Bellano, Marco. "Introduction: Sketching around Bozzetto." : *Bruno Bozzetto's Animated Music*. New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2021. 1–20. *Bloomsbury Collections*. Web. 26 Apr. 2023. <<http://dx.doi.org/10.5040/9781501350894-007>>.

Downloaded from Bloomsbury Collections, www.bloomsburycollections.com, 26 April 2023, 10:47 UTC.

Copyright © Marco Bellano 2021. Released under a CC BY-NC-ND licence (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/3.0/>). You may share this work for non-commercial purposes only, provided you give attribution to the copyright holder and the publisher, and provide a link to the Creative Commons licence.

Introduction: Sketching around Bozzetto

Ideas, Lines, Images, and Their Circumstances

“A drawing is an idea with a line around it.”¹ Bruno Bozzetto (Milan, Italy, March 3, 1938) has repeated this favorite quote of him so many times that it became indissolubly bounded to him and his art. Bozzetto acknowledges an unnamed child² with the paternity of this phrase, even though it sounds quite similar to a motto³ ascribed to the French painter Henri Matisse (1869–1954); anyhow, it remains the most elegant short commentary on Bozzetto’s approach to animation. Ideas are the main fuel of his films, while the visual style is instrumental to them: after all, because of a poetic coincidence, Bozzetto’s surname means “sketch” in Italian, and another of

---

¹“Un disegno è un’idea con una linea intorno.” Bozzetto can be heard saying this in the documentary film *Bozzetto non troppo* (2017), dir. Marco Bonfanti, Italy: Istituto Luce Città, at 1:14:7.

²According to Bozzetto, the child who said that was a participant in a discussion about Bozzetto’s animation during a class taught by Massimo Maisetti, a scholar and writer specialized in animation. Maisetti later informed the director about the remark of the child. Bozzetto in the documentary *L’arte è un delfino. Intervista a Bruno Bozzetto* (Stefania Gaudiosi, September 30, 2019). <https://www.tribune.com/television/2019/09/video-l-arte-e-un-delfino-intervista-a-bruno-bozzetto/> (accessed December 14, 2019).

³“Dessiner met une ligne autour d’une idée.” For example, the quote inspired the title of an exhibition at the Gagosian Gallery in Genève, Switzerland: “A line (a)round an idea,” May 2–July 27, 2019, <https://gagosian.com/exhibitions/2019/a-line-around-an-idea-selected-works-on-paper/> (accessed July 1, 2019).

his catchphrases is that he cannot actually draw well.⁴ This is why, for his films, he mostly relied on the graphic competences of a selected group of colleagues and friends. Bozzetto's self-taught drawing skills might be limited to two-dimensional characters, made of simple shapes and angular lines, but his design is always cleverly functional to comedy and satire and, more importantly, it consistently stays easily readable and highly expressive. In terms of communicative effectiveness, in spite of his own judgment, Bozzetto can be considered a major visual artist. In fact, he did not shy away from illustrating books or providing newspapers with cartoons featuring his most famous character, Mr. Rossi. He also mentions Saul Steinberg, R. O. Blechman,⁵ and Ronald Searle⁶ among the main references of his drawing style.

It is in filmmaking, though, that Bozzetto's art showed its outstanding qualities at best. *Mistertao* (1988) won a Golden Bear for the Best Short Film at the 1990 Berlin International Film Festival; *Cavallette (Grasshoppers)*, 1990) received an Academy Award Nomination for Best Animated Short Film in 1991; from November 21, 2013, to March 17, 2014, the Walt Disney Family Museum in San Francisco hosted the exhibition "Bruno Bozzetto: Animation, Maestro!" More than by honors and awards, though, the worth of Bozzetto's body of work is proved by the unwaveringly positive audience response that continues to the present day in respect to the new, self-produced shorts he keeps releasing online through his YouTube account, BrunoBozzettoChannel.

Many reasons justify Bozzetto's domestic success and international recognition. Among the most important ones there might be a widely relatable thematic choice, which is to say the parodistic exposition of the foolish inclination of humans to pursue self-destructive life choices, while appeasing a greedy pursue of power. Since his first animated short film, *Tapum! La storia delle armi (Tapum! The History of Weapons)*, 1958), Bozzetto has adopted a consistent satirical strategy, based on the estrangement of the viewer from the subject. Many of his films show, in caricature, the absurdity of the human behavior. The events, often graphically violent and dramatic, are however presented in the fashion of a documentary; a mockingly authoritative voiceover sometimes reinforces this impression. A faraway point of view completes the disengagement of the spectator. As Bozzetto often remarked, even the most tumultuous crowd, from a distance, looks like a bunch of insects. That is why he has sometimes been called

⁴Anna Antonini, "Bruno Bozzetto: Wit and Wisdom," *Animation Journal* 25 (2017): 38.

⁵Bozzetto in Roberto Tirapelle (wrongly attributed to Alessandro Camon), ed., *Il cinema di Bruno Bozzetto. Sequenze* 9 (Verona: Nuova Grafica Cierre, 1990), 9.

⁶Bozzetto in Ivan Manuppelli, "Intervista a Bruno Bozzetto," *Piero Tonin Blog*, December 12, 2014, http://pierotonin.blogspot.com/2014/12/intervista-bruno-bozzetto_12.html (accessed October 17, 2019).

the entomologist of mankind.⁷ The viewers are thus invited to laugh at the miseries of the human race from a safe position, while, ironically, the film is actually targeting them. This lingering irony, which is in some ways close to the disenchantment of Voltaire's *Candide*, is a distinctive trait of Bozzetto's narrative style and one of the foundations of its universal appeal.

Another distinguishing feature of Bozzetto's works, and one that firmly secured them a place in the panorama of contemporary animation, is their affinity with the stylized visual approach championed by many authors and schools around the world between the 1950s and 1970s. Bozzetto's first inspiration was Ward Kimball, and in particular the daringly stylized (for the Disney canon) animated documentary *Toot, Whistle, Plunk and Boom* (1953);⁸ this choice brought Bozzetto in the same artistic area of other films he knew and esteemed, those by the United Productions of America (UPA), like *Gerald McBoing Boing* (Robert Cannon, 1951) and *Rooty Toot Toot* (John Hubley, 1951), as well as of the abstract designs of the Zagreb School of Animated Film, nurtured by the talents of Dušan Vukotić, Borivoj Dovniković, Ante Zaninović, Zlatko Bourek, Zlatko Grgić, Vladimir Jutriša, Aleksandar Marks, Vatroslav Mimica, and Nedeljko Dragić; they were identified as a school by Georges Sadoul in 1958, the same year of Bozzetto's debut at the second edition of the Rencontres Internationales du Film d'Animation, a subsection of the Cannes Film Festival (its next edition, in 1960, would have become the Festival international du film d'animation d'Annecy). The director also lists Norman McLaren and the works of the National Film Board of Canada (NFB) among the main drives of his early inspiration: they revealed to him that it was possible to make animation without anthropomorphic animals.⁹ However, as Bozzetto himself remarked,¹⁰ the NFB and Zagreb films were mostly intended for a niche audience at festivals; he wanted instead to reach average filmgoers and people. This is why his choice of Kimball as a first source of inspiration proved to be strategic: Kimball had a somewhat radical approach to animation design (which was also in tune with Bozzetto's own drawing skills), but it was framed within the Disney model that had among its main tenets the ability to achieve a widespread appeal, "anything that a person likes to see, a quality of charm, pleasing design, simplicity, communication and magnetism," in the words of the

⁷Antonini, "Bruno Bozzetto: Wit and Wisdom," 39. Bozzetto himself acknowledged this definition of his in the documentary *Bozzetto non troppo*, at 1:05:00.

