

# The Eternal Struggle for the Power in the Dystopic Future of Echoes at InScena!

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After the great success at the Fringe Festival in Edinburgh, Echos lands at the Festival InScena! 2018. Stefano Patti, who is both actor and director of the show, talks about his project, a thriller set in a post-apocalyptic world with directing approach almost cinematographic.

Echoes (a **369gradi** production) is a play written by Lorenzo De Liberato and interpreted by Stefano Patti, who is also the director, and Marco Quaglia. This is the third year of this project's staging in Italy: the show was born out of a productive Residency of the Teatro Studio Uno, supported by Carrozzerie n.o.t. and grown thanks to a crowdfunding campaign that allowed **Echoes to land at the Fringe Festival** of Edinburgh last summer. So, the show will be in London and Limerick in 2018. In a near dystopic future, the Earth is divided in big governmental districts. Democracy as we know it doesn't exist. Humanity as we know it doesn't exist. A bomb was dropped on an agglomeration and millions of people died. A journalist, De Bois, interviews the person responsible for the carnage, a mysterious man named Ecoh. A bunker, an economic crisis, an interview, a genocide.

How was the project born?

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In 2013, Lorenzo De Liberato, author of the play, gave me a first draft of Echoes to read; he wrote it in two nights. I fell in love with it right away. Those are the premises: a bunker, two men, an interview. But then the script remained in a drawer for about two years. When the Teatro Studio Uno has announced an opening for a Productive Residency by their location, I thought that was the best opportunity to start working on the script and finally bring it to the stage. For Echo's antagonist I chose Marco Quaglia, who was busy at the Franco Parenti Theater in Milan at the time. After he read the script, he accepted right away. Thanks to the support of the theater and in particular of the directors Alessandro Di Somma and Eleonora Turco, in 2015 Echoes saw the light as a study. The following year we picked up the script again thanks to a crowdfunding campaign and presented it at the Carrozzerie n.o.t. In 2017, we decided to translate the text and debut at the Argot Theater, achieving more and more success. Now that show, that came from nothing, took flight and is now curated by the 369gradi production (whose general director is Valeria Oriani). A great synergy was born between us.

What are the strong points of the show? Why should people go watch it?

The thing that fascinated me the most in the script was the simplicity of the political analysis. The entire story develops around a table and Politics, Economy, Power are eviscerated on stage. I wanted to make this structural simplicity a strong point of the project and this was possible thanks to the strong and impeccable drama and my stage partner Marco Quaglia who proposes an interesting interpretation of a modern villain. The directing set up is very close to the one used in movies in which each word, suspension/pause, each muscular focus has its own concrete relevance.



Stefano Patti in Echoes – Photo by Paolo Palmieri.

What does it mean to you to perform in New York?

It mean a little dream coming true, it means taking a step forward, it mean the beginning of a new path. The show was born in a theatrical basement and ever since that November 2015 we have come a long way. It's incredible to think that Echoes, my first work as a director, was presented at the Fringe Theater and it is now ready for its first international tour. It made me realize how passion, structure, planning, dedication, investments, and a

great team are fundamental elements for a project's success. At the Fringe Theater in Edinburgh, we found out the power of Echoes in its English version (despite its Italian origin) and we thought that bringing it to New York, and in particular to the InScena!2018 Festival, was the right thing to do for the show. We live in a very delicate period from a political perspective; the **threats of a nuclear attack** are more and more frequent between the countries. How will the American public react to a show with a post-apocalyptic scenario?

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How did you approach the two characters of the play?

I have to admit that it wasn't easy, because I have a double role in this project: director and actor. The play is based on only two characters, on their dialogues, so conducting a deep analysis was necessary. My approach was to give equal respect to both the characters: on one hand, there is a journalist and on the other one an executioner of a carnage that killed more than a million people. How can you not judge them? The hard part was to keep the "judging" away from mine and Marco's work, so that we could give dignity to these two worlds who face each other dialectically. Along with the audience, we ask ourselves a series of questions and the audience itself will have the responsibility to take a position, to find the answer...or not.

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What's the message of this play?

This is a question I would like to ask the audience after the show. As the director and actor, my main intent is to respect the will of the show (and therefore of the author) to present the two opposites but complementary factions, that are necessary to the other. The message of the play is a question itself: what is good and what is evil? Is it really either black or white? How much can we (and must we) sacrifice of ourselves for the greater good? The text is full of pauses and suspensions, of bubbles, of voids in which we the actors and the audience are called to get lost in and fill. How lost are we willing to get? Echoes cannot have a final "period," an end, because it's a parenthesis in our history, an eternal struggle of men who desperately try to give a sense to their existence on Earth.

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How was your experience at the Edinburgh Fringe Festival?

It was incredible. It was one of those experiences that I will always remember, and I suggest to all the companies. Work has started almost eight months before our departure. We found an organizer who helped us finding the right venue to stage the show: there are hundreds of venues and without a guide it can be a disaster. The Edinburgh Fringe Festival is one of the most important theater festivals in the world and every year more and more companies participate; seeing artists mingle in the streets with the audience is an ineffable sensation. We decided to be on stage for the entire festival, with no breaks (for a total of 25 staging), so that we could invite as many people as possible to the theater and generate a word-of-mouth effect, which is essential at the Fringe Festival. The result was great: a good amount of people attended the show, we had two great reviews, a gig in Ireland at the Belltable Theater (where Marco Quaglia and I hosted a workshop as well) and one in London at the Tristan Bates. The Fringe Festival is a big display and, with the right kind of work and investment, it can give you great opportunities.

**Echoes will be on stage at the Cherry Lane Theatre in Manhattan on May 8th at 7p.m.**

and at Casa Italiana Zerilli- Marimò on May 11th a 6p.m.

For more information: [InScena!](#)

[Trailer Echoes \[ita\]](#) from [Stefano Patti](#) on [Vimeo](#).

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Translated by Giulia Casati