

# Aleksandr Vampilov The Major Plays

Russia possesses one of the richest and most admired literatures of Europe, reaching back to the eleventh century. A History of Russian Literature provides a comprehensive account of Russian writing from its earliest origins in the monastic works of Kiev up to the present day, still rife with the creative experiments of post-Soviet literary life. The volume proceeds chronologically in five parts, extending from Kievan Rus' in the 11th century to the present day. The coverage strikes a balance between extensive overview and in-depth thematic focus. Parts are organized thematically in chapters, which a number of keywords that are important literary concepts that can serve as connecting motifs and 'case studies', in-depth discussions of writers, institutions, and texts that take the reader up close and. Visual material also underscores the interrelation of the word and image at a number of points, particularly significant in the medieval period and twentieth century. The History addresses major continuities and discontinuities in the history of Russian literature across all periods, and in particular bring out trans-historical features that contribute to the notion of a national literature. The volume's time-range has the merit of identifying from the early modern period a vital set of national stereotypes and popular folklore about boundaries, space, Holy Russia, and the charismatic king that offers culturally relevant material to later writers. This volume delivers a fresh view on a series of key questions about Russia's literary history, by providing new mappings of literary history and a narrative that pursues key concepts (rather more than individual authorial careers). This holistic narrative underscores the ways in which context and text are densely

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woven in Russian literature, and demonstrates that the most exciting way to understand the canon and the development of tradition is through a discussion of the interrelation of major and minor figures, historical events and literary politics, literary theory and literary innovation.

YoU, Mukhina's most recent work, is a love poem to her hometown of Moscow as well as a scathing attack on the apathy of people blindly wrapped up in their own happiness and sorrows. The process of lovers, friends and relatives coming together and moving apart takes place as an unidentified and unseen war rages around them.

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Most of the essays collected in this volume deal with theoretical issues that dominate the international debate on Postmodernism, issues such as the shifting nature of the concept, the problem of periodization and the problem of historicity. Other essays offer readings of Postmodernist texts and relate practical criticism to a theoretical framework. Hans Bertens (Utrecht) sketches the historical development of the concept Postmodernism in American criticism, distinguishing between the various definitions that have been proposed over the last twenty-five years, in an attempt to bring some order to the field and to facilitate future discussion. Brian McHale (Tel Aviv) and Douwe Fokkema (Utrecht) offer models for the description of Postmodernist texts. Richard Todd (Amsterdam) argues convincingly that Postmodernism is much more of a presence in contemporary British fiction than has so far been assumed, and Herta Schmid (Munich) presents a similar argument with respect to Russian avant-garde theater. Elrud Ibsch (Amsterdam) presents a contrastive analysis of Thomas Bernhard and Robert Musil; Ulla Musarra (Nijmegen) writes on Italo Calvino. The relation between Existentialism and Postmodernism is examined by

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Gerhard Hoffman (Wurzburg); Theo D'haen (Utrecht) finds important parallels between Postmodernism in literature and in the visual arts; Matei Calinescu (Bloomington, Ind.) relates literary Postmodernism to a far more general cultural shift, rejecting, however, Foucault's notion of an epistemic break and arguing for both continuity and discontinuity. Finally, Helmut Lethen (Utrecht) and Susan Suleiman (Harvard) sharply question the concept of Postmodernism. Suleiman argues that the supposed Postmodernist reaction against Modernism may well be a critical myth or, if it isn't, a reaction limited to the American literary situation.

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This work sets out the broad guidelines for effective strategic planning. It investigates key features necessary for success and provides suggestions for the development of a strategic plan that is relevant for the individual school.

While critics have been quick to draw parallels between Vampilov and antecedents, including Anton Chekhov and Nikolai Gogol, his plays reflect most clearly his own personal vision of the drab and hypocritical world of the post-Stalin years. Free of the stock characters of Socialist Realism, Vampilov depicts the inhabitants of nameless provincial towns as they struggle to endow their lives with meaning. At the same time, Vampilov spares us that special 'Russianness' that makes the typical Soviet play inaccessible to outsiders. While the Russian situation is ever present, it never intrudes in such a way as to make the work interesting only because of its social or political revelations. In fact, it is the universality of his themes that have made his plays so appealing to foreign audiences. Aleksandr Vampilov: The Major Plays includes the following works in translation: Farewell in June, The Elder Son, Duck Hunting, Provincial Anecdotes: An Incident with a Paginator and Twenty Minutes with an Angel, and Last Summer in Chulimsk.