⁸Bozzetto during a meeting with the author in Bergamo, Italy, on January 4, 2019; also mentioned in the English biography published on Bozzetto's official website, https://www.bozzetto.com/pdf/longbio_bb.pdf (accessed September 24, 2020).

⁹Bruno Bozzetto, "Adagio, accelerando," in *Fantasmagoria. Un secolo (e oltre) di cinema d'animazione*, ed. Davide Giurlando (Venezia: Marsilio, 2017), 79.

¹⁰Bozzetto during a meeting with the author in Bergamo, Italy, on July 5, 2019.

Disney veterans Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston.¹¹ In addition to that, shortly after Bozzetto's debut, the bidimensional and stylized approach to narrative animated drawings cemented itself as a popular standard in the Western world, thanks to the international successes of the TV series and sitcoms in limited animation of the Hanna-Barbera Productions, like "The Flintstones" (1960–5). Such stylistic trend encountered the Italian audience in a crucial moment: the airing of the evening TV advertising program "Carosello" ("Carousel"), which between 1957 and 1977 remained the only time slot available to commercials in the programming of the single-channel (two-channel from 1961) Italian state television, RAI.¹² Limited animation with a strong design proved functional to the increasing need for relatively cheap but highly appealing short ads. In fact, some of the Hanna-Barbera characters were even licensed to the Italian Studio Pagot, which animated commercials with the Flintstones, the Jetsons, Yogi Bear, and Huckleberry Hound.¹³ Bozzetto's natural alignment with those market requirements granted him a preeminent position in the panorama of the "Carosello" animated ads; some of the most successful and well-remembered characters of the program came from Bozzetto's studio, including the American Indian Unca Dunca and the beavers Pildo, Poldo, and Baffoblù. Bozzetto, though, also directed live-action commercials for "Carosello." As a filmmaker, he has always affirmed that he was interested in cinema as a whole, even though animation had his unquestioned preference;¹⁴ this is why his filmography comprises several live-action works, including his fourth and last full-length feature, *Sotto il ristorante cinese* (*Under the Chinese Restaurant*, 1987). However, commercials had never been a preferred outlet to Bozzetto's creativity. He considered the average "Carosello" animations quite crude in terms of technical standard, and he felt that they appealed only to children, while he has always wanted to speak to adults.¹⁵ This is also why he had a mixed opinion on the Hanna-Barbera series, notwithstanding the apparent visual similarities between them and his own films. Anyway, Bozzetto had always aimed at making his commercials with uncompromised quality, but his decision to embark in such productions was mostly dictated by necessity. In fact, he was able to fund his short and features mostly because of the revenue from the commercials. Bozzetto's commitment with "Carosello" started just by chance, because of a suggestion from a friend of his who

¹¹Frank Thomas and Ollie Johnston, *The Illusion of Life: Disney Animation* (New York: Disney Editions, 1981), 68.

¹²See Piero Dorflès, *Carosello* (Bologna: Il Mulino, 1998).

¹³Fulvio Fiori and Marco Pagot, eds., *The Art of Pagot* (Milano: Edizioni BD, 2008), 91–3.

¹⁴Bozzetto in the documentary film *Gente di Milano—I mondi di Bruno Bozzetto* (Daniela Trastulli, in the DVD "I corti di Bruno Bozzetto," part of the DVD collection "Tutto Bozzetto (o quasi)" (Roma: Multimedia San Paolo, 2005), at 00:16:20.

¹⁵Bozzetto during a meeting with the author in Bergamo, Italy, on July 5, 2019.

worked for the automotive firm Innocenti; at the beginning of the 1960s, the director was about to sell out all his cinematographic equipment, with the intention to leave animation for good (because of how unprofitable it was) and to study for a university degree.¹⁶ The decision to work for “Carosello” gave a new chance to his career, but he remained sourly skeptical about the life models and consumerism ideals that those ads promoted; such are the roots of the pungent parodies of ads and average buyers abundantly present in his works, and prominently so in the feature film *Vip, Mio fratello superuomo* (*Vip, My Superman Brother*, 1968).

Italian Animation: An Overview, from Its Origins to the 1970s

The involvement of the director with “Carosello” points out another decisive reason behind the consolidation of Bozzetto’s reputation: he started his career and produced his most renowned works during the years when Italian animation peaked, in terms of quality, originality, and sociocultural relevance; Bozzetto himself was one of the driving forces of this “golden age,” but he also benefited from the favorable circumstances. In 1957, when “Carosello” debuted, the impact of Italian animation on the audiovisual culture of the country was almost nonexistent. While the Disney films enjoyed a rapidly growing fame and appreciation, also thanks to a series of rapid-fire releases during the 1940s that made up for the films that had never reached Italian cinemas due to the Second World War,¹⁷ the domestic animated production was scarce, mostly derivative and limited to hand-drawn short films, which were still being made with makeshift means and an amateurish approach. Only a few film studios used part of their resources to make animations, like the Istituto Nazionale Luce or the INCOM (Industria CortiMetraggi; “Short Film Industry”), a production company founded in 1938 by Sandro Pallavicini to make propaganda shorts and newsreels for the fascist regime (1922–43); it kept producing newsreels until 1967, the

¹⁶Bozzetto in Gianni Rondolino, *Bruno Bozzetto Pubblicitario* (Torino: STIP, 1969), quoted in Massimo Scaglioni, “La pubblicità: da Carosello allo spot,” in *La fabbrica dell’animazione. Bruno Bozzetto nell’industria culturale italiana*, ed. Giannalberto Bendazzi, Raffaele De Berti (Milano: Editrice Il Castoro, 2003), 43.

