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Kepler-452

# A PLACE OF SAFETY

*A Journey into  
the Central Mediterranean*

## PRESS REVIEW - EXTRACTS

**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 [...] 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.



**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 *il Fatto*), 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.

**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.

**DOPPIOZERO – Alessandro Iachino – 03/03/2025**

[...] Kepler-452's theatre is [...] 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. [...] Kepler-452's creation (...) 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.

**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.

**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, [...] 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).

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

[...] The greatest strength of this work, which fits perfectly within the realm of documentary theater, is the almost total absence of pathos. [...] For the first time, the intent to document and convey the unwritten stories of our present prevails, making this a truly accomplished production. [...] 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 enthusiasm of the audience here is of a different kind because, if at the end of the performance the flags of the NGO Mediterranean 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.

**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.

**DRAMAOLIC – 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 Sea-Watch 5, 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.

**QUANDESCENE! - Roberto Canziani - 05/03/2025**

[...] A theatre show. Extremely powerful. [...] To write "non-professional actors" would be nonsense. A sailor (with his Navy stars set aside), a nurse (who has left the hospital wards behind), a mission leader (who often questions the meaning of his mission), a handyman electrician (also a clown on board, for children, there on the ship), a legal advisor (who teaches Migrant Law at the Bicocca University in Milan), are the highest degree of professionalism. Professionals of life. Here, on stage, they bring it back with all their experience of the sea, acquired in hundreds of rescues. Contradicting the very word "theatre". Rather, what they present to the audience with their bodies and their voices is a document. A three-dimensional document. [...] when, at the end, to close Kepler-452's work, Battiato's *E ti vengo a cercare* arrives at the Arena del Sole in Bologna, the emotion, empathy, tears and long applause seem, for a moment, to erase the existence of all the Salvini, Orbani and Trump supporters of this unrecognisable Europe. But only for a moment. The duration of a song.

**LA REPUBBLICA - Anna Bandettini - 04/09/2025**

[...] There is something heroic about it, yes: in saving lives, of course, but also in accepting defeat without falling, in front of those who are swallowed up by the sea anyway. And this is also why *A Place of Safety* is received everywhere with great emotion.

**LIMINATEATRI - Laura Novelli - 07/10/2025**

[...] Usually, the narration of a theatrical event starts from the beginning. This time, however, we start from the end. From the applause. From the strong shared emotion that ran through it and the sincere feeling of civic belonging that sustained it for several long minutes. We start from the end because, in this case, the audience's reaction tells us not so much and not only of an aesthetic approval of the show, but of an ethical, ideological adherence. Or perhaps, on closer inspection, simply human.

[...] The humanity we refer to is that which unites us all and which finds its deepest meaning here in the encounter between the artists and some of the humanitarian workers dedicated to rescuing migrants travelling along the Mediterranean routes. And the way to convey this dual perspective – artistic and civil – could only be by looking at reality; indeed, by bringing reality itself to the stage, without filters, without codification, without metaphorical vectors. This is also thanks to the significant presence of Borghesi, who plays the role of a journalist who [...] connects the different professional and human stories of the workers involved, becoming, especially in the finale, a voice that questions and challenges us. In his amphibious position as reporter/witness and theatre practitioner, he ends up representing a sort of tragic chorus in open confrontation with the *polis*. And the *polis* he speaks to is us. Us Europeans. Us inhabitants of the world. Us Italians. It is not enough for this *polis* to be moved by the corpses submerged by the waters. This *polis* is asked to be human.