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This is a collection of John Freedman's reviews and articles, most originally written for the Moscow Times, in which he focuses his expert critical eye on the directors, writers and actors who held centre stage during the 1996-97 theatre season in Moscow. The book looks at the debut of promising new artists and directors at the Moscow Art Theatre celebrating its 100th anniversary this year and offers a wealth of insight into the latest developments in Russian theatre. Freedman illuminates all of the season's noteworthy trends and events in clear, informed and unapologetically opinionated reports. More than just an overview of the stars and highlights, Moscow Performances II observes at close range the playhouses and the people who make up the ever-changing face of contemporary Russian theatre today. This volume is generously illustrated with photographs of featured productions and will be a useful reference for students, professors, writers, directors and actors in the fields of Russian studies, theatre studies, theatre history and contemporary culture.

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Covers plays produced in New York, awards, details of productions, prizes, people, and publications, as well as the editors' choices of the ten best plays  
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Profiles the careers of Russian authors, scholars, and critics and discusses the history of the Russian treatment of literary genres such as drama, fiction, and essays

First Published in 1995. *A Meeting About Laughter* is a collection of sketches, interludes and theatrical parodies by Nikolai Erdman, Vladimir Mass and others. Translated from the Russian Theatre Archive by John Freedman, Harvard University. Erdman is best known as the author of *The Warrant* and *The Suicide*, both written for Vsevolod Meyerhold in the 1920s. Also including the transcript of a startling discussion of *The Suicide* at the Vakhtangov Theatre in 1930 and the only surviving fragments of Erdman's third play *The Hypnotist*.

First Published in 1996. Professor Zolotnitsky provides a picture of the life and work of Sergei Radlov - one of the most outstanding interpreters of Shakespeare on the Soviet stage in the 1930s. Sergei Radlov started as one of the left-wing directors among the disciples and companions of Vsevolod Meyerhold in post-revolutionary Russia. He directed Jack London, Ernst Toller, Evgeni Zamyatin and updated Aristophanes. In the latter he did "modern" operas, such as "The Love for Three Oranges" by Sergei Prokofiev and "Der ferne Klang" by Franz Schrecker.

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Russian theatre director, Vsevolod Meyerhold, has been called the Picasso of modern theatre. A ceaseless experimenter with new forms and techniques and the leader of an aesthetic revolution, he left no body of theoretical writings. What takes their place are the reminiscences and confessions made in conversations with pupils and friends, some of which were recorded by Aleksandr Gladkov during his years of close association with Meyerhold. This book aims to capture the essence of Meyerhold's personality and temperament as revealed in the director's own informal comments about his rich, varied experiences. His notes, made at rehearsals, present Meyerhold in action.

Olga Mukhina is one of the most talented, young playwrights in Russia. Born in Moscow in 1970, she has already garnered enviable praise from critics and audiences throughout Russia and Europe since her first play, *Tanya-Tanya*, was performed in 1996. *Tanya-Tanya* is an atmospheric, poetic tale that observes three couples at a suburban Moscow home who dance, drink champagne, kiss, fall in and out of love, and struggle with dignity and humor to keep some semblance of control over their lives. The parallels with Chekhovian drama are undeniable and clearly intended by the author. You, Mukhina's most recent work, is a love poem to her hometown of Moscow as well as a scathing attack on the apathy of people blindly wrapped up in their own happiness and sorrow.

The World Encyclopedia of Contemporary Theatre: Europe covers theatre since World War II in forty-seven European nations, including the nations which re-emerged following the break-up of the former USSR, Czechoslovakia and Yugoslavia. Each national article is divided into twelve sections - History, Structure of the National Theatre Community, Artistic Profile, Music Theatre, Theatre for Young Audiences, Puppet Theatre, Design, Theatre, Space and Architecture, Training, Criticism, Scholarship and Publishing

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and Further Reading - allowing the reader to use the book as a source for both area and subject studies.

