

PRESS REVIEW- EXTRACTS



INTERNAZIONALE – Annalisa Camilli – 04/03/2025

(...) The theater this company stages in an innovative yet now recognizable way is a language of the present time. It effortlessly finds a narrative perspective in reality and in non-professional actors, who are also the true protagonists of the story and who self-narrate with remarkable ability to reveal themselves.

LA STAMPA – Masolino D’Amico – 03/03/2025

(...) The result is a highly engaging evening, also from a spectacular point of view, thanks to the set design, lights, sound, and projections, all executed with sober yet admirable precision. The performance begins with stories of the volunteers brought on stage. They speak in many languages about themselves and about the reasons behind their choices, with the confidence of professional actors and an excellent coordination.

MINIMA&MORALIA – Graziano Graziani – 01/03/2025

(...) If we can define *A Place of Safety* not only as a successful performance but even a memorable one, it is because it manages to materialize the epistemological fracture that Europe, the West, is experiencing in the face of an historic process that has literally shaken its moral compass and, with it, its identity.

(...) With its multilingualism—ranging from English to Portuguese, from Spanish to Italian—*A Place of Safety* is already conceived as a profoundly European production. But what truly makes it so is not just its linguistic breadth; it is above all its dramatic and dramaturgical completeness. With this work, Kepler-452 takes a significant artistic leap, placing their theatrical explorations of reality within the tradition of great continental dramaturgy—from Milo Rau to Rimini Protokoll—while refining the company’s stylistic signature. They demonstrate their ability to construct a production of great scope—thanks also to the set design by Alberto Favretto, the sound design by Massimo Carozzi, and the movement direction by Marta Ciappina—capable of filling the stage of Arena del Sole Theatre in Bologna, where the work premiered, and holding the audience’s attention for two hours, only to release the emotional tension at the very end with a long, thunderous standing ovation.

TEATRO E CRITICA – Silva Maiuri – 05/03/2025

(...) The first effect that *A Place of Safety* has on the audience is a sense of disorientation. The clarity with which the facts are presented from the very beginning makes us realize how little we actually know about this widely debated issue in our country: “*The Mediterranean is a grave*” is not just a striking phrase to introduce the topic of illegal immigration—it is the reality of the situation. The greatest strength of this work, which fits perfectly within the realm of *documentary theater*, is the almost total absence of pathos. The narrative does not rely on the emotional element of Western bourgeois guilt, which the company, based in Emilia Romagna, has sometimes accustomed us to when addressing contemporary issues. For the first time, the intent to document and convey the unwritten stories of our present prevails, making this a truly accomplished production.

(...) Everyone carries a personal history with them, shaped over the years, and approaches the mission in their own way. Most importantly, each person speaks their own language—the language of their origins—as well as the English they all share. The entire performance is subtitled in English, with the aim of reaching an international audience.

(...) But the interest is political, and so the choice to use such a demanding set design (in terms of distribution) could also be a political choice: how many people is this performance meant for? How many countries? It should tour national theaters, of course, but it definitely aims at Europe. The ambition behind these choices is, for us, evident and challenges especially our way of talking to each other and talking to you about theater, because it goes beyond the limits of the theater hall and surpasses all our ideas.

(...) The enthusiasm of the audience here is of a different kind because, if at the end of the performance the flags of *Mediterranea Saving Humans* fall from the balconies of the theatre and even the gallery overflows with people in ovation, if the hall is always sold out, suggesting that more space could have been given to this show during the season, if word-of-mouth across different generations works better than traditional advertising, it probably means that this operation was needed. And that all our doubts are overshadowed by its political value. Ultimately, this performance challenges us, but crisis is part of our profession. It is the ideal historical moment for the cultural mediation we stubbornly try to carry forward to take on new forms.

FAMIGLIA CRISTIANA – Antonio Sanfrancesco – 09/03/2025

(...) The performance does not take shortcuts or offer improvised answers; it tells the complexity of the phenomenon, the human conglomerate involved in the missions, where women are the majority. It reminds us, without rhetoric, that every human life is sacred and saving it is an act of loving humanity. Apologies if that's not enough.

HUFFPOST.IT – Mario De Santis – 04/03/2025

(...) They are all outstanding interpreters of their own stories, their own doubts and struggles, existential crises, stress, and contradictions, which are the other, thorny side of a virtuous activity. Borghesi weaves this with his own narrative as both witness and director grappling with a new reality, putting himself on the line.

(...) What emerges is a choral narrative, fluid in its scene composition and movements choreographed by Marta Ciappina, and enveloped in the sound design by Massimo Carozzi—a sort of powerful civil oratorio, yet avoiding the risk of rhetoric. Borghesi and Baraldi, by writing the text with everyone's words, confront and deconstruct this risk, allowing contradictions to surface as well.

(...) The words we have are no longer enough. It is precisely by showing the fragile side of Good that *A Place of Safety* becomes a great performance, because it goes beyond the noble gesture of an arm lifting a body. It becomes a powerful fresco on the rifts, the internal crises within a vision of progress that is perhaps currently suspended, on this border between the rightful principle of welcome and rescue, yet almost trapped within it, just as we are torn between a progressive vision (save them, welcome them) and a right-wing vision (raise the walls).

