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# A New Vision Of Fantasia

#640

*Allegro Non Troppo*, written and animated by Bruno Bozzetto.

Wearing a gaudy sport jacket with a clashing shirt and tie, a man walks about the garish interior of an Italian opera house. He is telling us about the film soon to begin. It is to be an enchanting experience, emblazoned with dazzling color and glorious music. He explains that it has been the quest of many artists to combine color and note. His film, he claims, has succeeded grandly.

The phone rings. It is a call from Hollywood and a voice on the other end says that it has all been done before, that a film combining animation and classical music has already been made. "Prisney? Who is Prisney?" exclaims our narrator.

*Allegro Non Troppo*, the first feature length film by the quizical Italian animator, Bruno Bozzetto, has no pretensions concerning its origin -- it is quite simply a parody of Dis-

compositions of Debussy, Dvorac, Ravel, Sibelius, Vivaldi, and Stravinsky. Linking these animated splendors is a live-action story that comically elucidates the plight of the artist in modern society and eases the interface between the real and the fantastic.

The six compassionate vignettes encompass a surprisingly diverse vision and texture. Changing style and form with each new piece, the film rumbles and bounds through a variety of moody tales; everything from the sombre story of an aging satyr unable to find love (set to Debussy's "Afternoon of a Fawn") to the unimaginable recreation of the beginnings of the human race (set with unrelenting strength of Ravel's "Bolero").

The harmony of action and image with the classical music is always precise and, oftentimes, finely contrapuntal. A powerful example of this is seen in the penultimate sequence, set



"*Allegro Non Troppo*": "Prisney? Who is Prisney?"

ney's *Fantasia*. Yet this posture does not limit the film's worth. Bozzetto brandishes *Fantasia* above him as an ancient icon only to shatter it on the hard-edge of his drawing board. But he is not merely an anarchist, destroying without replacing. *Allegro Non Troppo* is an accomplished, highly inventive work that needs no comparison for survival.

Paralleling the structure of *Fantasia*, *Allegro Non Troppo* consists of six elaborately animated sequences illustrating the

to Stravinsky's "Firebird," in which a serpent, after eating an apple from the Tree of Life, falls into a modern nightmare of winged devils and consumer goods. The tumultuous pacing of the "Firebird" becomes an unerring assault upon the animator's ability for variety and rhythm. Bozzetto's response is spectacular, but the fluid magic of his animation provides more than just visual excitement. Viewing his sensuous creations, we are reminded of the true earthy bravado of Stravinsky's

symphony.

With all its gaiety of creation and imaginative rendering of image to music, **Allegro Non Troppo** is still far from a perfect film. Exploring a number of "liberal" themes, the film wanders through a labyrinth of self-contradiction. In the "Firebird" sequence, society is condemned for exploiting eroticism in an effort to sell goods. But the satyr story, existing solely on sexual imagery, uses whimsy as its defense for delving into the libido. Then, too, the live-action story uses "romance" and stereotyped notions of beauty with a tone that is anything but critical.

Another obvious contradiction arises from the exploration of violence. During "Bolero" the newly evolved Man is shown as consciously brutal and vocifer-

ous. In fact, the world about him has been recreated after a self-imposed holocaust. This condemnation is negated by the violent antics of the live-action plot where brutal slapstick gags are used because they are "funny." Old women are shot out of bleachers with champagne corks, others are struck, chased and intimidated. The supposed liberal sensibility operating within **Allegro Non Troppo** is like a snake striking at its own tail.

The enjoyment of **Allegro Non Troppo** lies in the unpredictability of style, mood and technique. But like all uncertainty, you must take the good with the bad. Anyway, don't compare it to **Fantasia**.

--Steve Seid

*Allegro Non Troppo is playing at the Surf, 4510 Irving in S.F.*