¹⁷*Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* was released in Italy during the 1938/1939 season; then, after the War hiatus, *Saludos Amigos* was released on April 15, 1946; *Fantasia* on September 19, 1946; *Pinocchio* on November 4, 1947; *Bambi* on February 11, 1948; *Dumbo* on October 3, 1948; *The Three Caballeros* on July 14, 1949; *Snow White* was rereleased between December 1949 and January 1950; *Make Mine Music* opened in cinemas on December 16, 1949 and *Song of the South* in April 1950. See Nunziante Valoroso, “Stagioni cinematografiche Walt Disney Italia 1938–2000,” *Cabiria* 171 (2012): 45–6.

year when it was bought by the Istituto Nazionale Luce.¹⁸ During the 1930s and 1940s, small animation studios were starting business and then closing down after a short while: such were the cases of the Milion Film, founded by the brothers Carlo (1907–1964) and Vittorio Cossio (1911–1984), or of the Macco Film, established in Rome by Luigi Giobbe in 1942 and then destroyed by a fire in 1943.¹⁹ In 1935, the composer, director, actor, and cinematographer Romolo Bacchini (1872–1938)²⁰ embarked his studio Cartoni Animati Italiani Roma (CAIR) on the production of *Le avventure di Pinocchio* (*Pinocchio's Adventures*), a full-length animated feature that would have been Italy's first. However, it remained unachieved, just like a previous feature film attempt by another director, Guido Presepi's *Vita di Mussolini* (*Mussolini's Life*, 1925–7).²¹ Another example of a short-lived animation production company was the CARAN in Turin, opened in January 1942 by the painter and illustrator Alessio De Barberis with the live-action director Jacopo Comin; however, the only source that tells about this studio is a single magazine article; no one of its films seems to have survived or even been released.²²

This dire situation persisted during the whole first half of the twentieth century, its causes having been the competition with the unmatched animated films from the United States and many technical inadequacies: the artists and animators did not have access to professional animation stands or cameras, which were not produced in Italy or were out of reach because of their high cost, and did not know the detail of the cel animation technique, the key to the efficient and seemingly faultless animated drawings imported from America. So, the devices and processes had to be reinvented from scratch each time a new production facility was set up. For example, in 1921 Giovanni Bottini (aka Jean Buttin) devised an analogue to the transparent cel technique for his short *La cura contro il raffreddore* (*The Treatment for the Common Cold*);²³ during the 1940s, two of the most relevant authors

¹⁸Marco Scollo Lavizzari, "INCOM," in *Enciclopedia del Cinema* (Roma: Treccani, 2003), http://www.treccani.it/enciclopedia/incom_%28Enciclopedia-del-Cinema%29/ (accessed July 7, 2019).

¹⁹Francesco Maurizio Guido, aka Gibba, *Diario. Un uomo di grande insuccesso* (Alassio: Città di Alassio, 2008), 33–4.

²⁰Bacchini is thought to have been the very first composer of original music for silent films; in 1906 he wrote the scores to two films credited to Gaston Velle, *Nozze tragiche* (*Tragic Wedding*) and *La malia dell'oro* (*The Enchantment of Gold*). See Sergio Miceli, *Musica per film. Storia, estetica, analisi, tipologie* (Milano: Ricordi LIM, 2009), 69.

²¹Marco Bellano, "Origini dell'animazione italiana: epopee di pionieri solitari," in *Fantasmagoria. Un secolo (e oltre) di cinema d'animazione*, ed. Davide Giurlando (Venezia: Marsilio, 2017), 46.

²²Raffella Scrimatore, *Le origini dell'animazione italiana. La storia, gli autori e i film animati in Italia 1911–1949* (Latina: Tunué, 2013), 55.

²³Raffaella Scrimatore, Mario Verger, and Emiliano Fasano, "Chronology of Italian Animation, 1911–2017," *Animation Journal* 25 (2017): 9.

in the history of Italian animation, the brothers Nino (1908–1972) and Toni Pagot (1921–2001), did their animated drawings by using transparent sheets produced by the Rhodia firm in Rho, near Milan;²⁴ hence the name that, for many years, Italian animation attached to the cel: *rodovetro* (“glass of Rhodia”; it has now been substituted by the English loan word “cel”). The Pagot brothers also engineered an animation camera with the help of their father Umberto, by modifying a regular camera with gears and sprockets made with cutaway pieces from a broomstick.²⁵ They even recreated independently the Technicolor process, unavailable in Italy because of postwar commercial sanctions.²⁶ Bozzetto himself, later, made his first animated film, *Tapum!*, with a 16mm camera mounted on a tilted ironing board.²⁷ Even with those ingenious and moneysaving strategies, though, the production costs remained a major hindrance to the development of Italian animation, as they did not have any chance to be compensated by the sales or even by the share on box-office revenue that the Italian government conceded to production companies during the 1930s.²⁸ Here is how a film critic, Joseph-Marie Lo Duca, described the situation in early 1949:

What is most surprising is that there is no regular production of animated drawings and puppets in Italy. When I speak of unemployed specialists, I do so because I do not ignore the efforts that had been done in this field. For ten times cohesive groups of artists, animators, inkers, and so on, teamed up. By wasting paper, celluloid, India ink and tempera, each one of them learned a craft. As they achieved a certain skillfulness, after the production of their first film—which was by no means infamous—the group collapsed. In Milan, in Rome or in smaller cities, many tried themselves regularly with animated drawings. In animated cartoons, the efforts usually resulted in a success. But the absence of a market and of some effective help made projects and endeavors sink. That Italy is the ideal place for animated drawings and puppets is just common saying. The crafty intelligence—that sometimes imitates art—is still strongly alive among us and it could be worthy of that new technical-artistic form that is the animated drawing. But the market is poor, and the future has been jeopardized by the routine. What could an Italian producer of

²⁴Roberto Della Torre, “Le straordinarie avventure dei fratelli Pagot,” in *The Dynamite Brothers. Una storia molto animata*, ed. Roberto Della Torre and Marco Pagot (Milano: Il Castoro, 2004), 41.

²⁵Della Torre, “Le straordinarie avventure dei fratelli Pagot,” 41.

²⁶Fulvio Lombardi, “Ferma, ferma lì! ... Ci siamo anche noi,” in *The Dynamite Brothers. Una storia molto animata*, ed. Roberto Della Torre and Marco Pagot (Milano: Il Castoro, 2004), 4.

²⁷Bozzetto in Tirapelle, *Il cinema di Bruno Bozzetto*, 12.

