

### 13. CONDUCTING PERSONALITIES OF THE ITALIAN SCHOOL. CONTRIBUTIONS TO INTERPRETATION

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**Abstract:** *The art of conducting presents various typologies and characteristics that belong to the structure and personality of each individual conductor - the foundation of defining artistic individuality. Opera creation forces us to pay more attention to the technical aspects of the individual study of the conducting-interpretive gesture, which must always be correlated and complemented by the dramaturgical and psychological course of the characters.*

**Key words:** *art of conducting, orchestra, opera*

#### 1. Introduction

The conductor has the mission to correct, search and explore the resources of the artists to achieve the best results in a fairly short time. Although they are generally simple, the gestures of the conductor become complicated at the time of the subdivision of the times, that is why the musical conductor must have first a clear idea of the stylistic peculiarities and of the character of the works from the time of the rehearsals, in order to reveal effectively the requirements of the composer.

#### 2. Angelo Maurizio Gaspare Mariani

The concept of the conductor as we know it today appears in Italy with Angelo Maurizio Gaspare Mariani<sup>111</sup>, recognized as the first Italian orchestra conductor in the modern and complete sense, a musician whose contribution was essential for the spread of the opera genre in his native country and in Europe, but also for the definition of the modern conducting practice. Mariani particularly distinguished himself by the struggle waged during the transition period, which led to the affirmation of the single conductor – the one who provides the musical leadership on the podium, with the baton in hand. Concerned about getting the most appropriate sounds from each instrumental group (or play), Mariani has delivered training in technique and interpretation to create the perfect homogeneity in which the voices of the singers are to be integrated. For a period, he was Verdi's favourite conductor, one of the greatest conductors of Verdi, and the one who introduced the Wagnerian opera creation to Italy.

There was a close friendship between Mariani and Verdi that broke when appeared the rivalry for soprano Teresa Stolz and Mariani's interest in Wagner's creation. However, Verdi, who had a huge professional respect for Mariani, would invite him to Cairo to conduct the world premiere of *Aida* (1871), but the conductor refused, motivating the cancer disease he was suffering from (and which would kill him two years later), which was the reason that emphasized the separation between them. The documents investigated in *Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova* reveal

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<sup>111</sup> October 11, 1821, Ravenna - June 13, 1873, Genoa

the professionalism and skill of conductor Angelo Mariani and in his letters, we find reasoned observations on the qualities of instrumentalists and orchestras, which are sometimes classified by him as “unsatisfactory”<sup>112</sup>.

Since 1862 Mariani used the term *interpretation* with a certain consistency, criticizing the interpretative deficiencies caused by the inconsistent conception of the performance *Un ballo in maschera*. He had clear, valuable conceptions of what music, orchestral apparatus, and interpretation in general must express. After the performance, Mariani wrote a letter to Eugenio Tornaghi<sup>113</sup>, in which he expressed these complaints: “La musica del *Un Ballo in maschera* è tale che ovunque deve piacere [...]. Anzi, ti dirò francamente che non so capire come un pubblico simile possa tollerare le mancanze, che pur si manifestano scandalose, dell’interpretazione musicale, che, lungi dall’essere mediocrissima, è quasi sempre ordinaria, trasandata, priva affatto di senso artistico e di senso comune [...]. Mio caro Tornaghi: quando non è indovinato il colore dell’opera, quando gli effetti drammatici vengono male interpretati, quando i vaghi colori che devono presentare le voci, gli strumenti e le masse non sono che eseguiti pel puro valore delle note, allora, credilo, le bellezze di uno spartito non possono essere comprese dal pubblico [...]. Vi è una grande differenza da forte a forte, da piano a piano, da crescendo a crescendo; [...]. È errore poi sommo quello di avere in un teatro un maestro concertatore e un direttore d’orchestra. Se il secondo deve star soggetto al primo, non produrrà che l’aspetto di una macchina: è un brutto affidare ad una macchina tutto l’edificio di un’opera in musica! Se è un vero direttore, deve anche dirigere e regolare tutto, allora si avrà unità nella esecuzione, nel concetto e nella interpretazione”<sup>114</sup>.

