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The Path to *Allegro non troppo*

No canonic animation pipeline or production process could be compared to how *Allegro non troppo* came into being. *Fantasia* itself was an atypical item, in this respect; it was not just a full-length animated feature but an anthology of short animated films interwoven with live-action sequences that used a stylized cinematography, dominated by colored background lights and dark silhouettes. The production started from the short *The Sorcerer's Apprentice* and was later converted and widened in scope, to allow the creation of the other shorts. However, even the productive setting of the animated omnibus film, which can optimize time and costs by splitting the crew into smaller units, each one working in parallel on a different short, does not apply to *Allegro non troppo*. Even though there were indeed separate units (and even separate studios) simultaneously at work on the project, the process was not linear and favored instead free-flowing creativity and trial-and-error approaches. A careful planning was needed anyway, especially to meet one of Bozzetto's main concerns: obtaining a convincing synchronization between screen action and preexisting music. However, during the production the artists had to experiment with new techniques and learn from direct experience, with no preparation for the task. Each subproduction unit advanced at a different speed; the crews had to occasionally disband and regroup to produce animated TV intros or commercials, the main source of income for the Bruno Bozzetto Film; moreover, such crews were not strictly separated, as an artist could contribute to more than one short; Bozzetto directed them all (whereas each *Fantasia* short had a different director). Apparently, *Allegro non troppo* was made in a counterproductive way; Bozzetto's approach seems far away from the ideal mindset behind an efficient animation production, summed up by Hannes Rall as: "to utilize one's creative resources for the optimal communication of content, whether

they be linear/narrative or abstract/experimental in nature.”¹ However, what Bozzetto did was precisely optimal—not necessarily to save time and money but to achieve the best artistic results in respect to the challenging productive setting, the continuity with his usual creative routines, and his own expressive needs, which favor immediacy and fresh improvisation over strict planification. This last point is something he clung to with proud tenacity; in 2019, for example, he lamented the overdetailed preparation of character designs and storyboards that the Studio Bozzetto & Co. had to comply with in the making of a new Mr. Rossi series, while he would have preferred a more instinctual and free attitude.²

The intricate production history of *Allegro non troppo* can be untangled by pointing out the main events and people who influenced the decision-making. First of all, Bozzetto’s creative strategy will be introduced, with an overview of the several ideas that never reached the final film: the episodes of an alternate *Allegro non troppo* that never was. Then, the artistic profiles of the main creatives who contributed to it will be detailed and commented.

The Origin of *Allegro non troppo*

In Bozzetto’s memories,³ the inspiration to make *Allegro non troppo* came to him in the early 1970s while he was about to enjoy a weekend in Bergamo. In that period, he used to visit his hometown once a week, while in the other days he worked in Milan. While he was packing, he was listening to classical music broadcasted by a cable radio network. A performance of Ravel’s *Boléro* caught his attention. The *Boléro* is an atypical symphonic ballet piece (see Part Two); it is based on two unchanging melodies that get repeated nine times each, with no development. At each repetition, the themes are assigned to different instruments and sounds more majestic and richer in orchestral color. Bozzetto already knew the composition, but at that time he was awestruck by the inexorable progression of musical inventiveness and sonic power; in his imagination, the listening experience activated memories of his popular science readings about the evolution of life on Earth. He keenly caught a key detail of Ravel’s musical architecture and merged it with a typical trope of educational narrations about evolution: as the music reaches the eighteenth repetition of the thematic material and prepares the

¹Hannes Rall, *Animation from Concept to Production* (Boca Raton, FL: CRC Press, 2018), 3, ePub.

²Bozzetto in a meeting with the author, Bergamo, July 5, 2019. This is no longer possible today, if the Studio needs to stay competitive in the animation market; Bozzetto now adopts his peculiar strategy only for the short films he creates all on his own, for his YouTube channel.

³Bozzetto during a class for the History of Animation course at the Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Padova, Italy, November 25, 2014.

listener to the conclusive coda, Ravel changes for the first and only time the tonality of the piece. The *Boléro* is obstinately in C major, but for a few bars it turns to E major; the change uplifts the music, with an exhilarating emotional effect. Bozzetto felt a natural parallel between Ravel's short modulation and the twenty-four-hour clock analogy, a visual scheme shaped like a clock analog dial used to visualize all of the history of the Earth as having taken place in just one day. It is basically a pie chart that shows the different geologic eras and their main events as proportional sectors on the dial, as if the 4.55 billion years since the formation of Earth were condensed in a single day starting at 0:00 a.m., with the present moment coinciding with 24:00 p.m.. In this analogy, the most impactful event of all, the advent of human beings, takes place at the very last moment: a few tens of seconds before midnight.⁴ Bozzetto felt like that Ravel's bold shift to E major was just the same: a last-minute twist with a tremendous effect. It provided the perfect conclusion to the evolutionary fantasy he was having, and it left a long-standing impression on him.

The *Boléro* was to become the *Sorcerer's Apprentice* of *Allegro non troppo*: it was the first short film to be conceived, and the one around which the whole project developed. When he started to share with his collaborators the idea he got while listening to the cable radio broadcast, though, Bozzetto was not thinking at all about making a feature film, or even some parody of *Fantasia*. After all, pantomimic animated films synchronized to recordings of orchestral music had already appeared in Italy by then, the ones by Gianini and Luzzati being the most renowned efforts in this field (see the Introduction), and they did not need to make any direct reference to *Fantasia*. Bozzetto just believed to have stumbled upon some good concept for a short film that would have allowed him to pour into it his love for classical music.⁵

The enthusiastic interest Bozzetto had for classical music was another trait he inherited from his father. As a child, he actually disliked the records his father avidly listened to. They were all of instrumental pieces (no operas—those stayed out from Bozzetto's later musical preferences, too), which the future director scornfully addressed as «"music for the dead."⁶ However, he slowly changed his opinion on the supposed boringness of that repertoire, and he developed a habit of listening so many times to the performances he liked that he ended up knowing them by heart, an ability that proved strategic during the making of *Allegro non troppo*.

⁴A commented instance of that diagram can be found in J. William Schopf, *Cradle of Life: The Discovery of Earth's Early Fossils* (Princeton, NJ; Princeton University Press, 1999), 11.

⁵Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019.

⁶“Musica da morti.” Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019.

Bozzetto does not exactly recall when and how the *Boléro*, after it had been positively received by his collaborators and entered an early stage of development, evolved into *Allegro non troppo*. Since the 1968 release of *Vip, My Brother Superman*, Bozzetto had often been invited to consider making a new feature-length picture. However, he stayed true to his attitude of having ideas determine the shape and scope of his film projects, and not vice versa. So, he was determined to develop a new animated feature only when in possess of an idea that called for that effort.

When it became clear that the *Boléro* was going to be part of an omnibus animated film based on classical music, Bozzetto took his first decisions about the production and artistic content of the work. He initially focused on the animated parts, with no concern about the live-action interstitials; in fact, at that stage he was not planning any form of direct reference to *Fantasia*.⁷ He looked up to the Disney model for inspiration, but the film he initially devised did not have to replicate its structure and throw parodistic references at the spectator. The parodical intent slowly came into being during the preproduction, when it felt instrumental to the narrative cohesion of the picture; as such, it was mostly entrusted to the live-action segments, whose content was decided only halfway into the production of the animation.

The earliest step Bozzetto took was the choice of the title and of the musical repertoire. He worked completely on his own and took track of his efforts in the *Allegro non troppo* diaries (see Chapter 2). However, the dates on the diaries show that the production of the animation started when Bozzetto was still going on with his listening and decision-making routines: so, the preproduction and actual production intermingled and were not consequential. For example, a note dated May 22, 1975 says that the completed part were the *Boléro*, the *Faune*, Vivaldi, and Sibelius; the music for the remaining two shorts was still to be chosen among the *Firebird*, an unspecified piece by Rossini (probably the *Guillaume Tell Overture*; see Appendix 1), the *Slavonic Dance*, and the *Overture* from Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Un giorno di regno* (*King for a Day*).