²⁸Scrimatore, *Le origini dell'animazione italiana*, 56.

animated drawings hope, in the present state of things? To lose two or three million per film.²⁹

As Lo Duca said, notwithstanding the unfavorable context, several early Italian animations proved to be far from infamous, and actually rose to historical fame in hindsight. Not much can be said of the 1911 paint-on-film experiments of the futurist brothers Ginanni Corradini, Arnaldo Ginna (1890–1976), and Bruno Corra (1892–1982), as they are today lost; they might have been the very first examples of Italian animation, even though some scholars differ on this point, like Carlo Montanaro, who pointed out how their work was probably intended just as a substitute for light projections in live performances. He instead sees a starting point for Italian animation in the short stop-motion tricks featuring animated shoes of Arrigo Frusta's live-action short *La storia di Lulù* (*Lulù's story*, 1909).³⁰ Other stop-motion sequences, this time with animated toy soldiers, appeared later in the Second World War propaganda films *Il sogno del bimbo d'Italia* (*The Dream of the Italian Child*, Riccardo Cassano, 1915) and *La Guerra e il sogno di Momi* (*The War and Momi's Dream*, 1917); the latter was directed by the Spanish specialist of "trick films" Segundo de Chomón (1871–1929). Stop-motion "tricks" were thus the first kind of animation practiced in Italy; however, during the 1920s, when the purpose of animation shifted from being a circumscribed attraction in a live-action context to embracing the whole visual and narrative horizon of a film, Italian artist consistently chose to employ drawn animation; that is to say, they based animation on the popular visual culture of comics and book illustrations (and of painting, secondarily), by following the lead of the United States. Stop-motion animated films were rare exceptions, even though Italy has

29

Quel che è più sorprendente è che in Italia non esista una produzione regolare di disegni e di pupi animati. Quando parlo di specialisti disoccupati è perché non ignoro gli sforzi fatti in questo campo. Dieci volte si formarono gruppi omogenei di disegnatori, animatori, inchiostartici ecc. Sciupando carta, celluloidi, inchiostro di China e tempera, ognuno imparava un mestiere. Raggiunta una certa abilità, finito il primo film—assolutamente non infame—il gruppo crollava. Regolarmente, a Milano, a Roma, in città minori, molti si cimentarono col disegno animato. Generalmente gli sforzi furono coronati dal successo per quanto riguarda i disegni animati. Ma l'assenza d'un mercato e d'un aiuto efficace faceva naufragare progetti e realizzazioni. Affermare che l'Italia sia il paese ideale per i disegni animati e per i pupi è un vero luogo comune. L'intelligenza artigianale—che a volte simula l'arte—è ancora vivissima tra noi e sarebbe degna di questa nuova forma tecnico-artistica che è il disegno animato. Ma il mercato è povero e l'avvenire compromesso dalle abitudini. Allo stato di cose attuale, che può sperare un produttore di disegni animati in Italia? Perdere due o tre milioni per film. (Joseph-Marie Lo Duca, "Alice al paese delle meraviglie," *Cinema Nuova Serie*, I, 6 (January 15, 1949): 176–7. English translation by the author)

³⁰Carlo Montanaro, "C'era una volta l'animazione italiana," *Cabiria* 177 (2014): 9–10.

a secular puppet theater tradition, part of which is a UNESCO World Heritage (i.e., the Sicilian Opera dei Pupi). That theater was mostly used as material for live-action films featuring puppets (*I quattro moschettieri*, *The Four Musketeers*, Carlo Campogalliani, 1936);³¹ animated puppet films remained a minority. The only animated restitution of the Opera dei Pupi was Ugo Saitta's *Teste di legno*, or *Pisicchio e Melisenda* (*Wooden Heads or Pisicchio and Melisenda*, 1938); Carlo Cossio, instead, directed a now-lost Western film parody with puppets, *Tompitt e i banditi del Far Prest* (*Tompitt and the Fare Fast Outlaws*, 1931). This niche repertoire of early Italian animation features also works by animators who worked in Italy but had East European origins, which granted them a special connection with strong national traditions of puppet theater and animation. Paul Bianchi (1902–1958), who was born in Ukraine, directed films like *Il topo di campagna e il topo di città* (*The Country Mouse and the City Mouse*, 1935), which is now lost, and *Un'avventura nella foresta* (*An Adventure in the Forest*, 1942); Giuseppe Šebesta (1919–2005), whose father was from Czechoslovakia, directed *Novelletta* (*Short Story*, 1949).

Among the scattered and visually inconsistent repertoire of early Italian animation, a few works stood out and earned historical reputation. Among them there are the refined and highly personal shorts (e.g., *Nel paese dei ranocchi*, *In the Land of Frogs*, 1942) by Antonio Rubino (1880–1964), an illustrator, poet, composer, and one of the founders of the renowned magazine for children *Il Corriere dei Piccoli* since its establishment in 1908; he was an artist who brought to Italian comics a unique style, in open contrast with the local and American traditions. During the fascist years, another distinct voice was that of Luigi Liberio Pensuti (1903–1946), an anarchic intellectual who first directed animated shorts based on texts by the Roman and anti-fascist poet Trilussa (such films were later called back and destroyed by the regime)³² and then worked for INCOM. His educational and scientific shorts brought Italian animation in the territories of the animated documentary and, notwithstanding the evident technical limitations, testified a conscious care in reaching communicative effectiveness through clear layouts, appealing drawings, and well-timed animated acting.³³ Another memorable contribution was that of Francesco Maurizio Guido, aka Gibba³⁴ (1924–2018); his first short film *L'ultimo sciuscì* (*The Last Shoeshine*, 1947) was the only attempt to translate into

³¹Scrimatore, *Le origini dell'animazione italiana*, 45.

³²Scrimatore, *Le origini dell'animazione italiana*, 118.

³³See Raffaella Scrimatore, "Luigi Liberio Pensuti, film d'animazione oltre la propaganda," *Cabiria* 178 (2014): 47–56; Cristina Formenti, "Note sul documentario animato italiano e il suo periodo delle origini," *Immagine. Note di storia del cinema* 15 (2017): 65–77.

³⁴Cristina Formenti, "Dal neorealismo al documentario animato scientifico: le animazioni 'realiste' di Gibba," *Cabiria* 178 (2014): 4–19.

animation the neorealist poetics of directors such as Roberto Rossellini and, in particular, Vittorio De Sica; the child in the short is in fact voiced by Luciano De Ambrosis, the protagonist of De Sica's *I bambini ci guardano* (*The Children Are Looking at Us*, 1943). The film is a retelling of Hans Christian Andersen's *The Little Matchgirl* in the context of the Allied invasion of Italy; while the drawing style roughly mimics the Disney shorts of the 1940s, the story is historically circumstantiated, has a bittersweet tone, and a tragic ending.