Lyric Incarnate examines the plays of Aleksandr Blok, the pre-eminent poet of Russian Symbolism and one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. Blok's plays have received less attention than his poetry in the West, and this book is the first and only English-language monograph devoted to Blok the playwright. In chronological succession, each of Blok's major plays is examined in detail. Special attention is accorded to Blok's relations with the major directors of his time, particularly Meyerhold and Stanislavsky. Blok's role, for instance, in Meyerhold's formulation of the theatre of the grotesque proved to be critical, and his relation to the Moscow Art Theatre just before the October Revolution helped to define the future course of that theatre. Blok's innovative dramatic technique is carefully studied at each stage in his career, from his earliest "lyric dramas", such as *A Puppet Show* and *The Stranger*, to his great tragedy *The Rose and the Cross*.

*Catherine the Great* (1729-1796) wrote over two dozen plays and operettas, but not until this edition has a complete translation of any of them been available to an English-speaking readership. *Oh, These Times* (1772) is a satirical attack on many vices Catherine wished to root out from her society: religious hypocrisy, superstition and slander. The main character, Mrs. Pious, is a superficially religious old woman who resembles Moliere's *Tartuffe*. Catherine again sets her sights on superstition in *The Siberian Shaman* (1786), this time by satirizing shamanism as a deceitful profession which preys on the gullible. This play was part of a group of three plays usually known as Catherine's "anti-masonic" trilogy, written as a warning against the growing influence of the freemasons. In a comprehensive introduction, Lurana Donnels O'Malley relates the plays to Catherine's

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status and philosophy.

The first study in English of Vampilov's writings, this book argues that Vampilov was both an innovator in Soviet Russian drama of his day and a precursor of trends that developed in the 1970s and 1980s. Vampilov's work generated many debates because of the fundamentally subversive nature of its contents and its devices.

This addition to the highly successful Contemporary Cultures series covers the period from period 1953, with the death of Stalin, to the present day. Both 'Russian' and 'Culture' are defined broadly. 'Russian' refers to the Soviet Union until 1991 and the Russian Federation after 1991. Given the diversity of the Federation in its ethnic composition and regional characteristics, questions of national, regional, and ethnic identity are given special attention. There is also coverage of Russian-speaking immigrant communities. 'Culture' embraces all aspects of culture and lifestyle, high and popular, artistic and material: art, fashion, literature, music, cooking, transport, politics and economics, film, crime – all, and much else, are covered, in order to give a full picture of the Russian way of life and experience throughout the extraordinary changes undergone since the middle of the twentieth century. The Encyclopedia of Contemporary Russian Culture is an unbeatable resource on recent and contemporary Russian culture and history for students, teachers and researchers across the disciplines. Apart from academic libraries, the book will also be a valuable acquisition for public libraries. Entries include cross-references and the larger ones carry short bibliographies. There is a full index.

These four Russian comedies were written during the reign of Nicholas I, a period of considerable repression and censorship. They represent the most popular genres of the period. Lensky's *Her First Night* was an immensely popular

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vaudeville which held the stage for years; Kozma Prutkov's Fantasy is a parody of vaudeville which was banned after one night. Turgenev's Luncheon with the Marshal is a comedy of manners about provincial life, and Saltykov-Schedrin's Pazukhin's Death is a satire of greed and corruption so savage that it was forbidden during the author's lifetime. This collection constitutes a remarkable comic spectrum which will assist in enlarging the English language repertoire with a set of newly available and highly stageworthy scripts.

From Russia comes this ironic, satirical, multi-layered, modern pop-art parable by Vassily Aksyonov. Your Murderer is a richly grotesque hodgepodge of different linguistic levels that defies all rules and mixes a powerful cocktail out of traditional slogans, invented obscenities, foreign words and phrases, terminology from sports and heavy drinking, and pure nonsense. Daniel Gerould is Lucille Lortel Distinguished Professor of Theater and Comparative Literature at the City University of New York. He is the Editor of Slavic and East European Performance and of Harwood Academic Publishers's Polish and East European Theater Archive series. Your Murderer comes from Russia and is an ironic, satirical, multi-layered, modern pop-art parable - richly grotesque and on different linguistic levels. that defies all rules, mixing a powerful cocktail out of traditional slogans, invented obscenities, foreign words and phrases, terminology from sports and heavy drinking, and pure nonsense.

