

Nachtland

Welcome to this introduction to *Nachtland* by Marius von Mayenburg, translated by Maja Zade and directed by Patrick Marber. The audio described performances are on Friday the 15th of March and Tuesday the 16th of April at 7:30pm. For both performances touch tours are at 6pm, the introductory notes will start at 7:15 and the performance itself at 7.30pm. The production lasts for approximately 1 hours and 40 minutes, with no interval, and the live audio description will be given by Miranda Yates and Eleanor Margolies. These introductory notes will take about 11 minutes to listen to.

The Young Vic warns that the show contains flashing and pulsing lights, haze, smoking, sudden loud music and sound effects. For content warnings, please download the [pre-show information document](#) from the website detailing the themes explored.

Patrick Marber, awarded a Tony for directing *Leopoldstadt*, directs a jagged new satire from one of Germany's foremost playwrights, Marius von Mayenburg.

In modern day Germany, Nicola and Philipp argue as they clear out their late father's house. When they find an old painting stashed in the attic, things get savage. The painting is a quaint street scene from 1920s Vienna; the work of a failed artist who abandoned his original vocation for Nazism... Nicola wants to sell it. Philipp wants to keep it. Philipp's wife Judith wants to burn it. The play is a mordant satire about marriage, legacy, the rise of the new right, and the terrible impulses buried deep.

The title, 'Nachtland', is an invented German word, suggesting a place of eternal darkness.

The audience seating wraps around a raised platform that thrusts forward into the space and is about a metre above the seating in the stalls. The platform is about 6 metres wide and 10 metres from front to back with seating wrapping around three sides on stalls and two balcony levels.

When we come into the space, the platform is entirely covered with a lifetime's collection of domestic objects. At the very back of the space there is a brick wall, the size and shape of the side wall of a house with a pitched roof. However, apart from this wall, the rest of the house has apparently been demolished, leaving traces of the former rooms exposed to view.

On the ground floor, to the left, there's a square of brown wallpaper suggesting a dingy living room. To the right, the trace of a vanished staircase zigzags up the wall. In the centre, between these two rooms, there's a square archway that leads to the street door. On the floor above, there are squares of faded peach and brown patterned wallpaper suggesting bedrooms to left and right, with deep cracks running down the walls. Between these two rooms, is a narrower rectangle of bathroom wall, the lower half covered with glossy dark green tiles, the upper half covered with crumbling plaster where the tiles have fallen off. Above these rooms, a wooden beam runs across the whole width of the house, with an attic space under the triangle of the pitched roof.

The platform in front of this wall is entirely filled with domestic objects, items that might have been collected by a comfortable household from the 1970s to the present day. They include: a folding bed, a step stool, a deck chair, a standard lamp, a violin case, a cream enamel teapot, side tables, a dolls house, an electric typewriter, a boombox, a hostess trolley, an office chair on casters.

Your experience of the set will change depending on the time when you enter the auditorium, as there is a pre-show sequence which begins as audience members take their seats. Members of the company gradually remove items from the space, revealing objects that were previously hidden such as a roll of red carpet, a camping stove and table, a plastic spade, a music stand, and an empty picture frame.

There are four main characters, a sister and brother and their partners, and three visitors.

Nicola is a white woman in her late-thirties with long curly red hair worn piled up into a messy bun, her pale skin is freckled with subtle make-up. She's dressed comfortably in a pair of brown wool trousers that finish above the ankle and a fitted sleeveless red top. Over this she wears a stylish oversize mid-grey wool cardigan, that has a wide hem and cropped wide sleeves, and often falls off one shoulder, and she wears black ankle boots with socks. Later she changes into a blueish-black calf length pleated skirt with a sheer black polo neck, black tights and long brown boots. Nicola has a sharpness to her that makes her a force to reckon with, her movements are direct and she has a confident manner often leaning into one hip as she speaks.

Nicola's husband is **Fabian**, who's also white and in his late thirties with short-cropped strawberry blonde hair and a short ginger beard and moustache. Fabian is similar in height to his wife and wears a pair of moss green corduroy trousers with worn white and red Adidas trainers. He also wears an Adidas Bayer Munich tracksuit top that has a white body and red sleeves with white stripes down them. Under his tracksuit top Fabian wears a saffron orange polo neck. Fabian defers to his wife often standing just behind her or listening at a distance in the shadows.