Italian animation started to produce full-length features in 1949, quite late in respect to other European countries. Germany had already had Lotte Reininger's *Die Abenteuer des Prinzen Achmed* (*The Adventures of Prince Achmed*) in 1926, while Spain produced Arturo Moreno's *Garbancito de la Mancha* (*Little Garbanzo Bean from the Mancha*) in 1945 and Denmark released Svend Methling's *Fyrtojet* (*The Tinderbox*) in 1946. Italy's case was unique, though, because two "first animated features" were released at the same time: Nino Pagot's *I fratelli Dynamite* (*The Dynamite Brothers*) and Anton Gino Domeneghini's *La rosa di Bagdad* (*The Rose of Bagdad*, or *The Singing Princess*).³⁵ They did not prove to be game changers for the Italian industry of animation, as no other full-length animated feature was produced in the country until 1965. Both films were first screened during the 1949 Venice Film Festival; *The Rose of Bagdad* even won the first prize in the category "Film per ragazzi" ("Films for young people"); *The Dynamite Brothers* was screened in the section "Film a soggetto" ("Narrative films").³⁶ However, after an unsuccessful cinema release around Christmas 1949,³⁷ *The Dynamite Brothers* sunk into oblivion. It seldom reappeared before its 2004 DVD release, as in the case of its black-and-white broadcast during the TV show "Mille e una sera," on RAI's Secondo Canale, at 9:15 p.m. on May 1, 1971. The ticket sales of *The Rose of Bagdad* were comparatively more successful, and the film reached the foreign markets of the UK, the Netherlands, France, and Belgium; however, the real profit was marginal, because of the massive production costs, the inadequate theatrical distribution, and Domeneghini's poor financial decisions. He was probably the only real producer-entrepreneur that Italian animation has ever had,

³⁵Even though Domeneghini's *The Rose of Bagdad* debuted at the Venice International Film Festival on August 22, 1949, just like *The Dynamite Brothers*, the latter was registered at SIAE (the Italian copyright office) in 1947; its registry number was 672. *The Rose of Bagdad* was registered in 1949 (no. 799). However, it is controversial whether a SIAE registration could establish the legal existence of a film in a certain date, or not. Giannalberto Bendazzi, "The First Italian Animated Feature Film and Its Producer: Anton Gino Domeneghini," *Animation Journal* 3, no. 2 (Spring 1995): 14–15.

³⁶Giannalberto Bendazzi, "Un produttore e il suo film. Anton Gino Domeneghini e *The Rose of Bagdad*," in *Il movimento creato. Studi e documenti di ventisei saggi sul cinema d'animazione*, ed. Giannalberto Bendazzi, Guido Michelone (Torino: Edizioni Pluriverso, 1993), 131.

³⁷Della Torre, "Le straordinarie avventure dei fratelli Pagot," 42.

but his penchant for grandiosity, often connected with his firm believe in the fascist ideals, had him promise to repay his creditors with the double of the loaned sums. When he evened out the production costs, he raised his offer to three times the due amount.³⁸ The two films did not thus kickstart the Italian animation market; however, they had several artistic merits and they favored encounters and connections between creatives that would have later contributed to the “golden age” of Carosello. *The Rose of Bagdad* and *The Dynamite Brothers* were profoundly different: the former was helmed by Domeneghini (1897–1966), a fascist advertising businessman who sought to emulate and even surpass Disney. His advertising agency, IMA (Idea-Metodo-Arte; “Idea-Method-Art”), which was established in 1929, was converted into an animation studio to face the crisis of the advertising market due to the War; the resulting film was a fairy tale inspired by *One Thousand and One Nights*, based on a close moviola study of a *Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs* print and enriched by the contributions of fine illustrators like Angelo Bioletto (1906–1987) and Libico Maraja (1912–1983), and of the renowned composer Riccardo Pick-Mangiagalli. The director of *The Dynamite Brothers*, Nino Pagot (1908–1972), was too a fine illustrator; with his brother Toni (1921–2001), the animator and musician Ferdinando Palermo (1913–1988), and the obscure but brilliant composer Giuseppe Piazzi (1903–1969), he created a film in four episodes that was ideally connected with the tradition of Collodi’s *Pinocchio*; it dealt with the mischievous deeds of the triplets Dynamite and their redemption. The film was less technically polished but more daring, imaginative, and dynamic than *The Rose of Bagdad* (Piazzi’s music even imitated Igor Stravinsky, and not the melodic style of US animation).³⁹ The production of both films was anyway slowed down and hampered by the War, even though the Pagot brothers were on the opposite front of Domeneghini, as they gave shelter to antifascists and people persecuted by the regime in their studios in Milan. Toni was also deported to Germany. In the end, *The Dynamite Brothers* was the more influential of the two, also because the Pagot brothers would have continued their careers by animating many memorable characters for “Carosello,” including the black chick Calimero, while Domeneghini, after two experimental shorts, returned to a managerial role in the advertisement business. The work of the Pagot brothers was also an epitome to the panorama of early Italian animation: it showed how to make the best of the energetic diversity of styles and approaches that marked the early history

³⁸Bendazzi, “Un produttore e il suo film,” 131.

³⁹See Marco Bellano, “‘Oh ... Musica moderna!’. Hollywood, satira e ‘modernismo’ nella musica di Giuseppe Piazzi per *I fratelli Dinamite*,” *Cabiria* 178 (2014): 57–70; and also Bellano, “*I fratelli Dinamite* di Nino Pagot (1949) e l’idea di ‘bello’ in musica,” in *Estudios sobre la influencia de la canción popular en el proceso de creación de música incidental*, ed. Sergio De Andrés Bailón (Salamanca: Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca, 2016), 335–57.

of this medium in Italy, while celebrating the ability to bypass the technical impairments with confident ingenuity.

The real game changer for Italian animation was advertising. Since the 1920s, when commercials started to be screened in Italian cinemas, the demand for short and visually compelling commercials had been steadily growing. Attilio Giovannini wrote in 1957 that the first blows to the Italian perception that Disney was the “embodiment” of animated drawings came precisely from the authors of animated commercials.⁴⁰ Gec (Enrico Gianeri, 1900–1984), a journalist and cartoonist who was also among the first animation historians of Italy, reported that the first advertising cartoon, for a garment bag,⁴¹ was authored by the Cossio Brothers in 1929 at the IPC (Impresa Pubblicità Cinematografica—“Cinema Advertising Enterprise”)⁴² of Bruno Ditz and Marcello Maestro; Bruno Munari, who would have later become a renowned designer, worked for the same company and collaborated to the Cossios’ animations.⁴³ Cinema advertisement offered frequent job opportunities also to other Italian animators during the 1930s and 1940s, as in the case of Gustavo Petronio, who created a well-received pair of characters for the Arrigoni food company in Trieste, *Arrigo e il suo tigrotto* (“Arrigo and his tiger cub”). Two other authors of animations destined to be remembered, Paul Bianchi and Nino Pagot, started their career in advertisement; they worked for the Publi-Enic company of the Leoni Brothers, one of the two major agencies for cinema advertising in Italy until 1950, together with the Publicitas company. Meanwhile, as already pointed out, Domeneghini’s IMA had already started business in 1929. In the postwar years, advertising became a main player in the economic recovery of Italy. The push to produce and sell claimed for more advertising agencies that mostly opened in the city of Milan. In 1951 Osvaldo Cavandoli, who previously worked with the Pagots and was destined to fame with his later “Carosello” character La Linea (“The Line”), established the short film studio Pupilandia (“The Land of Puppets”) with the photographer Ugo Gelsi; in the same period, the Studio 3P was born from an initiative of Elena Pellegrini and Osvaldo Piccardo, another former collaborator of the Pagots who later, with his brother Marcello and Bruno Munari, promoted and coordinated a major experimental center in film and advertising, the Studio di Monte Olimpino, near Como (1962–72).⁴⁴ The Gamma Film of the brothers Gino and Roberto Gavioli was legally registered in 1949;⁴⁵ its

⁴⁰Attilio Giovannini, *Guida alla pubblicità cinematografica* (Milano: L’ufficio moderno, 1957), 166.