Off Nevsky Prospekt is the first study to be published in English of the exceptionally rich and diverse theatre studio movement which has flourished in St Petersburg during the 1980s and '90s. Professor Markova charts the development of the theatre studios - from their beginnings as a reaction to the repressive atmosphere of the Soviet period and through the "theatre bacchanalia" of the Perestroika years. She then surveys today's vibrant scene, with analyses of key

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productions and interviews with many of the central figures, and describes how theatre studios have subverted the conventions of the past to create a new dialogue with the changing society from which their audience is drawn.

In this monumental work, Laurence Senelick and Sergei Ostrovsky offer a panoramic history of Soviet theater from the Bolshevik Revolution to the eventual collapse of the USSR. Making use of more than eighty years' worth of archival documentation, the authors celebrate in words and pictures a vital, living art form that remained innovative and exciting, growing, adapting, and flourishing despite harsh, often illogical pressures inflicted upon its creators by a totalitarian government. It is the first comprehensive analysis of the subject ever to be published in the English language.

Aleksandr Blok's TrilogY of Lyric Dramas gathers together for the first time in English translation the first three plays by Aleksandr Blok, the pre-eminent poet of Russian Symbolism and one of the greatest poets of the twentieth century. The three plays that constitute the trilogy - A Puppet Show, The King on the Square and The Unknown Woman - are pivotal documents in the development of modernist drama. In his productions of A Puppet Show; and The Unknown Woman, Meyerhold first began to work the basic tenets of his approach to grotesque and constructivist theatre. Moreover, A Puppet Show provided the inspiration and much of the foundation for Meyerhold's theoretical writings. As a result, these plays are indispensable to any student of Meyerhold or modernist theatre. The plays are presented in the context of the poetry from which they issued in order to suggest how Blok developed the themes and motifs of the plays in other genres.

The reviews and features collected in John Freedman's Moscow Performances bring to life the diversity, energy, and imagination of Russian theater as few books have done

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before. While focusing on the work of Moscow's leading directors - Pyotr Fomenko, Kama Ginkas, Valery Fokin, Anatoly Vasilyev, Konstantin Raikin, Sergei Zhenovach, Yury Lyubimov, and many others - also included in its review are key productions by many of the renowned guests who bring their art to the Russian capital. Essays on St. Petersburg's Lev Dodin (of the Maly Drama Theatre), Lithuania's Eimuntas Nekrosius, Georgia's Robert Sturua, and Germany's Peter Stein confirm that Moscow's position as a "theatrical mecca" has not diminished since Anatoly Lunacharsky coined the phrase in the 1920s. In addition to recording Freedman's immediate and opinionated responses to Moscow stage developments in the 1990s, *Moscow Performances* contains a wealth of information about the struggles and occasional triumphs of a new generation of talented but as yet unknown playwrights, the successes of the best actors, and the social and financial trends which have had such an impact on Russian theatre in the post-Soviet period.

*New Theatre Quarterly* provides an international forum where theatrical scholarship and practice can meet, and where prevailing dramatic assumptions can be subjected to vigorous critical questioning. Sukhovo-Kobylin's "Trilogy - Krechinshy's Wedding, The Case" and "The Death of Tarelkin" represent the sole literary legacy of their aristocratic author whose involvement in a sensational murder case became one of the great scandals of mid-19th century Russian society. Out of the drama of his own life, Sukhovo-Kobylin fashioned a trilogy of plays remarkable for the acidity of their satire against the tsarist bureaucracy and police. It is not only for their

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pungent satire that the plays have continued to attract attention ever since. They are, above all, splendidly theatrical and encompass not one but several different traditions of theatre from the "well-made play" of Scribe to the absurd comedy of Gogol. "As for sheer stagecraft," writes Price D.S. Mirsky in his "A History of Russian Literature," "they have no rivals in Russian literary drama." Harold B. Segel is Professor of Slavic and Comparative Literature at Columbia University, New York. He is the author of ten books and numer

Whether the writers in this period described the war, the Great Terror, the gulag experience, exile, repression, or simply everyday life in the city or in the country, they generally turned to a "major theme of Russian literature since the Revolution the fate of the individual human being in a mass state." In the literature often the state won, due to its power; at other times individuals triumphed, because of their moral convictions. The same can be said of these writers.

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