“The music of *the Masked Ball* is written so that you like it completely. [...]. In fact, I sincerely tell you that I do not know how this audience can tolerate the errors of musical interpretation, which are outrageous and far from mediocre, which are almost always the same, devoid of any harmony and artistic sense. [...]. My dear Tornaghi, when the colour of the work is not highlighted, when the dramatic effects are misinterpreted, when the vocal colours are not accurate, when instruments and assemblies are only executors for the exact value of notes, then, believe me, the beauties of the score cannot be understood by the audience [...]. There is a big difference from forte to forte, from piano to piano, from crescendo to crescendo; [...]. It is also a big mistake to have a concert master and orchestra conductor in a theatre. If the second must obey the first, only the effect of a machine will occur in music: it is a bad thing to entrust a machine with the conducting of a musical work! If he were a true conductor, he should conduct and correct everything, and then a unity in interpretation will be obtained”. (t. a.)

### 3. Francesco (Franco) Antonio Faccio

Highly appreciated for his professionalism, Faccio distinguished himself by the preference of the composers who entrusted their works to him, especially for Giuseppe Verdi - who considered him “irreplaceable”.<sup>115</sup> Speaking about the life

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<sup>112</sup> Archivio Storico del Comune di Genova, *Annuario dei Teatri di Genova Anni 1845-1846 e 1847*, without the number of the page.

<sup>113</sup> Secretary of the Editorial House *Ricordi*

<sup>114</sup> Franco Abbiati, *Giuseppe Verdi*, Milano, Ricordi, 1959, vol. IV, pp. 680-681

<sup>115</sup> *Ibidem*

and artistic path of Franco Faccio's professional career<sup>116</sup> we cannot omit the connection he had with Arrigo Boito, whom he met in his years of study at the conservatory, they befriended and respected each other, and with whom he has experienced many successes.

*Cantata Patria* on Boito's text and the music written in collaboration (in 1860) was dedicated to other European states, including Poland (the country of Boito's mother), which in the first half of the 19<sup>th</sup> century fought for the independence of their national reality against foreign domination and to converge towards a national and political unity, just like Italy. *Le sorelle d'Italia* was made for the final exam in 1861 and was an attempt at the music of the future, the authors being rewarded with a special award – a 2000-pound scholarship received from the ministry for the improvement of musical studies.

Their stay in Paris occasioned their contact with great personalities of the time such as: Rossini, Berlioz, Gounod, Verdi. Upon returning to Italy, Faccio already had an important compositional activity: *Il Fornaretto* - 1857, *Ines De Castro* - 1859, three symphonies, sacred and chamber music. On November 11, 1863, he directed the premiere of his opera *I Profughi Fiamminghi*, written on a libretto by Emilio Prague at *Teatro alla Scala*, and in 1865, he directed the premiere of the opera *Amleto*, written on a libretto by Boito at *Teatro Carlo Felice* in Genoa.

Faccio will abandon his compositional activity (in 1866) to dedicate himself to conducting, being invited by the manager Achille Lorini in Berlin for the musical direction of the works: *Don Pasquale*, *Il Trovatore*, *Il Barbiere di Siviglia*, *Ernani*, *Rigoletto* and *Un ballo in maschera*. Returned to Milan (1868), Giulio Ricordi chose him as conductor at *Teatro Carcano*, where he opened the season with *Dinorah* by Giacomo Meyerbeer, then following *Zampa* by Ferdinand Hérold, *Faust* by Charles Gounod and *Lucrezia Borgia* by Gaetano Donizetti. Coming back to *Teatro alla Scala* (1869), Faccio resumed the opera *Amleto* (1870) with some changes, but due to the illness of the tenor Mario Tiberini, he had to withdraw the work from the repertoire of the season.

Franco Faccio marks a precise direction in the history of music, because through him the conductor occupies the first and most important place in the creation of opera, he is the artist who “passes into the depth of its spirit by assuming it as his own person, whom, in turn, offers to the public; he is the one who rediscovers, rethinks, rethinks, recreates and leads the spiritual essence, the representation of the work as a direct result of the sensitivity of his soul, talent and passion”<sup>117</sup>. Being a very good performer not only from a technical point of view, Faccio was recognized for his rigor towards all the details of the score, but also for his special sensitivity, because he put a lot of soul and feelings while conducting, fascinating the audience with his performances.