⁴¹Scrimatore, *Le origini dell’animazione italiana*, 41.

⁴²Enrico Gianeri, aka Gec, *Storia del cartone animato* (Milano: Omnia Editrice, 1960), 192.

⁴³Piero Zanotto and Fiorello Zangrando, *L’Italia di cartone* (Padova, Liviana, 1973), 25–6.

⁴⁴<http://nuke.monteolimpino.it/Default.aspx> (accessed on July 9, 2019).

⁴⁵Marcello Zane, *Scatola a sorpresa. La Gamma Film di Roberto Gavioli e la comunicazione audiovisiva in Italia da Carosello a oggi* (Milano: Jaca Book, 1998), 22–3.

first animated advertisements were for the Lever agency, but the Gaviolis built their reputation at Guido and Oscar Maestro's Opus (that bought the Publi-Enic in 1950), starting with the short *Night and Day* (1951); the Gamma Film later worked for Ferry (Ferdinando) Mayer, a cousin of the Leoni brothers of Israeli origins, who founded his own agency in 1950, after a period as an employee at Opus. Most of the interest that Italian industries had in promoting their business through animated commercials goes to Mayer's merit.⁴⁶ Another major player in the pre-"Carosello" years of animated advertising was the Pagot Film studio, which had already been releasing animated commercials since 1936 (for the Leoni brothers);⁴⁷ in the early 1950s it changed its name into Opec—Organizzazione Pagot & C. ("Pagot Organization and Company") that remained active until 1972, when Nino Pagot died; it was later reopened as Rever by the sons of Nino, Marco and Gi (Gina), and is still active in 2021. The production was further stimulated by the establishment of competitions for commercials only; in 1951, the Mostra Internazionale del Cinema al Servizio della Pubblicità ("International Exhibition of Cinema at the Service of Advertising") opened at the Milan Fair; in 1954, the Festival Internazionale del Film Pubblicitario ("Advertising Film International Festival") had its first edition in Venice, but, after a second edition in Monte Carlo, it later moved to Cannes; it alternated between the latter and Venice until (1984) it settled in the French city, where it still takes place under the name Festival International de la Publicité Cannes Lions.

Such a productive context, now richer in resources and competences and fueled by an unprecedented demand for animation, paved the way to the debut of "Carosello" in 1957 and naturally attracted many young talents into its welcoming force field. Bozzetto was among them; and so was his studio, the Bruno Bozzetto Film (Studio Bozzetto & Co. since 2000), established in 1960 in Milan, via Melchiorre Gioia.

At the end of the two "Carosello" decades, Italian animation had changed its face. There still was not an industrial production, and an equal competition with the animated films imported from the United States was out of question; however, many studios had managed to stay active well beyond their opening and first works, fostering thus the consolidation of stylistic traditions and the continuous training of the skills of many practitioners. Such studios were more artisanal workshops than industrial facilities; there was not a single production model but a flexible disposition to modify or reinvent the animation pipeline according to the specific necessities of each

⁴⁶Roberto Della Torre, "È nata un'idea! La produzione pubblicitaria cinematografica dei fratelli Pagot," in *Un mondo perfetto. Le pubblicità cinematografiche dei fratelli Pagot*, ed. Roberto della Torre and Marco Pagot (Milano: Il Castoro, 2005), 13.

⁴⁷Della Torre, "Le straordinarie avventure dei fratelli Pagot," 38.

film, even by means of “trial and error” processes. In this respect, Bozzetto has always liked to call himself an “eternal amateur,”⁴⁸ always ready to learn a new craft from scratch; this is maybe one of the reasons of the visceral discontent he feels when someone addresses him with the word “maestro.” Productivity and creativity were anyway fiercely stimulated by the “Carosello” requirements: the deadlines and format imposed by the RAI were in fact quite restrictive so that directors and scriptwriters had to keep devising clever narrative and visual solutions in order to make the best out of those limitations. Each commercial could not last more than two minutes and fifteen seconds, which is sixty-four meters and twenty-six centimeters of film length.⁴⁹ The actual promotional message had to stay in the last thirty seconds only.⁵⁰ Each short could not be repeated (but there were some exceptions); every evening the “Carosello” time slot had to last ten minutes (from 8:50 to 9:00 p.m.), which allowed for a total of four shorts. This meant 1,460 new commercials per year, both animated and live-action.⁵¹ This is why the RAI, which initially wanted to self-produce the commercials, outsourced the films to private studios that kept multiplying through the whole country; even though Rome and Milan were the main productive centers, other film companies appeared also in smaller cities. Among those specialized in animation, for example, there were Paul Campani’s Paul Film in Modena or the Studio K of Francesco Misseri, Pier Francesco Tamburini, and Renzo Tarchi in Florence. The already-mentioned Gamma Film, in Milan, was one of the most active: in its first three years of work for Carosello (1958–1960) it produced 110 commercials; they became 290 in 1961–3.⁵² Many famous stop-motion “carosellos” were produced by Armando Testa in Turin; the Corona Cinematografica of the brothers Ezio, Fulvio, and Elio Gagliardo, active in Rome from the late 1940s through 1997, besides its contribution to the advertising market by means of its association with the Ondatelerama company in 1960, which was for a short time known as Publicorona,⁵³ deserves also to be mentioned because of a peculiar production of animated documentaries and experimental shorts.

⁴⁸“Eterno dilettante.” Mario Serenellini, “La medietà made in Italy nella saga nata 45 anni fa. Dialogo tra il Signor Rossi e il Signor B,” in *Bruno Bozzetto. Cinquant’anni di cartoni animati*, ed. Dino Alois (Torino: Edizioni Il Pennino, 2005), 56.

⁴⁹Vito Molinari, *Carosello... e poi tutti a nanna. 1957–1977: i vent’anni che hanno cambiato l’Italia* (Sestri Levante: Gammarrò edizioni, 2019), 23–4. Through the years, the allowed length changed to 2:30 in 1959, it went back to 2:15 in 1960, then it became 2:05 in 1973, and 1:40 in 1974. See Viviana Giovannetti, ed. *Ai margini del cartoon. Supplemento a Cineclub 25* (Roma: FEDIC, 1995), 33.

⁵⁰Dorfles, *Carosello*, 17.

⁵¹Marco Giusti, *Il grande libro di Carosello* (Segrate: Frassinelli, 2004), 13.

⁵²Zane, *Scatola a sorpresa*, 60.

⁵³Giusti, *Il grande libro di Carosello*, 16.

