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Allegro Non-Troppo: who, why, reception.

The art of comedy can be a very tricky subject, the art of parody even more so at times. The trouble with parody is finding one's own voice amongst all of the things being re-imitated. A parody/satire is the practice of taking an idea, a concept, or subject matter and imitating it in a comedic style. For example, one could make a parody of a John Wayne film and make fun of how the actor speaks or how the hero all ways rides off into the sunset. Now parody isn't always funny, mainly because it all depends on how funny the subject matter is. It is however due to this that there are things that many would consider wrong to parody. Things such as historical tragedies, massive wars, and, surprisingly, things considered cultural icons. This was the case behind a very odd film that is known as *Allegro Non Troppo*.

Allegro Non Troppo, Translated roughly as either; 'Not SO FAST!' or 'Joyful, but not too much!' is an animated feature film from Bruno Bozzetto Films. *Allegro* was directed, produced, written, and animated by Bruno Bozzetto, and was released in the year 1976. *Allegro Non Troppo* is a film that compiles both live action and animated sequences accompanied by an orchestral arrangement of classical music. However unlike most animated features that did the same thing as this, *Allegro Non Troppo* stands up uniquely for it's comedic take on this structure. Like mentioned before, this film is a parody. However, rather than being a simple parody of the genre of film, it takes on the mouse house itself. Now of course this isn't done flat out, but it is a brilliant satire of the famous studio. The unique part about it is that it takes advantage of their live action segments in between songs by adding some

funny, strange, and marvelously performed 'skits.' These were performed by Italian actors Maurizio Nichetti, who was also the film's co-screenwriter, Maurizio Micheli as the over-the-top presenter, and Nestor Garay as the 'slightly antagonistic' orchestra conductor.

Since its release back in 1975, *Allegro Non Troppo* has gone on to be one of those films that wouldn't be considered a mainstream popular film. However, it is considered one of the most beloved cult classics! This is mainly due to Bruno Bozzetto's interesting and very unique art style. Where *Allegro* truly goes on its own unique tangent from a simple Disney parody, is in the way the animated set pieces play out. According to film critic Phil Hall "...they function as backdrops for surrealism akin to *Yellow Submarine*..." (Hall). When it was released, it received much critical acclaim. Compared to his previous films, *Allegro non Troppo* stands out as one of his many highlights. After its release, it was nominated for best film at the Chicago International Film Festival, where he won the golden plate award for the same film. According to Bruno Bozzetto's official website, *Allegro* has won him 4 film festival awards as well as numerous nominations (Awards).

Artist Involved:

By: Jacob Chapman

Bruno Bozzetto was the director, lead writer, and producer of *Allegro Non Troppo*. Bozzetto's animation career started in 1958 when he made his first animated short "Tapum, the weapons' history". This short sparked a lot of interest, leading to his eventual meetings with Norman McLaren and John Halas at the Cannes Festival. Bozzetto would later go on to collaborate with Halas on several projects. In 1960 Bruno Bozzetto founded, alongside Piero Pinetti and Andrea Bozzetto, the Bozzetto Film Company. Guido Manuli, Maurizio Micheli, and Maurizio Nichetti were some of the company's first workers, setting the stage for *Allegro Non Troppo*.

The Bozzetto film Company made animated shorts, commercials, and feature films. Bozzetto and Manuli produced "West and Soda" in 1965. This marked the first Italian animated feature film since 1945. Afterwards the Bozzetto Film Company went on to produce "Vip my brother superman" in 1968. *Allegro Non Troppo* premiered in 1976, and was worked on by Bozzetto, Manuli, Micheli, and Nichetti.

During the 70's, Bozzetto experimented with different medium. He worked with color comic strips, producing several comics including strips based off of West and Soda. The 70's marked the beginning of Bozzetto's use of live action films. His first live action works were "Oppio per oppio" and "La cabina". Bozzetto's first live action feature film came in the 1980's with "Under the Chinese restaurant".

Guido Manuli worked with Bozzetto on writing *Allegro Non Troppo*. Manuli is an Italian screenwriter, film director, and animator. His career began in Milan as an illustrator. He didn't get into animation until 1960 where he joined the Bozzetto Film Company. There, Manuli worked alongside Bozzetto as an animator, writer, and art director. Manuli went on to work on the 1965 *West and Soda* film, and was a major contributor to the 1976 film *Allegro Non Troppo*.

Maurizio Micheli was the presenter in *Allegro Non Troppo*. Micheli has worked as an actor, voice actor, comedian, and playwright. He was very active in theater and on the stage, but had few film performances throughout his career. He mostly in films later in his life, in the 1990's and the 2000's. Notable works from this time include "Valzer" and "Pinochio". Maurizio Nichetti was a writer and actor, and portrayed the animator in *Allegro Non Troppo*. One of his most notable works is the 1989 "The Icicle Thief". Nichetti won a Golden St. George Award for the film at the International Film Festival.