During his time as conductor at *Teatro alla Scala*, he was concerned with the image of the conductor and instrumental artists, being also the artist who chose the black suit and the white shirt for both the conductor and the orchestrators, so that the appearance in front of the audience is as sober and elegant as possible. Considered an excellent leader of the orchestral ensemble, highly appreciated for

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<sup>116</sup> March 8, 1840, Verona - July 21, 1891, Monza

<sup>117</sup> Franco Abbiati, op. cit.

the clarity of the conducting gesture, for the interpretive sensitivity and prodigious memory he showed, Mariani was conducting without score, was extremely rigorous and demanding with the artists.

In one of the letters addressed to the management of *Teatro alla Scala*, Faccio expressed his dissatisfaction with the attitude of an instrumentalist as follows: "L'oboista, mentre stavo provando la Preghiera, nell'atto secondo della Forza del Destino, si permise di accennare con l'oboe ad altro motivo di altra opera, con nessun rispetto per l'illustre Maestro Verdi che assisteva, incognito, alla prova di me e dell'intera orchestra che ho l'onore di dirigere. Mi credo in dovere di denunciare questo fatto... affinché si provveda onde la disciplina teatrale venga, da parte del primo oboista, meglio compresa ed osservata"<sup>118</sup>. "While repeating the Prayer in the second act of the opera The force of destiny, the oboist allowed himself to allude with the oboe to another motive from another work, without respect for the illustrious Master Verdi who attended, incognito, my rehearsal and the whole orchestral ensemble, which I conduct with honour. I consider it my duty to denounce this fact... so that the theatrical discipline is better understood by the first oboist." (t.a.)

The premiere of the opera *Aida* by Verdi (February 8, 1872) in Milan enjoyed a real triumph under the musical direction of Franco Faccio who, on this occasion, consecrated his relationship with *Teatro alla Scala* and his connection with master Verdi, being named "the conductor of Verdi"<sup>119</sup>. In one of the many letters that Faccio sent to Master Verdi, said "... ho la soddisfazione di dirle che la lettura di *Aida* (orchestra sola) fu completamente soddisfacente. Questa mattina metterò insieme, al pianoforte, artisti cori, e questa sera se la prova riuscirà efficace, porterò in orchestra toute la boutique, e la informerò in seguito sull'andamento delle prove successive..."<sup>120</sup>. "... I am pleased to announce that the reading of *Aida* (only with the orchestra) was completely satisfactory. This morning I will repeat with the choir and the piano, and tonight, if the rehearsal is effective, I will bring the whole ensemble to the orchestra and inform you about the evolution of further rehearsals...". (t. a.)

The relationship between the two masters became closer and closer, based on respect, trust and gratitude, and Faccio's professionalism ensured a guarantee for all the composers who entrusted their works, especially for Verdi who considered him irreplaceable in the works: *Don Carlo* (1878, Bologna), *Simon Boccanegra* (1881, *Teatro alla Scala*), *Otello* (1887, *Teatro alla Scala*), especially appreciating the conducting conception of his friend as "extremely refined and effective"<sup>121</sup>. Also, Faccio contributed to the memorable success of the premiere of *La Gioconda* by Amilcare Ponchielli, contributed to the consecration of Giacomo Puccini to the *Teatro alla Scala* with the works *Le Villi* (1885) and *Edgar* (1889), and Boito with the *Mefistofele* (1868). Franco Faccio showed great interest in German music and especially in Wagnerian architecture. While he was conducting *Lohengrin* at *Teatro alla Scala* began the health problems manifested by the loss of lucidity,

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<sup>118</sup> Raoul Meloncelli - Faccio, *Francesco Antonio, detto Franco*, in *Dizionario biografico degli italiani*, vol. 44, Istituto dell'Enciclopedia Italiana, 1994, p. 189

<sup>119</sup> Ibidem

<sup>120</sup> Idem, p. 217

<sup>121</sup> Ibidem

disorientation, the amnesia was increasingly obvious, being often accompanied in his way home so as not to get lost.

#### 4. Arturo Toscanini

Top graduate of Regio Conservatorio di Parma (in 1885), Toscanini<sup>122</sup> earned his diploma with full marks in composition and cello. On a tour in Brazil (he was a cellist in an itinerant opera company and second choir master), Toscanini was called to replace the conductor Carlo Superti, who was strongly contested by the public even before the beginning of the performance with the opera *Aida* by G. Verdi. In the chaos triggered by the protests of the audience, incited by instrumentalists who appreciated him for his knowledge in the genre of opera, Toscanini took the baton, closed the score, and began to conduct from memory.