The title page of the second notebook from the *Allegro* diaries documents what seems a brainstorming on the title of the feature. Right in the center, among two preprinted horizontal lines intended to be compiled with the personal information of the notebook owner, stays the final title *Allegro non troppo*, without any kind of special mark or emphasis. All around it, the page is scattered with puns on the music vocabulary. The position of this page at the beginning of the second notebook tells that the title decision happened in the course of the preproduction, and possibly when the production of some of the shorts had already started; the director at that point had already

⁷Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019.

embraced the *Fantasia* reference. In fact, all the considered titles are based on the same wordplay strategy used in the naming of the Disney feature (Italian terms from the musical lexicon that also have a second meaning as a mood description) and most of them add some ironic or diminishing attribute to the word “fantasia.” Such are the titles prevalently grouped in the upper half of the page: “Senza Fantasia” (“Without Fantasia”), “Fantasia Bacata” (“Bug-ridden Fantasia”), “Poca Fantasia” (“Not Much Fantasia”), “Fantasia dei Poveri Diavoli” (“Fantasia of the Poor Devils”), “Fantasia Senza Soldi” (“No-Money Fantasia”), “Piccola Fantasia” (“Little Fantasia”), “Fantasia in La Minore” (“Fantasia in A Minor”), “Fantasia Moderata” (“A Moderate Fantasia”), and “Fantasia Allegra” (“Cheerful Fantasia”). All those titles could also be fit for actual musical pieces: they are variations on “fantasia,” a name that, apart from the blatant reference to the Disney feature, traditionally identifies a kind of musical composition (see Chapter 2). Bozzetto explored further this naming rule by playing around with other typical titles of classical compositions, in the lower half the page: “Follia n. 3 in La Maggiore” (“Follia no. 3 in A Major”; “follia” or “folia” is the denomination of an ancient Portuguese theme often used in the Baroque age for songs, dances, and sets of variations;⁸ in Italian it also means “madness”). There might be there, coincidental or not, a subtle Disney reference: *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was famously known as “Disney’s folly” among film industry insiders. “Capriccio Italiano” (“Italian Caprice”) continues with the wordplays on music titles, and Bozzetto actually wrote it down twice, underlining one of its instances. It might be that this was his early title choice; it was close to the name of a composition by Čajkovskij, the *Capriccio Italien Op. 45* for orchestra. However, it was probably discarded because of being nearly identical to the title of a previous Italian live-action omnibus film, *Capriccio all’italiana* (Mauro Bolognini, Mario Monicelli, Pier Paolo Pasolini, Steno, Pino Zac, Franco Rossi, 1968).

Bozzetto then contemplated original titles with no reference to the formal musical jargon, like “Musicanimata” (written down also in English, “Musicanimation”) and “La Macchina della Musica” (“The Music Machine”). However, the last group of titles recorded in the notebook returns to the musical vocabulary, and in particular to a subset of words referring to dynamics or performance indications;⁹ they tell the musician how to play the piece. Bozzetto singled out one of them on the opposite

⁸Giuseppe Gerbino and Alexander Silbiger, “Folia,” in the *New Grove Dictionary of Music and Musicians*, Grove Online, <https://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/grovemusic/view/10.1093/gmo/9781561592630.001.0001/omo-9781561592630-e-0000009929#0000009929.3> (accessed September 21, 2019).

⁹A few composers, though, have used such indications as titles, too; see Chopin’s *Allegro de concert*, Op. 46, or Bartók’s *Allegro barbaro*, BB 63, SZ 49.

page, all in upper-case letters, “FORTISSIMO.” On the title page there is one more attempt of this kind (“Allegro spiritoso,” “Humorous Allegro”), and then the conclusive *Allegro non troppo*, which in Italian means “Cheerful, not too much.” Most of the titles seem to respond to two alternate communicative urges: signaling that the film was to be a “minor” or derivative version of *Fantasia* and revealing that its mood was going to be boldly vivacious, although occasionally tinged by introspective tones.

Structuring *Allegro non troppo*: Repertoire Scouting and Discarded Ideas

Bozzetto’s preparation to the film production mostly consisted in a tireless listening routine. He went through his massive collection of records (mostly Deutsche Grammophon ones) multiple times, in search of compositions that inspired him a definite storyline, and that as such responded to the primacy he intended to give to narration in the film (see Chapter 2). His notes in the diaries present two kinds of picks from the records: those he merely considered interesting, whose titles were just written down (with rare short comments hinting to keywords or story ideas), and the ones he deemed worthy of the elaboration of a one-page plot outline.

The repertoire selected by Bozzetto has been collated from the several lists of the diaries and reproduced here in Appendix 1. When available, short story ideas or keywords by Bozzetto have been included. Some of the listed pieces ended up in the film; some others were elaborated into one-page plots but were ultimately discarded. There are also cases of alternate and abandoned plots for the final film pieces.

The list testifies a deep and eclectic knowledge of the symphonic repertoire, far beyond that of an average amateur. While it comprises several items that would qualify as staples of worldwide easy-listening habits, like the first movement of Beethoven’s “Moonlight” *Sonata*, *In the Hall of the Mountain King* by Edvard Grieg or Jacques Offenbach’s *Barcarole*, there are many others that probe less popular recesses of the production of famous composers, such as the *Benedictus* *sit Deus* K. 117 by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart and *Jeu de cartes* by Stravinsky, or that are even by composers whose names are still virtually unknown to mass culture, like Aleksandr Mosolov or Darius Milhaud. The rationale behind the choices, anyway, had never been educational; Bozzetto just took note of what stimulated his own narrative imagination the most. He did not even restrict himself to the so-called “classical” or “high” repertoire: the list in fact features also the names of Jimi Hendrix and Tijuana Brasses. Those forays outside the “classical” precinct would have strayed *Allegro* even farther from *Fantasia*; Bozzetto considered them for the finale of the film, which he envisioned as

endowed with some “extremely modern”¹⁰ music, as he repeatedly wrote in the diaries and confirmed in conversation with the author.¹¹ Bozzetto remembers that his first preference in this respect went to some daringly dissonant electronic song by a rock or pop German band; he was awestruck by the aural chaos that it stirred, and so he contacted the group to ask for permission to use it. It was denied,¹² reportedly because they suspected that the use of their song in an animated feature would have been incongruent with their band identity.¹³ Bozzetto was not expecting that, considered that he had already plotted the storyline of the Biblical snake that eats Adam and Eve’s apple and gets overwhelmed by the worst sides of human progress. The *Allegro* diaries sometimes label that story idea as “hell.”¹⁴ The “hell” tag appears also near a mention of *Kontakte* by Karlheinz Stockhausen and of an unspecified piece for two pianists by Sylvano Bussotti, which is likely to be *Tableaux vivants (avant La Passion selon Sade)*. So, it seems that before adapting the storyline to two movements from *The Firebird*, Bozzetto’s search for the “modernism” he desired had a very wide range. As for the band Bozzetto initially wanted to involve, it remains uncertain; he could only recall that the album that contained the song had a completely black cover and that the musician dressed in black too. When showed some examples of rock groups that could fit his description, Bozzetto said that the closest match would be the Faust band, a krautrock ensemble (a kind of electronic art-rock) that in 1972 released an album with an all-black cover, titled *So Far*. The song Bozzetto wanted to use had the same title of the LP.¹⁵ In the diaries, there are two instances of the name Faust (not referring to the homonymous opera by Charles Gounod, mentioned by Bozzetto in other pages) that could confirm this identification; one is next to Bozzetto’s commentary of *Night on Bald Mountain* from *Fantasia*, which had a plain connection with the “infernal” undertones sought by the director (see Chapter 2); the other one is just above the redacted name of Stockhausen’s *Kontakte*, suggesting that there Bozzetto was indeed thinking about the aggressive hypermodern soundscape he desired for the end of the film.

¹⁰“Modernissima.”

¹¹Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019.

¹²Other cases of permission denial (from the heirs of the composers) occurred to Bozzetto in respect to *Till Eulenspiegel’s Merry Pranks*, *Op. 28*, by Richard Strauss and the first movement from Gustav Mahler’s *Symphony No. 3 in D minor*. Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019. The denials were usually justified with the suspect that the music was going to be mocked in the film (Chiara Cereda, “La nascita di un capolavoro,” in *Allegro non troppo. Un Tesoro dell’arte italiana*, ed. Chiara Cereda, Shirin Chehayed, Priscilla Mancini, and Andrijana Ružić (Milano: Agema, 2016), 17.

¹³Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019.

¹⁴“Inferno.”

¹⁵Personal communication to the author via email, September 18, 2019.

Even though Bozzetto holds that the second piece he picked after the *Boléro* was the *Slavonic Dance* Op. 46 No. 7 by Dvořák,¹⁶ it is evident from the diaries that its animated short was among the last ones to be produced, together with *The Firebird*. It was not even developed into a one-page plot, unlike other pieces of the final program; the only one that was similarly neglected was Vivaldi's *Concerto*. However, the concept for the *Slavonic Dance* story is present as a short annotation (see Appendix 1); and, in general, the final film fluidly borrowed ideas from the one-page plots, even reallocating other music stories originally conceived for different pieces. The plots have been here translated and collected in Appendix 2.

