

The Choice: a Look at Human Nature

N. L. (August 31, 2011)



Trapped in an open house at the end of the world, a young man must decide who lives or dies among a group of eight strangers confronting the apocalypse. He has to choose. The Choice, a play written by Riccardo Costa, is a drama tinged with humor that addresses division based on religion, class, gender or politics and proves how much we are all the same, especially in front of death.

If there were an atomic attack and you had the chance to save yourself and only two other strangers who would you save? How would you decide who to save and spend the rest of your life with? Time is running out and you need to decide within an hour... after all life, or what is left of it, is a series of choices.



The Choice, a full-length dramatic play written by Riccardo Costa and directed by Andre Hereford, premiered on April 28, 2010, at [Theater for the New City](#) [2] in New York, as part of the 2010 Downtown Urban Theater Festival, where it was awarded Best Play - Full-length (Honorable Mention). It has been playing at the same Theater as part of the Dream Up Festival, the theater's summer showcase, a lineup of wide-ranging and original theatrical visions embracing drama, poetry, music, and dance. The last chance to see the play is this Saturday, September 3, at 9.30 pm. The run was unexpectedly extended as the play has been so successful with the audience.

Trapped in an open house at the end of the world, a young man, Tom, played by Gregory Wool, is forced to play God. The basement contains a fallout shelter with a three person capacity. Being that he is the homeowner, it's a given that one of the spaces belongs to him but he must decide who lives or dies among a group of eight strangers who have come to hopefully buy the house.

Will, played by Josh Breckenridge, is a doctor who saves lives, Charles, played by Ron Dizon, is a guru who never has experienced love, Donna, played by Nedra Gallegos, is an Italian-American engineer who cannot have children, Andrew, played by John J. Higo is a politician who cheats and denigrates immigrants, the Priest, played by Chuck Marti, is an older man with blind faith, Ethan, played by Tym Moss, is a businessman who paints memories, Patricia, played by Melanie Torres, is a prostitute whose dream to be a dancer was shattered, and Tom, the owner of the house, is a loser who has lost all his money gambling.

Each character clings to his or her own vision of the future, but The Choice is universal: what do you live for, and what compromises would you make to keep it? We asked that same question to Riccardo Costa, the creative mind behind the story "People tend to say: I live every day as it was my last one. I tend to say the opposite: I live every day as it is my first one. After all after "last" there's nothing, but after "first" there's plenty. So I see The Choice being a beginning more than an end. Being a terrible situation where the end is the beginning of something new and the only compromise that's required is the truth. If you're truthful with yourself and others what you need to keep is your integrity and communicate that with the people around you."

Riccardo, who is a writer and director from Bologna who, among his credits, has worked with Spike Lee and has founded, with Andre Hereford, the entertainment company, [Blitz Entertainment](#) [3], got the idea for the play as he was reading, a few years back, a research study by Swedish scientists who put five people in a room and told them that a nuclear fallout just happened, only the first one who walked out of the door of the room where they were staying could have survived. "That gave me the inspiration to create a New York scenario for a similar situation, trying to portray the characters that we meet frequently in our city life as well as depicting personalities having their own ethnic, religious, sexual and social preferences," he explains.

"As a writer I see a side of myself in each character," he continues, "I identify myself with the questioning of the protagonist with the world that surrounds him; with the religious dogma I learned from Catholic school; with the spirituality of going beyond oneself of the guru; the pragmatism of the engineer; the need of love after death of the gay doctor; the material aspect of the entrepreneur; the hypocrisy of the senator and the giving up of the prostitute. We're complex human beings we just don't run or live on one thing otherwise we would be one dimensional, but what makes us interesting is the unpredictable aspects we can show in unusual situations."

A dramatic play with shades of abrasive humor The Choice provides thoughtful, provocative insight to human nature and the desperate measures people will go to when looking at death in the face. It raises big questions with a provocative mix of sharp comedy, sincere drama and growing suspense. In the end, it makes a powerful argument for how much we are all the same, especially at a moment when the past ceases to matter, and we stand exposed to the end of everything.

"After this run we plan to take the show to its next stage Off-Broadway hopefully for spring 2012. We've people interested in helping us to do fund raising and promote the show. This is just the beginning," Riccardo concludes.



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