch to navigate his world.

Simplicity and ingenuity are this production's greatest strength; the set (Aleš Valášek) comprises of three multipurpose units which transform from fridge to dressing table, cooker to recording studio. The largest of these units also houses a projector which shows us the stars during Max's lectures where he informs us about the beginning of the galaxy, how we can find the pole star and what happens when a star dies.

The lectures are neatly interspersed with Max's story and reflect his deteriorating sight; whilst he is telling us about the death of a star, his eyesight takes a turn for the worse and it is as though his own personal galaxy collapses for a while and goes dark.

Most touching are the conversations between Max and his six-year-old son, who is a recorded voice. His son worries how his father will be able to remember his face when Max permanently loses his vision, and their dialogues, which are highly realistic and moving, bring home the personal story after we have listened to speeches regarding the massive expanse of the universe.

This is a magical experience which gives audiences a tiny insight into one man's collapsing and changing world. What is most beautiful is the way in which we discover that, even though Max's sight may have gone, his ability to perceive and imagine the wonders of the universe remains. His world does not end: it transforms.

Reviewer: [Anna Jones](#)