

The Herald

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Neil Cooper

Every day's the same for tired commuter in Renato Gabrielli's tense monologue, adapted and performed here by Martin O'Connor on Glasgow's small but perfectly formed underground network. Its six stops to work, another five to his yoga class before a final four for the weary journey home. Every day he sits in the same spot, at the far end of the final carriage, close to the door. Here he keeps his eyes upwards, absorbing the same old inanities of the advertising hoardings opposite or else ticking off every stop on the maps next to them.

The man has been going round in circles like this for years, and is so set in his routine that he could do it in his sleep. Today, however, is different. It's all the fault of a two-year old boy in the next carriage who catches the man's eye, lurching his increasingly dark thoughts into a hyper-reality that blurs the every day with horrors imagined.

Over the 24 minutes it takes the train to do a full loop of every station, what starts off like a tenses, edgier Reginald Perrin, all suburban existential ennui and a life in freefall, enters even more disquieting and uncomfortable terrain.

Neil Doherty's up-close and personal production solicits a claustrophobic ickiness by having the audience of eight pressed up close to O'Connor on the speeding train. Only the microphone which allows him to be heard above the Saturday tea-time hustle and bustle sets him apart. This makes for a hypnotically intense and intimate experience, and when O'Connor finally makes eye contact with his fellow travellers, the conclusion is as much accusation as confessional.