Other than by the proliferation of studios with a continued activity, the new florid condition of Italian animation was signaled by the quality and quantity of films made with no advertising purposes. Those works, mostly short films, were often produced out of the desire of artists and directors to put to test the abilities they honed with “Carosello,” but there was also room for films by traditional artists who, in the words of Giacomo Ravesi, saw animation as “a fertile land to extend their artistic search beyond the canvas and develop original connections between art, painting, and animation.”⁵⁴ Such were the cases of Cioni Carpi (1923–2011), Manfredo Manfredi (1934), Alberto Mastroianni (1903–74), and Magdalo Mussio (1925–2006).

With no real audience, apart from the people at the animation festivals that had started to appear in Europe in those years (like in Cannes, 1960, and Zagreb, since 1972), those short films embodied the liberation of the artistic desires of a generation. There was actually a marginal interest in theatrical success; a 1965 law⁵⁵ instituted a state award called “Premio di qualità” (“quality award”) that sustained the most deserving short films productions, destined to be screened in cinemas with full-length features; but the winners were usually not animations but “artsy” documentaries made with the prospective funding in mind only.⁵⁶ Sometimes cinema operators did not even program them,⁵⁷ as they feared they would have irritated the audience.⁵⁸

This situation freed the directors and animators from the competition with Disney; a plurality of visual styles could thus be researched and expressed without almost no concern, except the budgetary ones. For example, the theater and opera scenographer Emanuele Luzzati (1921–2007) and the cinematographer Giulio Gianini (1927–2009) initiated in 1960 (*I paladini di Francia*, *The Paladins of France*) a series of shorts wherein using stop-motion are animated cut-out collages of poor materials, including “fabric, paper, splinters of wood, plastic or glass, doilies for cakes, basically everything in reach.”⁵⁹ The final result bridged together the historical Italian

⁵⁴Giacomo Ravesi, “Painted Screens: Italian Experimental Artists-Animators,” *Animation Journal* 25 (2017): 62.

⁵⁵Law 1213/1965; http://www.prassicoop.it/Norme/L%201213_65%20A.pdf (accessed July 19, 2019). See also Marco Bertozzi, *Storia del documentario italiano. Immagini e culture dell'altro cinema* (Venezia: Marsilio, 2008), 125.

⁵⁶See Bruno Di Marino, “Vite in scatola: opere e autori del cinema d'animazione,” in *Storia del cinema italiano 1965/1969*, ed. Gianni Canova (Venezia: Marsilio, 2003), 227.

⁵⁷Bertozzi, *Storia del documentario italiano*, 125.

⁵⁸Bozzetto, “Adagio, accelerando,” 82–3.

⁵⁹“Stoffe, carte, pezzetti di legno, plastica o vetro, centrini delle torte, praticamente qualunque cosa gli capitasse a tiro.” Carla Rezza Gianini, “Animazione per passione,” in *Gianini e Luzzati. Cartoni animati*, ed. Alfio Bastiancich and Carla Rezza Gianini (Milano: Silvana Editoriale, 2013), 23.

puppetry with the most refined styles of illustration for children; many of Gianini and Luzzati's stories did not use dialogue, but their character acted in close synchronization with music from the opera repertoire. Two of their works based on opera symphonies by Gioachino Rossini went on to receive Academy Award nominations: *La gazza ladra* (*The Thieving Magpie*, 1964) and *Pulcinella* (1973, based on Rossini's *Il turco in Italia*, *The Turk in Italy*). Other artists who contributed to the ebullient variety of approaches to animation of the 1960s and 1970s were Giorgio "Max" Massimino-Garnier (1924–1985), Guido Gomas (Luigi Guido Gonzo; 1936–2005), Lorenzo Taiuti (1943), and Pino Zac (Giuseppe Zaccaria; 1930–1985).

This expressive renovation was encouraged also by new Italian initiatives that recognized the artistic value of animation, like the international meetings that took place in 1969 and 1970 in Busto Arsizio, Mantova, and Abano Terme, resulting in the creation of the Istituto per lo Studio e la Diffusione del Cinema di Animazione (ISCA—"Institute for the Study and Diffusion of Animated Cinema"), in the spring of 1970. In the same year, until 1971, the second RAI channel inaugurated "Mille e una sera" ("One Thousand and One Evenings"), a program that every Saturday broadcasted renowned animated features from the past, including *Vynález skázy* (*The Fabulous World of Jules Verne*, Karel Zeman, 1958), *Le Théâtre de monsieur et madame Kabal* (*Mr. and Mrs. Kabal's Theatre*, Walerian Borowczyk, 1967), and the two Italian pioneering full-length features of 1949. From 1970 and 1973, another program "Gli eroi di cartone" ("Cartoon Heroes") aired biweekly thematic anthologies of animated shorts, during the afternoon time slot of the first RAI channel dedicated to children's shows; it featured also films by Winsor McCay, Władysław Starewicz, and Norman McLaren.

Another major consequence of this situation was the reappearance of full-length animated features: in 1965, Bozzetto directed *West and Soda* (1965), an animated spaghetti-western whose ideation actually anticipated Sergio Leone's genre-defining *Per un pugno di dollari* (*A Fistful of Dollars*, 1964), but that was released later only because of the longer time required by animation production. Two more feature were completed in the 1960s, Bozzetto's *Vip, Mio fratello superuomo* (*Vip, My Brother Superman*, 1968) and Gino and Roberto Gavioli's *Putiferio va alla Guerra* (*The Magic Bird*, 1968), plus a film that alternated live-action with an extended animated sequence by Pino Zac, *Gatto Filippo licenza d'incidere* (*Philip the Cat—Licence to Hack*, 1966). But it was during the 1970s that animated feature films started to populate the Italian cinema repertoire more conspicuously, even though the numbers remained far from overwhelming. With the exclusion of the live-action works with animated sequences, the final count is of eight, among which there were some record-setters, like the first Italian hand-drawn version of Collodi's *Pinocchio* (*Un burattino di nome Pinocchio*; *The Adventures of Pinocchio*, 1971) and the debut of an animated pornographic comedy feature film in Italy, *Il nano e la*

strega (King Dick, Gibba 1975). Four out of those eight features were by Bozzetto: three films featuring Mr. Rossi that however were broadcasted in small installments on TV⁶⁰ (*Il signor Rossi cerca la felicità*, *Mr. Rossi in Search of Happiness*, 1976; *I sogni del signor Rossi*, *Mr. Rossi's Dreams*, 1977; *Le vacanze del signor Rossi*, *Mr. Rossi's Vacations*, 1978) and, above all, *Allegro non troppo* (1976).