For example, the theme of degenerated military power in the hand of ill-fit commanders, akin to the story of the *Slavonic Dance* little man who takes advantage of the crowd that mindlessly imitates him, recurred in the plot sketches for Johannes Brahms's *Hungarian Dance* No. 1, for *Uranus*, from *The Planets* by Gustav Holst, and for the *King for a Day* overture by Giuseppe Verdi. This theme overlaps with that of vanity, to which two more plots, inspired by Grieg's *In the Hall of the Mountain King* and Weber's *Invitation to the Dance*, are dedicated. In the story on Grieg's piece, the image of the ugly larvae that inflate, become as beautiful as kings, and then explode might have influenced the story arc of the gigantic and bug-like alien queen known as Her Fertility, from the 2018 graphic novel *The Mystery of the Come-and-Go*. The sad vanity of the old satyr in the *Faune* is not featured in the diaries, though, since the *Faune* plot sketch just talks of him as someone who leaves behind a ugly wife to have a stroll in the woods with his flute. This early iteration of the character connects instead with another theme that recurs in the one-page plots, and that would have become one of the major narrative cores of *Allegro* (see Chapter 2): the search for freedom. The musical repertoire that made Bozzetto think about it included Ravel's *Daphnis et Chloé*, Antonio Vivaldi's *Gloria*, and the *Dance of the Comedians*, from Smetana's opera *The Bartered Bride*. The latter was supposed to be a satiric ballet about the relationship between office workers and their chief; in a note (see Appendix 1), Bozzetto pondered the use of a multitude of Mr. Rossi. The image of the exploited crowd might be, once again, a prefiguration of the *Slavonic Dance*. On the other hand, there is no doubt that the ecological narrative that threads together several *Allegro* shorts was repeatedly anticipated in the diaries, and in particular by the plot idea for the first movement of the *Symphony No. 3 in D minor* by Gustav Mahler, which imagined a lethal monster made of wasted cars forming on its own from polluted water. Such monster alone ended up in the finished film, and precisely in the *Firebird* episode: it rises like a cobra ready to spit its poison. The concept of spontaneous generation of life from waste might

¹⁶Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019.

have inspired also the polymorphic offspring of a Coca-Cola drop at the beginning of the *Boléro*, though. Moreover, the idea is surprisingly featured in a comic written and storyboarded by one of Bozzetto's favorite Disney artists, Carl Barks (see the Introduction): *Be Leery of Lake Eerie*. It was unlikely that Bozzetto could know it was by Barks, as the art was by Kay Wright and, at the time, there were no credits in the Italian editions of Disney comics; nonetheless, he could have read the story, as it was published in the issue 931 of the magazine *Topolino*,¹⁷ in September 1973. This might be just a curious coincidence, anyway, as the director has no memory of having read that comic.¹⁸ Another horrific by-product of human progress appears in the story on *Daphnis et Chloé*, as a sentient monster city; this image was going to be echoed by the city violently springing from the ground in the *Boléro* ending. Catastrophes are in fact another recurring motif of the one-page plots, which in at least four cases foresee the annihilation of the entire Earth by means of an implosion into a dark void: the already-mentioned *Hungarian Dance No. 1*, but also the *Guillaume Tell* overture by Gioachino Rossini, Mahler's *Symphony No. 3*, and the *Hungarian Rhapsody No. 2 in C-sharp minor* by Franz Liszt. Bozzetto wanted the *Rhapsody* by Liszt, a staple of classic cartoon music, in its piano and orchestra version; however, such version does not exist, but it is precisely a consequence of the cartoon heritage of the *Rhapsody*. A piano and orchestra (partial) arrangement by Scott Bradley was in fact featured in one of the most famous shorts that used the piece, *The Cat Concerto* (William Hanna, Joseph Barbera, 1947); it is likely that Bozzetto unconsciously held it as a legitimate alternate score by Liszt. Anyway, his prospected *Rhapsody* had a totally different storyline, featuring a chase between a witch and a hunchback; while the latter was probably foreshadowing Franceschini from the *Allegro* finale, the subtheme of malicious masculine lust inserted here was reshaped into the inane sex obsession of the satyr in the *Faune*. The plot for the *Pizzicato Polka*, from Léo Delibes's *Sylvia*, stroke a similar chord, with a girl-pinching pervert (*pizzicato* means "pinched," in Italian) who could have ended up played by Mr. Rossi, as Bozzetto wrote in his notes—so, by a character whose design is not far from that of the *Allegro* satyr.

The one-page plots deal also with consumerism and advertising, as in the *Danse des petits cygnes* from Čajkovskij's *The Swan Lake*. Advertisements,

¹⁷*Topolino* is one of the longest-running and most famous weekly comic magazines in Italy. Its name is Italian for Mickey Mouse; it publishes Disney comics, almost exclusively written and drawn by Italian authors. Over the years, it has become a major part of the Italian popular culture. The weekly demand for new comics favored the consolidation of a renowned Italian school of Disney comics; at a global scale, about half of such comics come from Italy. *Topolino* had its first run as a newspaper-sized magazine, from 1932 to 1949; in 1949, it became digest-sized and restarted from number one. It is now published by Panini Comics.

¹⁸Personal email to the author, December 12, 2019.

in *Allegro*, appear as live-action inserts in the *Firebird*; they try to lure the snake toward them, just like a TV does to a chicken in the *Danse des petits cygnes* plot. The *Firebird* has however its own preliminary plot, not far from the one in the film (just like the *Boléro*); it is attributed to Stockhausen's *Kontakte*, though, as explained before. The visual theme of Adam and Eve's apple was also explored by Bozzetto in the story for *Guillaume Tell*.

The only moment for melancholia in the whole collection of preproduction notes is the *Valse triste*, just like in *Allegro*; during this stage the cat was not in the story yet, though, as the main role was given to an old man who sees his whole life again. Anyway, a lyrical kind of mood was also established in the bird-like flight toward freedom of the characters imagined for *Daphnis et Chloé*, as well as in a Christmas-time story variant for the *Dance of the Comedians*.

As in the case of the live-action sequences, the final decisions on the program of *Allegro non troppo* came well into the production. In the diaries, on June 20, 1974, Bozzetto marked as "done"¹⁹ the *Boléro*, the *Faune*, the *Valse triste*, and the "hell" (the *Firebird*, presumably); he listed two more shorts as still missing, the *Slavonic Dance* and Smetana (a likely reference to the *Dance of the Comedians*). On May 22, 1975, however, Bozzetto tagged as "approved"²⁰ the *Boléro*, the *Faune*, *Vivaldi*, and the *Valse triste*, while a "not sure"²¹ list mentioned Rossini (possibly the *Guillaume Tell* overture), the *Slavonic Dance*, the "Finales" conclusive sequence, and even the *Firebird*; it is thus unclear whether that last short was completed in 1974 or 1975. In any case, from those lists it seems that Bozzetto initially intended to use the *Boléro* as an opening piece; he later decided that having the *Faune* come first was more effective.²² With its calm pace and suffused atmosphere, the *Faune* made a good contrast with the hectic live-action debut of the feature. It also enhanced the impact of the *Boléro* in the middle of the film, by instating a crescendo of visual engagement. The spectator gets to that lavishly animated march of metamorphic creatures through simpler approaches to animation: a subdued and lyrical one in the *Faune* and an abstract and frenetic one in the *Slavonic Dance*.

During the making of *Allegro*, Bozzetto remained the sole responsible of the musical choices and of their narrative elaboration. He firmly pursued his vision; for example, he rejected a suggestion that came up at his studio about inserting dialogues and sound effects in the animated shorts, in order to make them more appealing to a general audience.²³ No music consultant

¹⁹"Fatti."

²⁰"Approvati."

²¹"In dubbio."

²²Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019.

²³Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019. Bozzetto cannot remember who made this suggestion.

was ever hired; a major music professional almost joined the production during the planning of the live-action interstitials, though: Claudio Abbado (1933–2014). Bozzetto considered to assign him the role of the orchestra conductor and had some early agreement with him, in this respect;²⁴ the idea was later abandoned, when that role became a parodistic one (see below).

Screenplay and Storyboard

Bozzetto started to share his film project and to involve more people in the creative process when he entered the screenplay and storyboard stages. Just like the previous preproduction activities, both those phases were neither clearly separated nor strictly consequential; the whole preproduction process was fluid, driven by a friendly and open dialogue between the director and the other artists; while keeping his authority and reserving for himself the right to have final word on any production issue, he remained very open to suggestions, changes, and second thoughts. Bozzetto's crew reportedly worked in an enjoyable and amusing context.²⁵

The screenplay was written by Bozzetto with the animator Guido Manuli and the actor and assistant director Maurizio Nichetti. While Manuli had joined Bozzetto's studio almost since its establishment (see Chapter 1), Nichetti was a fairly fresh addition to the team, who contributed in reviving Bozzetto's interest in live-action during the 1970s (see Chapter 1). The collaboration of the three was positive and very productive; Bozzetto only remembers a few details about the work on the screenplay, and mostly that he had to continuously restrain Manuli from inserting continuous surreal gags,²⁶ especially in respect to the shorts where comedy would have been out of place, like the *Boléro* and the *Valse triste*.²⁷

The storyboard was developed mostly at Giuseppe Laganà's studio. Bozzetto, Manuli, and the key animators of each episode (see below) worked there by continuously listening to the selected musical pieces. The individuation of the synchronies was done by ear, with no technical aid; this is why the storyboard panels were subject to continuous revisions, as the familiarity of the artists with the music and the stories increased over time. A huge load of movable paper patches and corrections rendered the storyboard very rough-looking. This became particularly evident for the

²⁴Bozzetto in "Ricordando *Allegro non troppo*," a documentary in the *Allegro non troppo* DVD, part of the DVD collection "Tutto Bozzetto (o quasi)" (Roma: Multimedia San Paolo, 2005).

