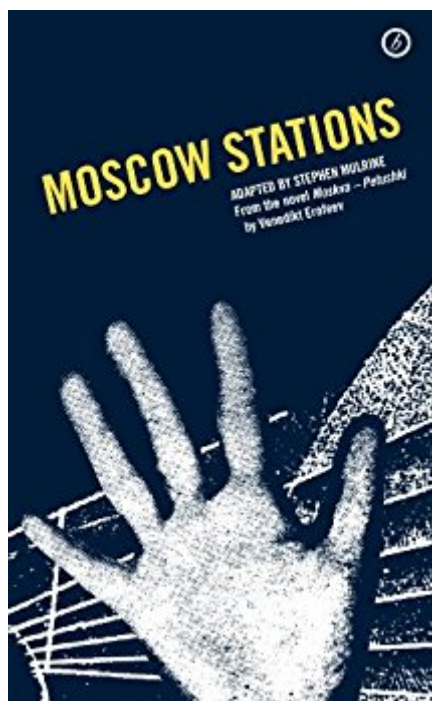


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Moscow Stations



Synopsis

Venichka Erofeev (Venya), cultured alcoholic, self-mocking intellectual, regales us with an account of his heroic odyssey from Moscow to provincial Petushki. Stories of his rich, turbulent inner life abound as he staggers through Brezhnev's Moscow and encounters dangerous, eccentric and often hilarious strangers on a train. His journey ends when fate cruelly intervenes curtailing the vivid panorama of Russian life that we have seen through Venya's eyes. Stephen Mulrine's adaptation for one actor of Erofeev's cult novel has been highly acclaimed on BBC Radio 3, at the Edinburgh Festival, London's West End, and New York in Tom Courtenay's blissfully funny performance.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

Moscow Stations is one of the most fascinating literary works of late Soviet literature. Sub-titled 'a poem', this novella is indeed poetic and dense, mixing autobiography, fantasy and hallucination in the tragic life of the narrator, a homeless and occasionally-employed alcoholic, who wanders the Moscow streets and subway system forever in search of the next drink, and haunted by the dream of a beautiful woman he has apparently promised to meet at one particular station which he never seems to be able to find. Woven around this hopeless quest, this slim volume contains so much:

from alcohol-addled discussions of philosophy on half-empty subway carriages rattling on through the impenetrable Moscow darkness, to pin-sharp satire at the absurdity of totalitarian bureaucracy; from passages of the most heart-rending tenderness, particularly in the description of a brief visit to the narrator's sick son, to the most laugh-out-loud humour. The writing gathers momentum and increases in insane intensity as the inevitable tragic demise of the narrator approaches, stabbed in the neck by unknown assailants in an echo of the pointless death of Josef K in Kafka's 'The Trial', and in a bizarre prefiguration of Erofeev's own death of throat cancer. The author's life was as ribald, riotous and ultimately tragic as his character in this book - the stories of cocktails made from vodka, meths and pesticides; the loss of family, the lazy drunken work-crew antics - these are all apparently drawn from his own mazey, mashed-up existence. The only slightly disappointing thing about the English edition of Moscow Stations is some slightly stilted and over-literal translation in the early chapters.

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