At the *Lyric Theatre* in Rio de Janeiro on June 30, 1886, it was a memorable evening for Toscanini who delighted the audience with a brilliant performance. Following his triumph, thanks to his talent and execution skills at the age of 19, he was hired until the end of the season. Upon his return to his homeland, his friend, tenor Nikolaj Figner, will recommend him to the editor Giovannina Strazza (widow of Francesco Lucca) in Milan, and Alfredo Catalani will choose him to direct the premiere of his work *Edmea* at *Teatro Carignano* in Turin (November 4, 1886), where he enjoyed a new triumph and enthusiastic critics from specialists.

Toscanini resumed his career as a cellist for a short time; thus, at the premiere of *Otello* by G. Verdi at the *Teatro alla Scala* (February 5, 1887) he was the second cellist, under the baton of Franco Faccio and with this met the master, Giuseppe Verdi. Toscanini's contribution is remarkable in the period when he oversaw *Teatro alla Scala* for the way he worked on reforming the representation of the work, because of the innovations brought by his idol Richard Wagner. He managed to obtain the most modern system for the lighting of the stage that existed at that time (in 1901) and for the orchestra pit (in 1907), he was the one who imposed that the lights in the hall be turned off throughout the performance, prohibited the entrance of the delayed audience to the hall, prohibited the ladies to wear hats in the auditorium and pulled out the encores.

So, in addition to reinventing the work of the conductor, Toscanini also attributes managerial valences to him. In the years spent at *Scala* he claims and obtains full powers, intervenes in the achievement of decorations and costumes, in the methods of study of the performers, fixes the schedule of rehearsals and the management of the advertising panel. He also chose his artistic staff based on rigorous competitions and auditions, forming a stable orchestra for the first time in the Italian musical panorama. Toscanini enjoyed an impressive career in the history of the modern conductor, based on the principles consecrated between the second half of the 19th century and the first half of the 20th century. As Adorno stated: "fu un musicista dell'Ottocento che inventò l'arte del dirigere."<sup>123</sup> Certainly, his professional training, as the son of the country of *bel canto*, has enabled him to pursue an extraordinary career and to assert the essential values of the scores

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<sup>122</sup> March 25, 1867, Parma - January 16, 1957, New York

<sup>123</sup> "He was a musician of the 19th century who invented the art of conducting" (t. a.), Theodor W. Adorno - *Immagini dialettiche. Scritti musicali 1955-65*, a cura di Gianmario Borio, Torino, Einaudi, 2004, p. 53

performed. He was considered a reformer from the perspective of the fact that he had the ability to influence the quality of the performance in the direction of the compact running of the music, without concessions on the fluctuations of *tempo* or colours not specified in the score.

“Sometimes he exaggerated regarding the faster *tempos*, as a reaction to the romantic indolence and static inconsistency of the movement of the Italian works on the stage, at the pleasure of the performers, who used to develop virtuosity at the expense of the dramatic unity of the works”<sup>124</sup>. Toscanini's art of conducting developed the aspirations for perfection, for the absolute; he was grandiose in that he knew very well what he wanted to achieve through the proposed interpretative vision, but he also knew how to impose himself to turn his conception into the sound of the orchestral ensemble, his ecstasy and titanic (sometimes exaggerated) effort turning him into a musical dictator.

Stefan Zweig describes Toscanini as follows: “A poco a poco si sprigiona da lui tutta la forza della persuasione, e il grande dono della gestualità, tutto italiano, trova nelle sue mani magnificamente espressive geniale espressione. Persino chi è negato alla musica riuscirebbe a capire dai suoi gesti cosa intende e cosa vuole quando scandisce il ritmo, quando allarga scongiurando le braccia o le premeardentemente sul cuore [...]. Con crescente ardore adopera tutte le arti persuasive, prega, scongiura, implora, gesticola, enumera, canta a voce alta, si immedesima in ogni singolo strumento per ispirarlo, le sue mani imitano i movimenti del violino, dei fiati, dei timpani, e uno scultore che volesse rappresentare simbolicamente l'umana impazienza, la preghiera, il desiderio, lo sforzo, il fervore non troverebbe modello più adatto di questi gesti mimetici di Toscanini”<sup>125</sup>.