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Bozzetto in Mario Querin, ed., *Bruno Bozzetto* (Trento: Centro di Documentazione Visiva, 1992), 9.

²⁷Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019.

Boléro, whose storyboard was ridden with emendations and was seven meters long and two meters tall.²⁸

The Animation Crew

There are very few stylistic or design indications, in the plot outlines; once again, it is evident that, during his intensive scouting for musical repertoire, narrative effectiveness was the primary need of the author. Nonetheless, Bozzetto affirmed²⁹ that he actually had instinctive thoughts about the visual style he wanted for each one of the stories, even though he did not take notes about that; in those thoughts he also identified who, among his collaborators, was the fittest to bring a particular story to the screen.

The end titles of *Allegro non troppo* do not specify the production team for each episode; they just list the whole film crew according with their creative mansion, in alphabetical order. The identification of the leading roles in the short film units is anyway possible through Bozzetto's own recollections, a few essays and interviews,³⁰ and the documentaries that complement the Italian DVD edition of the film. The final cast and crew amounted to less than one hundred people, including Bozzetto.

When the artistic goals for each one of the prospected animated shorts became more defined, with a particularly high one set for the *Boléro*, Bozzetto resorted to a decision he had never taken before: to outsource some of the animation to other studios. He did so not only to improve the potential of his own studio but also to let his collaborators keep on with the jobs from their usual clients in the advertisement and TV industry, which constituted their main income source; in fact, during the production of *Allegro*, Bozzetto Film kept accepting commissions for ads and TV program intros, unlike it did for *West & Soda* (see Chapter 1). The studios that joined forces with Bozzetto were all in Milan: Master Programmi Audiovisivi S.r.l. that, however, only animated the claymation intro to the *Firebird*; Giuseppe Laganà's own freelance studio; and RDA 70 (also known as Erredia 70), whose name stands for "Reperto di Animazione" ("Animation Division"). It was in fact born as the animation division of the Gamma Film studio

²⁸Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019; documentary "Ricordando *Allegro non troppo*."

²⁹Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019.

³⁰Andrijana Ružić, "Un romanzo corale," in *Allegro non troppo. Un tesoro dell'arte italiana*, ed. Chiara Cereda, Shirin Chehayed, Priscilla Mancini, and Andrijana Ružić (Milano: Agema, 2016), 21–4; Valerio Sbravatti, "Colloquio tra Valerio Sbravatti e Bruno Bozzetto su *Allegro non troppo*," in Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo. Vedere la musica e ascoltare i disegni* (Roma: Il glifo, 2015), Kindle; Mario Verger, "Addio Walter Cavazzuti," *Note di tecnica cinematografica*, April 2003–January 2004, 28–9.

of the Gavioli brothers (see the Introduction), which eventually branched out into an independent facility by initiative of Walter Cavazzuti, Angelo Beretta, Giorgio Forlani, Riccardo Denti, Giovanni Ferrari, and others.³¹ They brought to *Allegro non troppo* a technical level that went far beyond that of Bozzetto Film, which was specialized in a highly stylized approach based almost completely on self-taught skills. Bozzetto acknowledged³² that the crew at RDA 70 was proficient in a more lifelike and three-dimensional hand-drawn style of animation, along the lines of the Disney one, because they learned directly from American artists while at Gamma Films: in the 1960s, the studio of the Gaviolis was visited several times by Marc Davis (1913–2000), one of the Nine Old Men, the core animators and directors who consolidated and refined the Disney style; other foreign guests included Chuck Jones (1912–2002), one of the foremost animators and directors at Warner Bros. Cartoons, and an unidentified Disney artist who worked on the film *The Jungle Book* (Wolfgang Reitherman, 1967).³³ A remarkable chance of training in a Disney-like animation style was also *The Night the Animals Talked*, a 1970 internationally coproduced animated short for the ABC network, directed by James “Shamus” Culhane (1908–1996), an animator and director especially renowned for his work at Disney, and in particular for the direction of the “Heigh-Ho” song sequence in *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* (David Hand and others, 1937). The Gamma Film artists who were directed by Culhane in *The Night the Animals Talked* included the future *Allegro non troppo* crew members Paolo Albicocco and Giovanni Ferrari.

The artists with lead creative responsibilities in *Allegro non troppo*, besides Bozzetto himself, were Guido Manuli, Maurizio Nichetti, Giuseppe Laganà, Giovanni Ferrari, Walter Cavazzuti, Giorgio Valentini, Giancarlo Cereda, Giorgio Forlani, and Paolo Albicocco. Their specific contributions will be discussed during the analysis of the film episodes in Part Two, in the paragraphs titled “Program Notes.” As to provide basic reference information to identify the artists, succinct bio details of each one of them will be provided in the next paragraphs; their roles in the *Allegro non troppo* production will be listed below their names.

³¹Verger, “Addio Walter Cavazzuti,” 28.

³²Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019.

³³Marcello Zane, *Scatola a sorpresa. La Gamma Film di Roberto Gavioli e la comunicazione audiovisiva in Italia da Carosello a oggi* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1998), 116, 153. Zane credits the *Jungle Book* crew member just as “Klim”; he mentions that “many of the *Jungle Book* characters were created by him” (“gran parte dei personaggi del *Libro della Jungla* sono stati creati da lui”). There is no “Klim” among the character designers or animators of that film; Zane adds only that he drew a caricature of himself laying at the feet of Davis’s self-caricature on the wall of a reserved room in the Gamma Film canteen. He might have been Bill Keil (1916–2003), an uncredited *Jungle Book* animator who also had a long-standing collaboration with the Hanna-Barbera Productions.

- **Guido Manuli (1939)**

Screenplay

Concerto in C Major RV 559: character design

The Firebird: character design

Finale(s): character design, key animation

A native of Cervia, a seaside city in the Romagna territory, Manuli became one of the driving forces of Bruno Bozzetto Film since 1961:³⁴ the first production he contributed to was *Il signor Rossi va a sciare*, 1963.³⁵ He soon distinguished himself as a prolific provider of anarchic and extreme gags, which he visualized with hand-drawn animations prone to high dynamism, visual excess, and risqué humor. Bozzetto felt that Manuli's eccentric extroversion was a much-needed antidote to his own penchant for pessimism.³⁶ As Alberto Rigoni and Giovanni Russo argued, Manuli's approach was a "sensual" manifestation of his "contagious love of the medium, even when his collections of gags are not strongly cohesive."³⁷ He was inspired not only by Tex Avery but also by Disney: desecrations of the character of Snow White are among Manuli's favorite visual themes, not to be understood as a unabashed panning of the Disney heritage, but instead as a desperate love letter to an unattainable animation ideal. As his internationally awarded³⁸ 1983 short film *Soltanto un bacio* (*Just a Kiss*) shows, Manuli's violent desire for Snow White is bound to be chastised and ridiculed: it is a metaphor of the technical and budgetary limits of Italian animators, who frustratingly work for a domestic audience whose benchmark is the foreign Disney style.

Manuli had his directorial debut in 1973 with *Opera*, a short film he cocreated with Bozzetto (who directed the second half of the film). The first film he fully directed was *Fantabiblical* (1977); after he left the Bozzetto Film in the late 1970s, he joined forces with Maurizio Nichetti, instating a collaboration that started with the short film *S.O.S.* (1979) and peaked with *Volere volare* (*To Want to Fly*, 1991), a mixed-technique full-length feature directed by Nichetti, marketed as "the Italian response to *Who Framed Roger Rabbit*"³⁹ and that brought to Manuli and Nichetti a Davide of Donatello Award for Best Screenplay.

³⁴Sabrina Perucca, *Il cinema d'animazione italiano oggi* (Roma: Bulzoni, 2008), 241.

³⁵Carlo Chatrian, "La giusta idea. Incontro con Guido Manuli," in *Maurizio Nichetti. I film, il cinema e ...*, ed. Massimo Causo and Carlo Chatrian (Cantalupa, TO: Effatà Editrice, 2005), 133.

³⁶Documentary *Gente di Milano—I mondi di Bruno Bozzetto*.

³⁷Alberto Rigoni and Giovanni Russo, "All Roads Lead to Animation: Gianini, Luzzati, Cavandoli, and Manuli," *Animation Journal* 25 (2017): 58.

³⁸It won the International Critics' Award at the 1983 Annecy Festival.

³⁹Rigoni and Russo, "All Roads Lead to Animation," 59.