GLI STATI GENERALI – Walter Porcedda – 05/03/2025

(...) A rather theatrical reportage than a journalistic one – though it borrows its methods and timing from journalism – it is able to transcend the documentary genre by creating something unprecedented on the

theatrical front. By contemporaneously updating the Brechtian method (and it strongly resembles the theater of Milo Rau and, to some extent, that of Brazilian director Christiane Jatahy, Golden Lion at the 2022 Venice Biennale), Kepler 452 parallels information and spectacle, alternating moments of alienation with the more intimate and engaging phases of personal recollection.

It brings together sharp analysis and anger, a chronicle of dramatic events and political denunciation that goes beyond the immediate emergency of migration flows to raise questions about those who wield power in our Europe. (...) *A Place of Safety*, which curiously means "Safe Place," referring to the ports where people disembark after being rescued at sea, is primarily a first-hand testimony with emotional and passionate involvement. But above all, it is a scrupulously analytical and political account of what the issue of immigration represents today.

IL FATTO QUOTIDIANO – Francesco Ferasin – 01/03/2025

(...) A feature film already seen and replayed on TV, in the news, on social media, on the lips of politicians and political figures. Yet, it is almost never felt on the living skin in the way that the company Kepler-452 manages to make us feel.

(...) Borghesi boards the ship as a reporter (for *ilFatto*), takes notes on what happens onboard, lives the life of the rescuers. He emerges as a director of a brilliant, surgical, real, and honest dramaturgy that moves you and makes you want to say "to hell with it" and get on that ship.

(...) *A Place of Safety* is a collection of stories that are impossible to tell, happening in a place both far away and close.

QUANTASCENE! – Roberto Canziani – 05/03/2025

(...) Those five weeks of experience became the title *A Place of Safety* and a theatrical performance. A very powerful one.

(...) If I write "non-professional actors," I am being foolish. (...) They are the highest degree of professionalism. Professionals of life. Here, on stage, they bring it to life with all their sea experience, gained in hundreds of rescues. They disprove the very word "theater." This is, rather, a document they present to the audience, with their bodies and voices. A three-dimensional document. Chilling, tragic, moving.

DRAMAHOLIC – Paolo Martini – 05/03/2025

(...) In fact, the rescue is over for Kepler-452 as well, and there were no police waiting for them at the port like when they disembarked from SeaWatch5, but only a few thousand spectators who, during the first four sold-out performances in the main hall of Arena del Sole in Bologna, followed the nearly two-hour performance with palpable and sincere emotion, anger and compassion, before erupting into long standing ovations.



(...) *A Place of Safety* indeed seemed so deeply embedded in its writing and dramaturgy, without easy concessions to sentimentality or ideology, much like the great sea novels of the late 19th century.

(...) The choice of the meta-theatrical theme, of how a company approaches the world of sea rescues to tell it in a performance, and the skill with which the dramatic crescendo is constructed, initially woven with irony and disenchantment, only highlights the truth of the characters chosen and brought to the stage. These characters are so well matched and calibrated: five "actors" who are genuine and natural, not performing but confessing their own contradictions, both small and large.

(...) Moreover, the entire choice of images filmed and collected by Enrico Baraldi is absolutely perfect, anti-rhetorical, unpredictable, and powerful.

JULIET ART MAGAZINE – Emanuela Zanon – 03/03/2025

(...) The protagonists are very effective stage presences; one can sense their extra-theatrical attitude to coordinate, to make themselves heard and to act with determination. They have proud faces and are able to lock eyes with the audience, seeing an invisible horizon in the darkness of the auditorium, with an intensity and concentration that few professional actors can maintain. (...) A sharp discourse because it is objective, compelling, and impartial.

(...) And it is precisely this emotional neutrality that is the greatest strength of the performance, which has managed to bring to the stage one of the greatest collective tragedies of all time through an almost clinical analysis of every detail (...) carefully avoiding both epic storytelling and empathetic solicitation.

DOPPIOZERO – Alessandro Iachino – 03/03/2025

(...) Kepler-452's theatre is not a theater of boundary crossings, of cultural or disciplinary raids, but rather a theater that chooses to stay, to inhabit the border as if it were simultaneously the last refuge of a disintegrating present and the only possible outpost from which to contemplate the future. It is a theater capable of grazing the center and observing its architectures and constructs (class conflicts, small and large collective hypocrisies, cultural stereotypes claimed by both the left and the right), as well as contemplating the elsewhere, the repressed and the forgotten—everything we push to the extreme margins of maps and consciousness.

(...) The joint result is a work with a broad scenic scope – the beautiful set design is by Alberto Favretto, while the lighting design is by Maria Domènech – and with rigorous, minimalist directorial solutions.

(...) Kepler-452's creation is thus inscribed within the path traced by Davide Enia with his *L'abisso* (...) but above all, it seems to take inspiration from the great European theater, foremost among them Tiago Rodrigues' *Dans la mesure de l'impossible*. (...) As in the work of the Portuguese director, the scenic multilingualism returns to each individual their mother tongue, the language of the heart, especially in the moments of deeper immersion in memories.