“He releases gradually all the power of persuasion, and the great talent of his gesture, totally Italian, finds a bright expression in his magnificently expressive hands. Even those who do not know the music could understand from his gestures what he means when he tacts the rhythm, when he opens his arms wide or when he presses them with ardour on his heart. [...]. With growing passion, he uses all persuasive arts, prays, begs, gesticulates, lists, sings aloud, identifies with each instrument for inspiration, his hands imitate the movements of violins, of wind instruments, of eardrums, and no sculptor who wishes to represent human impatience, prayer, effort, fervour would not find a more suitable model than these mimetic gestures of Toscanini.” (t. a.).

Toscanini's great art was capitalized by the force with which he imposed himself in front of the orchestral ensemble to make the instrumentalists aware in a real way of the interpretative vision on the score they had in front of them. From Harvey Sachs' descriptions<sup>126</sup> we find out that Toscanini “first deciphers the score on the piano, then memorize it, playing all the roles beating the measure, and at rehearsals he was focused on the dramatic values of the opera and the improvement of the timbral colours in the relationship between the voice - *solo* instrument or orchestra”<sup>127</sup>. He often appropriated even the role of director, insisting on the movements and expressiveness of gestures, which is why the comments and critics

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<sup>124</sup> Harvey Sachs, *Toscanini*, London, Weidenfeld & Nicolson, 1978, p. 68

<sup>125</sup> Stefan Zweig, *La resurrezione di Haendel. E altri scritti musicali*, Passigli Editori Firenze, 1994, pp. 83-84

<sup>126</sup> Harvey Sachs, *op. cit.*, p. 68

<sup>127</sup> *Ibidem*

he made came from a deep knowledge of artistic, dramatic, poetic, and musical values that converge into a work of art.

Implemented through the application of valences belonging to the Wagnerian experience in consensus with the European symphonism (especially with the German one), Toscanini's revisions in the creation of Verdi are of great importance. He had a direct relationship with Verdi and enjoyed the privilege of receiving the master's inheritance from his own hands. His conceptions regarding the interpretation of Verdi's creation stood out as revelations in the era because he managed to subordinate the vocal interpretation to dramatic coherence, as master Verdi had imagined. He was a master conductor in love and totally involved, devoted to his profession, who constantly sought the path to perfection, who knew not only to conduct an orchestra, but also to make it sound and sing. He held the baton in his right hand to mark the time, and his left hand up to choose the most suitable colors of sounds, the gestures were clear, but measured, essential, but supple, and the open mouth accompanied the singing.

## 5. Tullio Serafin

The artistic career of Tullio Serafin<sup>128</sup> began when he played viola in the orchestra at the *Teatro alla Scala* under Toscanini's baton, and later became the assistant of the master. At less than 25 he debuted as conductor at the *Teatro Reinach* in Parma, with *L'elisir d'amore*, under the pseudonym Alfio Sulterni<sup>129</sup>. In over 60 years of experience on the podium he was invited to conduct in the most prestigious opera theatres around the world, where he had the privilege of collaborating with generations of great singers and directors, his main concern being to obtain valuable performances, representative over time.

Very clear and safe conducting technique, the energetic and precise arms developed an exceptional conductor and musician, impossible to forget, which everyone in music respects for his professionalism and human quality. He was a great lover of music and singing in its depth, with his whole being, with passion, tireless, and he knew how to convey this love to all those with whom he worked.<sup>130</sup> He knew how to capitalize on singers and orchestra, he knew how to get the best from them and was a guarantee of the success of the works he directed with his magic baton. Tullio Serafin inaugurated *Arena di Verona Opera Festival* in 1913, with *Aida* by Giuseppe Verdi, a particularly important event in the history of the genre, which practically marked the genesis of a new scenographic style. With the advent of this festival, the painted scenes typical of traditional theatres were dropped and a preference for new three-dimensional elements, used for most of the works represented in amphitheatres, appeared.

Serafin's name is closely related to that of Maria Callas, he is a very fine connoisseur of voices and vocality. Maria Callas' debut in Italy, at *Arena di Verona*, takes place under the baton of master Serafin, with *La Gioconda* by Ponchielli. On various occasions, Callas stated that Serafin was not only a great conductor but had a decisive contribution to her artistic training and improvement, especially in the

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<sup>128</sup> September 1, 1878, Rottanova di Cavarzere - February 3, 1968, Roma

<sup>129</sup> An anagram of his real name used for the billboard, thus bypassing the ban on public singing imposed on students at the Conservatory of Milan.