Manuli also directed three feature-length, hand-drawn animated films: *L'eroe dei due mondi* (*The Hero of the Two Worlds*, 1994), on Italy's national hero Giuseppe Garibaldi, with the participation of the renowned painter-animator Manfredo Manfredi; *Chi ha paura ...?* (*Monster Mash*, 1999), a TV film coproduced with overseas partners; and *Aida degli Alberi* (*Aida of the Trees*, 2001), a musical fantasy adventure loosely based on Antonio Ghislanzoni's libretto for Giuseppe Verdi's opera *Aida*, with a score by Ennio Morricone. It was an attempt to create an Italian equivalent to the animated Disney musicals of the 1990s; however, the final result was not on par with its model. In the 2000s, Manuli went on to produce Adobe Flash animated shorts he released through his YouTube channel Guido Manuli Animation, similarly to Bozzetto. He currently resides in Annecy, France.

According to Bozzetto,⁴⁰ the satyr in the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* short of *Allegro non troppo* ended up being a caricature of Manuli, even though that was not his initial intention.

- **Maurizio Nichetti (1948)**

Screenplay

Actor (the animator)

On April 30, 1970,⁴¹ a 22-year-old Maurizio Nichetti brought an acting portfolio to the Bruno Bozzetto Film. He was a Milanese student of architecture at the Politecnico (he was going to graduate in 1975); he had a little experience in advertising, as he had already gotten a few freelance jobs as copywriter, and he was now applying for an acting job in a “Carosello” production. As he made acquaintance with Bozzetto and his young crew, Nichetti cast a glance over the other portfolios that had already come in; he felt discouraged,⁴² as he believed that his competitors were all more handsome than him; he was more the funny type, with a big moustache and round glasses. When he took his leave, anticipating a rejection, he suggested, “In case my application will not go well ..., please consider that I can also write stories and gags ... for advertisements.”⁴³ Bozzetto took his remark seriously; Nichetti noticed that and added that he would have preferred writing comedy scripts, as they were his specialty. By chance, Bozzetto was having an emergency meeting with his collaborators, because one of his scriptwriters had quit his job just the day before. He asked Nichetti to wait as he went inside the meeting room; he came back after five minutes

⁴⁰Personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019.

⁴¹Nichetti, personal communication to the author via email, September 6, 2020.

⁴²Nichetti in the documentary *Gente di Milano—I mondi di Bruno Bozzetto*.

⁴³“Se per caso andasse male il provino ..., tenete presente che io posso anche scrivere le storie, le gag ... per la pubblicità.” Nichetti in the documentary *Gente di Milano—I mondi di Bruno Bozzetto*.

and asked Nichetti to return the next morning, to start a three-month trial period⁴⁴ in the story department. He was going to stay for almost nine years. Since his first day, he sat next to Guido Manuli, who took an interest in improving the gags provided by the new member of the crew. After a while, Nichetti was able to do the same to Manuli's gags; that was the start of their long-standing mutual collaboration, and of their friendship.⁴⁵

Bozzetto's bet on Nichetti was going to be a winning one: he went on to build a solid career as an actor, scriptwriter, and director. His humor was akin to that of Bozzetto, who gladly accepted Nichetti's prompts to return to live-action filmmaking (see Chapter 1). Meanwhile, Nichetti took acting courses at the Piccolo Teatro of Milan, including one in mimic acting taught by Marise Flach, a former pupil of Étienne Decroux, the foremost modern French mime. In 1974, he founded with fellow alumni of the Piccolo a theatrical company and acting school called "QuellidiGrock" ("TheGrockBunch"), in honor of the stage name of the Swiss clown Charles Adrien Wettach (1880–1959); the first members included Gero Caldarelli, Osvaldo Salvi, and Angela Finocchiaro. "QuellidiGrock" and Flach contributed to *Allegro non troppo*: the former ones were acting extras, the latter provided mimic consulting.

Nichetti's duties at the Bozzetto studio included also roles as assistant director to live-action productions, which helped him gain an expertise that proved crucial when he decided to venture on his own and start a career as a film director with *Ratataplan* (1979), his first full-length feature. He wrote and directed twelve more, both for the TV and the theater; his acting and comedy style was sometimes compared with that of Jacques Tati.⁴⁶ Other than for *Volere Volare*, with Guido Manuli, he received accolades for *Ladri di saponette* (*The Icicle Thief*, 1989), which won the Golden St. George at the 16th Moscow International Film Festival. He was in the jury of the 1998 Berlin Film Festival and of the 1999 Cannes Film Festival.

While continuously engaged in acting and directing for the theatrical stage, during the 1980s Nichetti also hosted TV shows ("Quo Vadiz?", 1984–5; "Pista!", 1985–6). In 2006, he wrote and directed the TV animated series "Le avventure di Neve & Gliz" ("The Adventures of Neve and Gliz"), starring the mascots of the 2006 Winter Olympics in Turin and animated by the Lanterna Magica Studio.

After 2000, Nichetti took also teaching duties at the Centro Sperimentale di Cinematografia (the animation department in Turin), the Civic Cinema School in Milan, the Catholic University in Milan, and the IULM University.

⁴⁴Nichetti, personal communication to the author via email, September 6, 2020.

⁴⁵Maurizio Nichetti, *Autobiografia involontaria* (Milano: Bietti, 2015), 27.

⁴⁶Roberto Manassero, "Escaping Reality," in *Infinity Festival 2005*, ed. Roberto Manassero (Cantalupa, TO: Effatà Editrice, 2005), 107.

- **Giuseppe Laganà (1944–2016)**

Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune: storyboard, layout, character design, backgrounds, key animation

Boléro: artistic direction, storyboard, layout

Giuseppe Laganà was one of the most respected Italian animators of the second half of the twentieth century. Bozzetto entrusted him with the artistic direction of the *Boléro*, the most complex of all the *Allegro non troppo* parts, because of his remarkable skills and strong artistic background. He was also in charge of all the main creative roles for the *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune*, which he endowed with a nuanced style, mostly achieved through the use of watercolor and Ecoline paintwork in the backgrounds.

He studied at the Brera Academy of Fine Arts in Milan, the city where he was born. He entered the Italian animation market in the early “Carosello” age, at the Cartoon Film studio of Pierluigi De Mas; there, he had a chance to perfect his skills under UPA artists like Harry Hess and Jimmy Teru Murakami, who were in Italy to participate in the making of some advertisements.⁴⁷

He then worked at the Gamma Film studio, where he met more international artists (see above); his advertisement series “Sul ritmo di ogni spiritual” (“To the Rhythm of Every Spiritual,” 1963),⁴⁸ for the Comitato Italiano Cotone (“Italian Cotton Committee”), received an award at the Advertising Film International Festival in Cannes.

He began his collaboration with Bozzetto with *West & Soda*; he regularly contributed to the output of the studio until *Vip, My Brother Superman*, often together with Manuli. Then, he opted for a freelance position, accepting thus jobs also from other clients (like the cartoonist and director Marco Biassoni). It is in this independent role that he was later hired back by Bozzetto to work on more “Unca Dunca” carosellos and, of course, on *Allegro non troppo*.

Laganà consolidated his reputation as an animation filmmaker by authoring a huge variety of products, from music videos to TV series; he is also remembered as the first director to make an Italian computer-animated short, *Pixnocchio* (1982).⁴⁹ In 1991 he founded his own company, the Animation Studio, later converted into the Animation Band (1996); among the works he directed, there are the TV series “Tiramolla Adventures”

⁴⁷“Addio al regista e animatore Giuseppe Laganà,” *Il Blog di Fumodichina*, January 5, 2016, <https://ilblogdifumodichina.blogspot.com/2016/01/addio-al-regista-e-animatore-giuseppe.html> (accessed October 17, 2019).

⁴⁸Guido Michelone and Giuseppe Valenzise, *Bibidi bobidi bu: la musica nei cartoni animati da Betty Boop a Peter Gabriel* (Roma: Castelvechi, 1998), 97.

⁴⁹Maya Quaianni, “È morto Giuseppe Maurizio Laganà,” *Lo Spazio Bianco*, January 5, 2016, <https://www.lospaziobianco.it/morto-giuseppe-maurizio-lagana> (accessed October 17, 2019).

(1992), “Lupo Alberto” (1997–2001), “The Last of the Mohicans” (2004), “Kim” (2008), and “Treasure Island” (2016). He also directed two full-length features coproduced with German studios: *Felix—Ein Hase auf Weltreise* (*Felix—All Around the World*, 2005) and *Felix 2—Der Hase und die verflixte Zeitmaschine* (*Felix 2—The Mechanical Rabbit and the Time Machine*, 2006). In 2003 he renovated his collaboration with Bozzetto by directing a TV series he ideated, “La famiglia Spaghetti” (“The Spaghetti Family”).

He also provided cartoons to magazines and newspapers like *Il Corriere dei Piccoli*, *Linus*, *Il Corriere della Sera*, *Playboy*, *Cosmopolitan*, and more. In 2004–7, he taught at the course in Performing Arts (DAMS) of the University of Udine in Gorizia.