Nicola's brother **Phillip** is in his late thirties, tall and slim with a pale complexion and unkempt ginger hair and a stubbled jawline. He's initially dressed casually in mid blue jeans, a black band t-shirt with the word FAUST repeated across the front in different colours, worn with a denim shirt over the top and comfortable brown leather lace-ups. Like his sister he later adopts a more formal appearance wearing a grey-blue suit that used to belong to his father and is slightly too big for him. He wears this with a pale shirt and dark patterned tie.

Phillip's wife **Judith** is Jewish and is in her mid-thirties. She has thick, wavy, dark brown hair that's worn up in a messy ponytail with a patterned scarf tied around her head. Judith has pale olive skin and dark eyes with strong brows and wears a pair of navy canvas overalls rolled up at the ankle and the cuffs, with sturdy brown boots. Later she adds a black wool overcoat. There's a sturdy self-assuredness to her energy and an air of steely resilience.

Evamaria is an art specialist. She's in her 50's and petite with a perfectly made up, pale complexion, and striking red lipstick, her look completed by heavy black framed

designer glasses. Evamaria's demeanour is serious and uber cool. Her straight hair is dyed blond and shoulder length and is initially worn slicked into a severe ponytail. Her high fashion clothing is chic and stylish, with jewellery to match. She first arrives wearing a pair of pale grey dropped crotch trousers worn with white calf length boots with chunky soles. On top she wears a blue silk blouse and a subtly patterned long cardigan in thin woven cotton. Its asymmetric hemline is lower at the front where it finishes in two points. Later she wears a pair of cropped black trousers and a matching box-jacket, with a smart white shirt that has broad cuffs and an exaggerated collar that finishes in points at the waist. She accessorises with a neat black bag across the body on a long strap and a pair of silver drop earrings. Evamaria exudes the confidence of one who is fiercely intelligent and expert in their field. She has a contained energy and her movements are sparse, her posture poised with chin lifted.

Evamaria's associate **Kahl** is in his late 50's and tall at around 6ft 3. Karl is slim and fit as one trying hard to stay young. He is charismatic and extrovert, often using expansive gestures to emphasise a point, wafting around the space in a sweeping motion, then dropping dramatically to sit, a little like a combination of panther, snake and occasional moments of excited puppy. He occasionally puffs on a black and gold electronic smoking pipe. His thick, grey-white hair is cut short and neatly combed back from his pale, strong featured face. The eagle like sharpness of his eyes is emphasised by his strong bushy brows. He wears a pair of mustard yellow chinos that finish at the ankle and are worn with a dark animal skin belt, on his feet are a pair of oxblood velvet loafers that have a red crest on the front and are worn without socks. His cream wool shirt is worn open at the collar with a brown suit jacket over it.

On top, his oatmeal wool coat has soft fur lapels and cuffs comes to mid-thigh. However, he first appears wearing rather less – as will be described live in the performance.

The lighting and soundscape heighten the action with a non-naturalistic tone. Throughout the performance, characters are often picked out in pools of light whilst the surrounding space is in shadow. The light pools vary in size, and can be circular, square or rectangular in shape. At other times part of the setting itself may be illuminated to emphasise what is being said, or an entrance may be heralded by a shaft of light in the doorway. The soundscape includes various abstract tones and moments of white noise as well as moments of loud music.

Naturalistic elements of the performance where characters address each other are mixed throughout with non-naturalistic moments, where the characters address the audience directly.

The cast and production credits

Nicola Dorothea Myer-Bennett

Philipp John Heffernan

Fabian Gunnar Cauthery

Judith is played by Jenna Augen

Evamaria Jane Horrocks

Kahl Angus Wright

The Designer is Anna Fleischle

Lighting Designer Richard Howell

Composer and Sound Designer Adam Cork

Movement and Intimacy Director EJ Boyle

Nachtland was written by Marius von Mayenburg, translated into English by Maja Zade and directed by Patrick Marber.

This is the end of the introduction to *Nachtland*. If you have any questions or require further assistance please call the Young Vic box office on 020 7922 2922.

Upcoming audio descriptions at the Young Vic include *Earthworks* on Saturday 6 Apr at 7.45pm and *Passing Strange* on Saturday 22 Jun at 2:30pm and again on Tuesday 25 Jun at 7:30pm, with touch tours available 90 minutes before each performance.