Production Methods

:Alex Jermyn

The film *Allegro Non Troppo* utilized different production techniques in order to create the end movie. Since the movie is a parody of Disney's *Fantasia* it need to impersonate the movie in some fashion. This has to be done in different ways such as; the way the film was made, the techniques used, and the reasons behind the chosen means to make the film. Each decision put into *Allegro Non Troppo* had to be correct, or else the film would have not done so well. Being a parody the movie needed to copy what Disney set out to make. While at the same time having the movie be viewed as a stand-alone film.

The means as to how the film was made, allows for the movie to stand out. The movie was set out to copy *Fantasia*, but in a comical fashion. This was done through the merging of both live action and animated sequences. The live action sequences being shot in black and white, while the animated parts were done in color. The live action sections of the film are were the comical portions lie. This was done to keep the viewers attention between each musical piece. While revealing the background for the reasoning behind the movie. Whereas the animated sections have serious to light tones. Which are the portions of the film that were created to mirror *Fantasia*. Bruno Bozzetto, the director, made the visual in this form to show the viewers where his inspiration came from. However most of the visual works are more abstract than *Fantasia*'s. This was mainly due to the budget that Bozzetto had compared to Disney, which was far less than Disney's. Even some of the live action effects might not have been up to par with Disney. The film however was made this way to separate itself from Disney. By having the visuals be more abstract the

viewer has to think more about the meaning behind each piece. Bozzetto did this to give *Allegro* it's own style and to differentiate itself from Disney.

How Bozzetto did this is through the use of various techniques throughout the film. The live action parts were shot in black and white. This is method allowed for the animations to be more visually impactful. This is because the animations were done in color. The animations themselves use different methods to make the visuals flow on screen. Such as using rotoscope to assist in animating the more human like beings. As well as using cel animation in some parts of the movie. Cel animation was used different musical parts as well as the parts were the animations mixed with the live portions of the movie. However some of these techniques were not as smooth as Disney's might have been. Even the visual work being shown was more adult themed compared to *Fantasia*'s. These methods are Bozzetto was able to contrast *Allegro* from *Fantasia*. Through the use of these techniques Bozzetto was able to bring in a different audience.

Which all comes down to the reasoning behind each choice made. Bozzetto wanted to pay homage to what had inspired him as a kid. So then the movie gets set up to a similar fashion, that being a showcasing of music through visual interpretation. Bozzetto also wanted to keep the viewers attention differently than what Disney did. He wanted the live action portions to have more reasoning than to just say which piece is next. This is where the comical aspect comes into play. This aspect helps to keep the viewers attention by giving them something to keep track of and is easy to follow. This is done so because some of the visual works may take a different tone. So the comedy helps to lighten the mood for those that watch. The musical interpretations are another area where Bozzetto carried out with thoughtful reasoning. Some of the themes have darker

tones or have more mature themed visuals within them. Of course all the works were done to emulate the types of visuals that *Fantasia* had, but to cater to a more mature audience. *Fantasia* may have some works like this, but in the end it's still a Disney movie so there is a limit. Bozzetto wanted to create something that hit themes that Disney could not.

Allegro Non Troppo can be viewed as both a stand-alone film and as a parody of Disney's *Fantasia*. This can be thanked to how it was produced. Bruno Bozzetto wanted to create a film that paid its homage to what inspired him, while being something of his own take on things. All with how the movie was made, the techniques used to accomplish this, and the reasoning behind the different choices. Each was utilized in different ways, both between the live action and animated sequences. All producing a movie with mature themes and aesthetics, mixed together with slapstick comedy. The narrative at the beginning is to create a film that has not yet been created. When in fact it has already been and the movie knows this, and acknowledges the fact. But it sets out to create something on it's own, that is different from what is out there. It does just that with the help of the overall production of the movie.

DIGITAL ANALYSIS

While watching the film, you will be familiarized with a handful of techniques used. Since *Allegro Non Troppo* is a parody of the classic film, *Fantasia*, A lot of the techniques used in *Fantasia* are used in *Allegro Non Troppo*. Surrealism is used in this film almost entirely, making the film a bit absurd. Where weird aliens evolve throughout the film, or when Instead of an original orchestra playing the music, there is a group of old ladies playing the music. Even the way the colors are used, for example, when there are scenes of only black and white, it'll rapidly transition onto color, instead of using the colors from dark to light, the colors just appear. And also another example, in the horizon where the sky is red, there will be a hint of blue with a white glow on the horizon. There will be a scene where the animation is blended with the real time footage, and also where the animation is hand-drawn, during the scene. Stop- motion occurs later in the film, where there is a scene including clay figures of Adam and eve.

Throughout the whole film, including animation done on screen while the orchestra is playing, the artist is trying to escape from imprisonment, that's why you see the animation done on screen too. Some of the artwork seems to be sloppy and just put there, making it look as if the

characters will change shape any moment. The mixing of tinted photographic backgrounds are shown also, even in the scene where the Coca cola bottle creates new life, or when the being becomes sad that no naked female is being attracted to him. Other than anything else, the film is still original, and as they say, what Fantasia was afraid to do in their film, *Allegro Non Troppo* perfected it.

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