- **Giovanni Ferrari (1937–2017)**

Boléro: key animation

Valse triste: key animation

Concerto in C Major RV 559: key animation

The Firebird: key animation

Giovanni Ferrari was an artist whose works influenced a great deal the Italian pop culture from the 1960s to the 1990s. Apart from *Allegro non troppo* and the other works he animated for Bozzetto—the “Carosello” character Mammuto, Babbuto, and Figliuto, the hysterically laughing Stripy mascot from the intro of the Swiss TV program “Scacciapensieri,” and the cat in the Bozzetto/Hanna and Barbera short *Help!* (1995)—he was the creator of several famous characters from commercials, like the dwarfs advertising the Loacker wafer brand, the genie of the Mastro Lindo cleaning supplies, and the anthropomorphic egg of the Kinder chocolate. More importantly, he animated the protagonists of *Lucky and Zorba* by Enzo D’Alò, the 1998 full-length animated feature that made Italy competitive again in the animation market. He also animated the characters of Nichetti’s *Volere volare*.

Ferrari was born in Stienta, near Rovigo and the river Po. He attended the civic art school Dosso Dossi in Ferrara and graduated from the Venturi art institute in Modena.⁵⁰ He moved to Milan in the early 1960s, where he joined the Gamma Film Studio, and later the RDA 70.

He spent his late years in Villasanta, near Monza, where he kept painting and teaching fine arts.

- **Walter Cavazzuti (1946–2004)**

Boléro: key animation

The Firebird: key animation

⁵⁰Riccardo Rosa, “Dai film di Nichetti a Mastro Lindo: addio a Giovanni Ferrari, l’uomo capace di disegnare i sogni,” *Corriere della Sera*, December 27, 2017.

Like Ferrari, Cavazzuti was one of the most talented animators of the Gamma Film Studio, and later a driving force of the RDA 70. However, Cavazzuti considered himself a character designer, above all.⁵¹ In fact, Cavazzuti designed the main cast of some of the most successful Italian animated features between the 1990s and the early 2000s, those directed by Enzo D'Alò: *La freccia azzurra* (*How the Toys Saved Christmas*, 1996), *Lucky and Zorba*, *Momo alla conquista del tempo* (*Momo*, 2001), and *Opopomoz* (2003). His expertise in animation went well beyond that, though: the experience he matured at Gamma Film had Bozzetto entrust him with the complex character animation required for the *Boléro*, where the marching creatures had intricate shadow patterns on their bodies. Cavazzuti attended to the painstaking work of defining the shadows for each pose, together with Ferrari: they drew them in pencil and then printed the poses on the transparent cels by using xerography, a process that was imported to Italian animation production by Gamma Film, Cavazzuti, and Ferrari's former studio, around the mid-1960s.⁵²

Cavazzuti also directed a few animated independent short films, starting from *Il gatto nero* (*The Black Cat*, 1972; lost), inspired by the stylized animation of the Zagreb school.⁵³ In 1987 he directed *Tunnel*, which featured a visual experimentation based on the use of Ecoline colors and chemical diluent on cels. His interest in design was reaffirmed in *The End* (1989), his last directorial work: a black-and-white character runs away from a "killer" who wants to paint it in color; he finally gets caught, but the splash of paint leaves a blank silhouette on the wall behind him; the chase is thus not over.

Another important contribution of Cavazzuti was the direction of the animation of Nichetti's *Volere volare*; moreover, in 1980 he had established his own advertising and animation studio, Quick Sand Production, with a fellow animator and a former colleague at RDA 70: Michel Fuzellier.

- **Giorgio Valentini (1948)**

Boléro: character design

Valse triste: character design

Giorgio Valentini approached Bozzetto in 1972, after he spent several years working as a goldsmith. In fact, his education included goldsmith courses at art institutes in Fano (his native city) and Venice.⁵⁴ Because of his interest in cinema and animation, he then attended the "Scuola del Libro"

⁵¹"Walter Cavazzuti," Girodivite.it, https://www.girodivite.it/antenati/xx3sec/_cavazzuti.htm (accessed October 18, 2019).

⁵²Zane, *Scatola a sorpresa*, 109.

⁵³Verger, "Addio Walter Cavazzuti," 28.

⁵⁴"Giorgio Valentini," Motusfilm.com, <http://www.motusfilm.com/SitoItalia/CvGiorgio.htm> (accessed October 18, 2019).

(“Book School”), the art institute of Urbino, which had an animation department; other two members of the main *Allegro* crew came from this same school, Giorgio Forlani and Paolo Albicocco (see below).

Valentini aroused Bozzetto’s interest by showing him an animated short film of his own. He first contributed to *Il Signor Rossi a Venezia* (1974); he then worked to all the principal productions of the Bozzetto Film until the late 1980s. In the 1990s, he joined the animation crew of D’Alo’s features, codirecting the animation of *Lucky and Zorba* and providing storyboards, layouts, and animation to *Momo*.

Valentini proved to be a versatile professional: a part from the designs of some of the key characters of *Allegro non troppo* (the *Boléro* monsters and the *Valse triste* cat), and of the animated creatures populating the parallel world in Bozzetto’s fantasy live-action film *Under the Chinese Restaurant*, he was able to serve as storyboarder, screenwriter, and animator for animated advertisements, TV series, and live-action films. He also directed several shorts, like *Lo scrittore* (*The Writer*, live-action, 1981), *È questione di vita o di morte* (*It’s a Matter of Life or Death*, live-action, 1983), *DNA* (animated, 1996), *Café l’Amour* (animated, 2005), and *Le nuvole sono solo nuvole* (*Clouds Are Just Clouds*, live-action, 2007). In 2000, he established with Silvio Pautasso the production company Motus Film.

- **Giancarlo Cereda (1929–2004)**

Boléro: backgrounds

Giancarlo Cereda received from Bozzetto a precise request about how to visualize the primeval world of the *Boléro*: he was asked to paint the backgrounds by using an airbrush, in order to convey a nuanced and layered impression of depth.⁵⁵

Cereda was one of the very first artists to join Bozzetto’s studio: he was among the ones the director selected among his acquaintances as a student (as already pointed out, he was the cousin of one of Bozzetto’s classmates, Carlo Re). He consistently kept his role as background artist.

His family initially wanted him to pursue a career in accounting, so he could join the business company of his uncle; after two years of studies in that field, though, Cereda decided to take instead art courses at the fine art academy of Brera, in Milan. He sometimes involved Re in his life painting exercises; for example, Re posed for a Jesus Christ oil painting Cereda did in the atelier he established in a large, windowed pavilion of a mansion owned by a well-to-do fellow art student, in Corso Italia.

⁵⁵Ružić, “Un romanzo corale,” 23.

Other than being a background artist for animation, Cereda also worked as a book illustrator (e.g., in Marino Giuffrida, *Come nasce l'automobile*, "How the Car Is Born," Milan: AMZ, 1969). In his late years, before his premature death due to a leukemia, he put to new use his academic training: he took commissions for portraits that perfectly imitated the style and appearance of famous paintings. In each one of those, the original subject was given the face of Cereda's client. The idea, however, was not so successful: he only did about six paintings of this kind. One of them was for Bozzetto.⁵⁶

- **Giorgio Forlani (1934)**

Concerto in C Major RV 559: backgrounds

Giorgio Forlani graduated in 1958 from the design course at the "Scuola del Libro" art institute of Urbino. He worked for several years at the Gamma Film studio.⁵⁷

- **Paolo Albicocco (1936–2011)**

Valse triste: backgrounds

Albicocco was another graduate (in 1958) of the "Scuola del Libro" of Urbino, where he studied lithography.⁵⁸ He moved to Milan in the early 1960s to join the Gamma Film studio; he later participated in the foundation of the RDA 70.

In animation, he became a background specialist, even for international productions. As background supervisor, he was in fact part of the crew of *The Night the Animals Talked*, directed by Shamus Culhane. Culhane also hired Albicocco to do the backgrounds of his 1980 TV animated special *Last of the Red-Hot Dragons*. Albicocco's backgrounds were also featured in *Maria d'Oro und Bello Blue* (*Once Upon a Time*, 1973), a German-Italian coproduction directed by Rolf Kauka.

Albicocco was a book illustrator as well:⁵⁹ he created the cover art for the RDA 70 children's book *Il gigante orripilante* (*The Hair-Rising Giant*, text by Italo Calvino), for Nilde Cima's *Un uomo e una volpe* (*A Man and a Fox*, 1971), for Elisa Franzoni Zane's *Partigiani in casa mia* (*Partisans in My House*, 1984), and for the repertory of literature from the Friuli region *Il Tesaur de Leteradure Pai Fruts* (Gianni Nazzi, 1987).

⁵⁶Carlo Re in a personal telephone conversation with the author, October 31, 2019.

⁵⁷"Cento anni di vita dell'Istituto d'Arte di Urbino. Capitolo Quarto," https://www.prourbino.it/ScuolaDelLibro/StoriaCarnevali_cap4.htm (accessed October 18, 2019).