Approaching *Allegro non troppo*

Allegro non troppo is, as of 2021, the third and last animated full-length feature that Bozzetto directed on the basis of an original concept and with an audience of young adults in mind (the Mr. Rossi films are usually not counted, because they are just collections of short films for children, based on a preexisting character). *Allegro non troppo* came at the very end of the “Carosello” era, and it retrospectively feels like a farewell to it, as well as a celebration of the history of Italian animation up to that point. In fact, in content and style, the film resumes major characteristics such as the accent on the short format (it is made of separate shorts alternated with a live-action continuing story), the use of cel animation (but there is also a brief sequence in stop-motion clay animation), a plurality of visual approaches (each short has a different design and animation style), a deep accordance between visual and musical rhythms (like in the films by Gianini and Luzzati), a mocking stance on advertising and consumers, and a blatant reference to Disney animation: the film is a parodistic remake of *Fantasia* (James Algar and others, 1940).

However, at the same time, *Allegro non troppo* also superseded all those traits and showed how far Italian animation could go. The short format is encased into a long continuity, and some of the animated stories overflow into the framing sequences, by mixing drawings with live-action footage; cel animation is used in unconventional ways, as in the bravura piece that is the episode on Maurice Ravel’s *Boléro*, where the animators had to draw intricate *sfumato* shadows in pencil on the bodies of the numerous creatures that populate the scenes; the stylistic diversity is used in close accordance with the expressive content of the music and storylines; the choreographic connection between music and movement is explored in depth; the parody on consumerism expands to a wider array of ecological and social issues, but it also deeply connects with the Italian context of the 1970s, which leaves a deep cultural mark on a film that anyway retains an international appeal; and, finally, the reference to the Disney model is by no means due

⁶⁰Maurizio Nichetti in Mario Querin, ed., *Bruno Bozzetto* (Trento: Centro di Documentazione Visiva, 1992), 27–8.

to marketing reasons or to a scarcity of original ideas, but it is a heartfelt homage to it and a deep rethinking of the very idea of “concert feature,” as Disney initially wanted to call *Fantasia*.

Allegro non troppo was also a landmark in Bozzetto’s career. In 1976, after eighteen years of activity, he had already directed two animated features and eighteen animated theatrical shorts, which earned respect and interest among critics and spectators at international festivals. A great number of short TV animations, like “carosellos,” program intros, and small specials, added to the count of his works. In the 1970s, he was also in the middle of a renewed interest for live-action films, favored by his encounter with the actor and screenwriter Maurizio Nichetti (Bozzetto practiced live-action during his stints as a filmmaker before his 1958 official debut); when Nichetti played the role of an animator in the interstitials of *Allegro non troppo*, he had already starred in three shorts by his friend. A premise to *Allegro non troppo*’s format, which reunites multistylistic fragments into a larger unitary structure, is found in *Sottaceti* (*Pickles*, 1971), which packs in mere twelve minutes thirteen episodes plus an epilogue, all making fun of the absurd human ways to deal with major sociohistorical issues like war, pollution, and so on; the animation is continuously varied and very stylized (everything in it is exceptionally drawn and colored by Bozzetto himself,⁶¹ just like it happens in one of the shorts of *Allegro non troppo*). Moreover, Bozzetto had already played with humorous uses of music from “high” repertoires in *Opera*, a 1973 short he codirected with one of his key collaborators, Guido Manuli, and that is based on surreal gags synchronized with excerpts from Italian operas.

Where This Book Stands

The aim of the present book is to introduce *Allegro non troppo* to English-speaking readers; it is both a historical record and an analytical commentary, but also a gateway to details on the history of Italian animation and Bozzetto’s career, which have been largely absent from the discourses of international animation studies because of a language barrier.

The book is divided into two main parts. Part 1 (“The Whole Picture”) is of three chapters; it is about *Allegro non troppo* from a general point of view. It has an informative scope and follows a historical criterion. Chapter 1 (“Bruno Bozzetto’s Life and Works: From the Short Format to the Feature Film”) outlines the director’s biography, with special attention

⁶¹Giannalberto Bendazzi, *Bruno Bozzetto. Animazione primo amore* (Milano: ISCA, 1972), reprinted in Alfio Bastianich, ed., *Bruno Bozzetto: 1958–1988* (Savona: Centro Promozionale Coop, 1988), 27–8.

to his professional efforts and the building of his view on animation and audiovisual aesthetics. The reader will be provided with extra elements of history of Italian animation when necessary. The critical transition to the full-length feature in Italian animation is discussed there, in order to stress the groundbreaking impact of Bozzetto's exploration of this field. Chapter 2 ("*Allegro non troppo* at a Glance") is an overall description of the film: its narrative content, its relationship with the Italian society and history of the 1970s, and its communicative strategies. The conclusive section of this chapter will be dedicated to the comparison between *Allegro non troppo* and Walt Disney's *Fantasia*. Chapter 3 ("The Path to *Allegro non troppo*") informs about the history of the preproduction and production of the film. It will also provide a few biographical sketches of the main artistic contributors to the work (e.g., Giuseppe Laganà, Guido Manuli, and Maurizio Nichetti). The chapter will report on all-new information about discarded episodes of *Allegro non troppo*, based on conversations with Bruno Bozzetto and archival material.

Part 2 ("The Episodes and Their Frame") approaches the several episodes of *Allegro non troppo* individually. There is a chapter for each one of them, plus one chapter on the live-action sequences that connect the animated parts and one chapter on the animated multiple conclusions of the film. Each chapter is structured as follows: (1) a description and summary of the episode; (2) "program notes," which is to say a commentary accessible to a wide audience but based on scholarship from musicology, music history, animation history, and animation theory. The structure of Part 2 will thus be modeled after *Allegro non troppo* itself. After an explanation of the methodology that will be used during the audiovisual analysis, Chapter 1 will deal with "The Live-Action Frame"; the live-action sequences in *Allegro non troppo* will be explained in light of their satirical and structural relevance. The rest of the chapters will be titled after the pieces of music used in the episodes: *Prélude à l'après-midi d'un faune* (Claude Debussy), *Slavonic Dance Op. 46 No. 7* (Antonín Dvořák), *Boléro* (Maurice Ravel), *Valse triste Op. 44 No. 1* (Jean Sibelius), *Concerto in C Major RV 559* (Antonio Vivaldi), and *The Firebird Suite* (1919 Version) (Igor Stravinsky). The last chapter is about the "Finale(s)," and the finale of the book itself, providing also its conclusion.

Some of the preproduction notes by Bozzetto have been translated and organized in two appendixes. Appendix 1 lists the titles of all the musical works that the director considered to use during his creative process, alphabetically ordered by composer. The plot ideas that the director wrote down near to some of the composition titles have also been reported. However, when such ideas were more extensively developed, they have been translated and collected in Appendix 2, ordered again by composer name.

A peculiar feature of this book is that the director himself is one the sources of its research. Over a whole year (2018–19), Bozzetto has kindly agreed to

meet the author to share his own recollections, archives, and expertise. This firsthand material on *Allegro non troppo* (and his other works) was cross-checked, integrated, and sometimes amended, when compared with other literature and testimonies on the topic, as it usually happens when interviews are involved in a scholarly work; however, it constituted an unvaluable sources of insights and research leads, which the author received with deep gratitude and which will be presented to the reader in the next pages.