⁵⁸"Cento anni di vita dell'Istituto d'Arte di Urbino. Capitolo Quarto," https://www.prourbino.it/ScuolaDelLibro/StoriaCarnevali_cap4.htm (accessed October 18, 2019).

⁵⁹"Addio ad Albicocco, grande cartoonist," *Il Resto del Carlino*, April 15, 2011, 27.

- Other crew members

Other notable members of the *Allegro non troppo* crew were Luciano Marzetti, Ugo Micheli, and Franco Godi. Marzetti, who was a regular collaborator of Bozzetto, was in charge of the visual effects. For example, he created the light refraction effect on the curved glass of the Coca-Cola bottle at the beginning of the *Boléro*: he did so by modeling the bottle in relief on the transparent cel, by applying spirit gum on the plain surface. The animation of that effect required one month, and it had to be reshot six times, because of the precision that was required to make the light reflection feel natural.⁶⁰

Ugo Micheli, instead, was an editor; he would have kept this role in many of the later films by Bozzetto. In *Allegro*, though, he was assigned a different task: he was responsible for the musical synchrony. His job consisted in making chalk marks on a 35 mm magnetic tape recording of the music, to evidence the moments when Bozzetto or the animators wanted to achieve a synchrony with the screen action, producing thus not only a visual guide for the animation⁶¹ but also a reference to set up the exposure sheet (x-sheet), which had a dedicated column for all the musical downbeats relevant to the animation, similar to a lip synch x-sheet routine, but much more complicated.⁶² The exact frame number corresponding to a certain chalk mark on the tape was deduced by having the tape, which was as wide as a film strip (35 mm), run in a moviola.⁶³ The synchronies were identified during the storyboarding and animation; finding their exact place on the tapes by mere listening was a difficult task, also because the slow-motion advancement of the tape, required to precision-search for a certain musical moment, heavily distorted the sound and rendered the musical instruments unrecognizable.

Franco Godi, the most important “Carosello” composer and former author of the music of *Vip*, *My Brother Superman*, completed the *Allegro* soundtrack with light ballroom music that plays during the live-action interstitials, the finale, and the end titles. In particular, the end title track is based on a medley of the main themes from some of the classical pieces used in the animated shorts (*Boléro*, *Valse triste*, *Slavonic Dance*).

Preproduction of the Live-Action Scenes

The development of the live-action frame of *Allegro non troppo* took place when the production of the animation had already begun, as previously

⁶⁰Bozzetto in the documentary “Ricordando *Allegro non troppo*.”

⁶¹Bozzetto, personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019, and also during a meeting with the author in Bergamo, Italy, on July 5, 2019.

⁶²Bozzetto, personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019.

⁶³Bozzetto during a class for the History of Animation course at the Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Padova, Italy, November 25, 2014.

mentioned; this did not prevent Bozzetto from collecting notes about it in the *Allegro* diaries.

The initial concept was fairly close to that of *Fantasia*. It had to be serious in tone and to involve a real orchestra with a renowned conductor (Abbado). What Bozzetto wrote about the visual treatment reveals an even deeper connection with *Fantasia*: he borrowed from the previous film ideas like showing the players as shadow silhouettes and having the instruments change color according to the music. He also made a little sketch (the only one in the *Allegro* diaries) showing how he wanted to arrange the silhouettes of the musicians: the similarity with the unrealistic orchestral seating seen in *Fantasia* is evident.

The diaries however also testify the next step in Bozzetto's approach to the live-action parts, which drastically steered the content toward grotesque comedy. The notes show that the director intended to make the musicians into quirky characters, prone to anarchically disrupt the performance: he mentioned a "dwarf"⁶⁴ and a "pleasure-seeking woman at the harp."⁶⁵ There is a note about having "jazz at the beginning,"⁶⁶ and then, in unspecified moments, "someone falls behind cubes (Indian face)? They bring him out in pieces on a stretcher. / Someone makes out with the harpist. / One brings down a player to take his place. / The pianist gets stabbed after a solo. He asks: who did that?"⁶⁷ While this is consistent with the later full-blown slapstick style of the *Allegro non troppo* live-action scenes, in this preproduction outline the humor was maybe more inspired to the musical antics of the Marx Brothers in *A Night at the Opera* (Sam Wood, 1935) than to Laurel and Hardy, who later became the main reference for Nichetti and Garay's interactions in the film. It is also peculiar how much Bozzetto's concept foreshadowed the dysfunctional orchestral players of Federico Fellini's *Prova d'orchestra* (*Orchestra Rehearsal*, 1979); at the end of the *Valse triste*, moreover, a wrecking ball demolishes a wall, just like in the finale of Fellini's film. Later, in the early 1980s, Fellini actually called Bozzetto with the intention to commission him the opening titles for *Ginger e Fred* (*Ginger and Fred*, 1986); Bozzetto however refused the job, as he believed that Fellini's ability to transform live-action actors in something completely unforeseeable was stronger than any cartoon creation.⁶⁸

⁶⁴ "Nano."

⁶⁵ "Godereccia all'arpa."

⁶⁶ "Jazz all'inizio."

⁶⁷ "Uno cade dietro cubi (faccia indiano?). Lo portano via a pezzi su barella. / Uno limona con arpista. / Uno getta giù orchestrale per prenderne il posto. / Pianista pugnalato dopo a solo. Dice: chi è stato?"

⁶⁸ Bozzetto in the documentary *L'arte è un delfino. Intervista a Bruno Bozzetto*.

A further unforeseen Fellini connection,⁶⁹ even though it was likely a coincidental one, is revealed by other pages of the diaries about the director's plans about the narrator, the equivalent to Deems Taylor in *Fantasia*. Bozzetto hoped to cast Marcello Mastroianni, the quintessential Fellinian protagonist, in that role; he was supposed to speak about classical music while holding a portable stereophonic system that did not work. After repeatedly hitting it, he would have had the music started; however, the recording would have failed, repeating over and over the same passage. The action on screen would have been similarly replayed many times, in synch with the music.

Other ideas penned down by Bozzetto included a mention of animators on-screen; this clearly led to the later development of Nichetti's character. The original project, though, was to joke about animating music to match the musical experience of a mentally disordered person, as cartoon artists were supposed to be "all have some mental disorder."⁷⁰ Bozzetto wanted to illustrate this with shots of animators at work, dressed in absurd ways and surrounded by drawings and signs hanging from the walls.

The diary notes on the live-action included also a project for a sequence dedicated to solo instruments. Their sounds were supposed to be visualized as animated patterns, in evident homage to the "soundtrack" intermission from *Fantasia*. There is also a short plot that introduces a character close to the satyr from the *Faune* animation (and to its early incarnation in the preproduction materials; see Appendix 2), but more vicious and aggressive: "A sex addicted on a beach dreams about killing his ugly wife; a beautiful girl undresses and throws herself at him; when they meet there is an explosion. Or else: a guy sees women everywhere / they come out from his eyes, head, ears / cartoon."⁷¹ The last remark might suggest that the effects on this live-action sequence would have been animated.

When the time to plan the production of the live-action parts came, Bozzetto returned to the idea of staging up a believable concert setting; he took advantage of a maintenance closure of the Donizetti Theatre in Bergamo (Figure 4) to ask the municipality permission to shoot in that location, including the ancient underground foundations where the animator/Nichetti was going to be imprisoned, for about four days (that

⁶⁹Bozzetto actually reported that the first American reviewers of *Allegro non troppo* often called the live-action parts "Fellinian," in a negative sense; the director did not like the comparison and said that they just did not get his grotesque humor. Bozzetto in Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo*, 91.

⁷⁰"Sono un po' tutti dei malati mentali."

⁷¹"Maniaco sessuale su spiaggia sogna di uccidere moglie brutta e bella ragazza si spoglia e gli si getta addosso. Esplosione quando si incontrano. Oppure tipo che vede donne dappertutto / gli escono da occhi, testa, orecchie / cartone."

FIGURE 4 The inside of the Donizetti Theater in 1977. The live-action sequences of *Allegro non troppo* were all shot inside this historical building, which was inaugurated in 1791 and then rebuilt in 1801, after a fire destroyed it.

was the overall duration of the live-action photography, according to Nichetti).⁷² He still wanted the orchestra scenes to be funny, so he considered hiring actors instead of real musicians; however, he was struggling to find out how to make that idea into something convincing.⁷³ The first draft of the screenplay was just a collection of variations on typical gags on the theme of the orchestra, including a scene with a hairpiece blown away by a trombone.⁷⁴ The game-changing inspiration arrived on a day⁷⁵ when Bozzetto, Nichetti, and Manuli had scheduled an inspection of the theater. While Bozzetto was waiting for them in Bergamo, Nichetti and Manuli were traveling together by car from Milan. They discussed some possible options to save on the live-action budget while making the scenes interesting, and they come up with the idea of an orchestra of spunky old ladies, led by a brute. As they told Bozzetto about this, the director had an immediate

⁷²Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo*, 12; confirmed also by Nichetti in a personal email to the author, September 6, 2020.

⁷³Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019.

⁷⁴Nichetti in Massimo Causo and Carlo Chatrion, eds., *Maurizio Nichetti. I film, il cinema e ...* (Cantalupa, TO: Effatà Editrice, 2005), 24.

⁷⁵For a reconstruction of that day, see Nichetti, *Autobiografia involontaria*, 115–16.

positive reaction:⁷⁶ this would have avoided them a lot of problems about musical synchrony and research about orchestras, while providing to the film the cheeky comic relief they needed to contrast and counterbalance the more abstract animated shorts.

This decision sped up the casting operations, too. The old ladies were found among acquaintances, families, or locals: Bozzetto involved also caretakers, ladies from retirement homes, as well as his mother-in-law and her friends.⁷⁷ Among the extras there were Jolanda Cappi and Osvaldo Salvi, who played the gorilla that attacks Nichetti after the *Boléro*. Another extra was a member of the “QuellidiGrock” acting company: Angela Finocchiaro (who would have later built a remarkable career in Italian cinema). She played among the old ladies, in disguise: she is the one who falls down and breaks up in pieces, bringing thus to the screen one of the gags featured in the *Allegro* diaries. Nichetti helped also in the casting of the main roles, because of his connections with theater actors. For example Maurizio Micheli, the host, was an alumnus of the Piccolo Teatro, like Nichetti; he was also to have a successful career in theater and cinema. The Argentinian Nestor Garay, instead, was cast as the conductor because, in Nichetti’s view, he was able to bring forth some Laurel and Hardy vibes. First of all, his imposing body type was a perfect contrast with Nichetti’s slim and short appearance; moreover, according to Nichetti, Garay resembled Eric Campbell,⁷⁸ a silent film actor who had supporting roles in films starring Charlie Chaplin, as well as James Finlayson in the Laurel and Hardy short film *Big Business* (James W. Horne, Leo McCarey, 1929).⁷⁹ In the mid-1970s, Garay had already a career in Italian cinema, mostly in comedies and B-movies; Maria Luisa Giovannini, who played the cleaning lady, was instead a newcomer to acting, and that of *Allegro non troppo* remained her only film role. According to Nichetti, she was a painter and a marathon runner who later relocated to Portugal.⁸⁰

Bozzetto codirected the live-action sequences with Nichetti with the precise intention to make them narratively and visually distinguishable from the animated shorts. As already remarked (see Chapter 2), he sought an “expressionist”⁸¹ black and white style, full of light and shadow contrasts, which however hid the colorful attires of the old ladies (that had a purposely kitsch “Charleston” fashion, to joke about how they were indeed old-timers,

⁷⁶Personal communication to the author via Skype, January 20, 2019.

⁷⁷Bozzetto in Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo*, 110–11.

⁷⁸Nichetti in a personal email to the author, September 6, 2020.

⁷⁹Nichetti in the documentary “Ricordando *Allegro non troppo*.” He actually does not mention Finlayson by name, but he references him as the cross-eyed sidekick to Laurel and Hardy; he then confirmed this in a personal email to the author, September 6, 2020.

⁸⁰Nichetti in the documentary “Ricordando *Allegro non troppo*.”

⁸¹In another instance (personal communication to the author via Skype, March 14, 2019), Bozzetto called this black-and-white cinematography “neorealist.”

but still full of the energy of the “Roaring Twenties”), created by the costume designer Lia Morandini. The cinematography was by Mario Masini, a renowned collaborator of esteemed directors like Carmelo Bene and the Taviani brothers.

The live-action footage that appeared in some of the animated shorts (*Valse triste*, *The Firebird*) was instead personally shot by Bozzetto with his 16mm Bolex Paillard camera; in the *Valse triste*, the characters featured in the memories of the cat are Bozzetto himself (on the rocking chair, with a dog nearby), his wife, and children, and also some acquaintances of him;⁸² in *The Firebird*, the billboards and advertisements were shot by Bozzetto in the Duomo square in Milan. Bozzetto also shot some reference footage for the wrecked house of the *Valse triste*, in Milan, too.

The End of the Path: *Allegro non troppo* in Theaters

Production on the film ended in 1976: Bozzetto annotated in the *Allegro* diaries that the finished print was ready in July that year. A celebrative early screening had anyway been organized earlier, on March 12, 1976, at the Arcobaleno Cinema in Milan. It was attended just by forty people: thirty crew members, five journalists, and five casual cinemagoers.⁸³

For the distribution in Italian cinemas, the director contacted the Cineriz company in Rome, as he had done for his previous two feature films. Bozzetto's proposed deal was only about the cost of the prints and of their distribution in cinemas, with no production attachments.⁸⁴ However, Cineriz refused the deal. The alleged motives confronted Bozzetto with the worst consequences of the Italian prejudice about animation being for children only (see Chapter 1). The objections focused on the target of the film: the work was appreciated per se, but it was deemed “not for children”⁸⁵ and as such not marketable as “animation.” On the other hand, they argued that it could not fit into the category of underground “adult” animation, which at the time, in Italy, was identified with films like *Fritz the Cat* (Ralph Bakshi, 1972), which had been released in Italian cinemas by Medusa Film two times, in 1972 and 1973. Consequently, in this respect, they dismissed *Allegro non troppo* as not “pornographic” enough.

⁸²Bozzetto in the documentary “Ricordando *Allegro non troppo*.”

⁸³Bozzetto in the documentary *Gente di Milano—I mondi di Bruno Bozzetto*.

⁸⁴Bozzetto in Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo*, 106, and also during a class for the History of Animation course at the Department of Cultural Heritage, University of Padova, Italy, November 25, 2014.

⁸⁵“Non è per bambini.” Bozzetto in Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo*, 106.

The film was at risk of remaining unreleased; however, a former collaborator of Bozzetto, Giuliana Nicodemi, offered her help to set up a distribution in the United States. She had been the sales manager of Bozzetto Film since 1972;⁸⁶ she made a deal with Pat Finley's company Specialty Film. After being in competition at the Chicago International Film Festival (November 1976), the film had a US release on July 27, 1977, to mostly positive reviews, which only objected about the grotesque tone of the live-action sequences.⁸⁷ In 1978, Nicodemi moved to New York to establish, on January 11, Italtoons, her own production and distribution company, which would have later become a gateway to an English-speaking audience for the later works of Bozzetto, Nichetti, and Manuli; she also distributed works by non-Italian artists, like Bill Plympton. Nicodemi had also the merit to terminate the contract between Bozzetto and Specialty Films when the company was facing dire financial problems, on the verge of bankruptcy. That move saved the film from sinking into oblivion; it was instead resold first to New Line, and then (1981) to Don Krim's Kino International, until 1987. The distribution was both theatrical and nontheatrical. In 1990, Nicodemi favored a new American theatrical run of *Allegro non troppo*, thanks to a new contract with Expanded Entertainment, a Los Angeles company managed by Terry Thoren, who was an admirer of Bozzetto. The film was relaunched with the support of a relevant advertising campaign; some scenes that had been partially expunged in occasion of the first American release were reintegrated to promote the film as a director's cut. Later, the RCA Corporation bought the rights to produce and sell videotapes and videodiscs of *Allegro*, but technical difficulties prevented this; so, in 1994 the home video rights were passed on to the Public Media of Chicago (later Home Vision). *Allegro* had also a parallel American circulation in campuses and universities, through 16 mm prints; in 1982, Bozzetto personally attended several campus screenings in the East and West Coast.⁸⁸

The overseas success of *Allegro non troppo* acted as a springboard for its Italian release. In 1977, Bozzetto got a call from the United States: a representative of Roxy International asked if the film had already an Italian distributor and advanced a proposal that brought *Allegro* in Italian cinemas on December 22, 1977.

The worries of Cineriz about the lack of a target audience did not prove true: the ticket sales were satisfactory, because of a kind of audience that no Italian distributor would have considered as a target for an animated film, at the time. As a cinema manager once told to Bozzetto, "Those who

⁸⁶Giuliana Nicodemi in Alessandra Raengo, "L'amica americana. Intervista con Giuliana Nicodemi," in Bendazzi and De Berti, *La fabbrica dell'animazione*, 136.

⁸⁷Bozzetto in Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo*, 107–8.

⁸⁸Nicodemi in Raengo, "L'amica americana," 138.

come to the cinema look like as if they are from the same mold: they are all young, around 18–20, wearing blue jeans, shirts and maybe with long hair.”⁸⁹ By appealing to young adults with much more than just sexual undertones, *Allegro non troppo* became also a groundbreaking achievement in the Italian popular perception of animated films, and a confirmation of Bozzetto’s ability to intercept and interpret the spirit of his age.

⁸⁹“Le persone che vengono al cinema sembrano fatte con lo stampino: sono tutti giovani, sui 18–20 anni, coi blue-jeans, con le camicie e magari con i capelli lunghi.” Bozzetto in Sbravatti, *Allegro non troppo*, 106–7.