<sup>130</sup> Norman Lebrecht (1991), *Il mito del Maestro*, Longanesi & C., Milano, 1992, p. 103

field of the interpretative technique. Here's what Callas said about the grand master: “Mi colpì una cosa che mi disse: ‘Quando si cerca di trovare un gesto, un modo di recitare sul palcoscenico, non basta far altro che ascoltare la musica. Il compositore ha già previsto tutto. Cerca di ascoltare con l’anima e con gli orecchi, perché anche la testa deve lavorare, ma non troppo. La musica ti dirà quali gesti fare’. E aveva proprio ragione.”<sup>131</sup>

He was the mentor of many valuable artists, appreciated especially for the way he managed the sound of the orchestra that was perfectly subordinated to the voices, the singers being not obliged to force themselves. Moreover, all the great singers of the first half of the 20<sup>th</sup> century had the joy and honour of being at least once under the baton of Master Tullio Serafin (Enrico Caruso, Mattia Battistini, Renata Tebaldi, Joan Sutherland, Rosa Ponselle, Rolando Panerai, Beniamino Gigli, Carlo Bergonzi, Jon Vickers or Luciano Pavarotti).

Serafin was very confident in the talent of the young singers, composers, and directors with whom he collaborated, among which we mention: Roberto Rossellini, Giorgio Strehler and Franco Zeffirelli. He distinguished himself by the special human and professional qualities he generously placed at the service of music, with the mastery and modesty characteristic of true values, and Tullio Serafin is one of them. Having a solid musical and cultural background, Serafin showed great openness to the creations of contemporary composers, which he also regularly included in the programs of the opera theatres seasons, working constantly with the authors for certain technical details and suggestions related to the preparation of the performances. In his repertoire we find an impressive number of works (over 240 titles), of which about 70 were world premieres.

Master Serafin believed that a conductor must possess three main qualities: “to know what he wants, to want what is right and get what he wants”<sup>132</sup> - the first two with reference to musicians, and the last one with respect to conductor. In other words, the master had a great power of persuasion over the interpreters, in the sense that he knew very well *what* and *how* to ask from them to make them not only listen.<sup>133</sup> “I was marked by a thing he said to me: ‘When you try to find a gesture, a way to perform on stage, you only have to listen to music. The composer has already foreseen everything. Try to listen with your heart and ears, because the mind has to work, but not too much. Music will tell you what gestures to make.’ And he was right, the music, but to express it as the conductor asks; had the power to inspire the confidence of artists in their potential, specific to great artistic personalities, this is why the performances coordinated by him remained emblematic from the interpretative point of view.

## 6. Claudio Abbado

Noted as one of the world's greatest conductors, the master Claudio Abbado<sup>134</sup> made some revelations about the methods of interpretative study he was approaching, starting from the rigorous research of the text, associated with a complex system of memorizing the score (memory schemes) learned at the school

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<sup>131</sup> Teodoro Celli, Giuseppe Pugliese, *Tullio Serafin. Il Patriarca Del Melodramma*, Corbo E. Fiore, 1985, p. 102

<sup>132</sup> Ibidem

<sup>133</sup> Ibidem

<sup>134</sup> June 6, 1933, Milano - January 20, 2014, Bologna



of Hans Swarowsky<sup>135</sup>, system which he developed and adapted later according to the repertoire. Each score studied represented for Abbado a source of new questions, research, searches, discoveries of new expressive forms and even the retrieval of the original sources of the scores. In this respect, the performance in 1969, *Il barbiere di Siviglia*, born from the revolutionary revision of the score based on the autographs of Alberto Zedda, is of anthology, paving the way for the renewal of critical editions.<sup>136</sup>

The vision of music as a living phenomenon in the constant renewal specific to Abbado ensures the continuity between the past and the future through the numerous works brought to light by the master. The concern for *the new* has produced reverberations in Abbado's interest against the research in the practice of music from the standpoint of historical information that has led to a deep review of the editorial criteria of the scores and orchestral materials and had an essential contribution in promoting initiatives aimed at spreading new musical languages. The master did not consider the literature from the past as static or repetitive, but he researched and found in every note, in every sound a rich source of information and questions, to which he sought and found the most suitable answers.

The fundamental particularities that define Abbado's professional and personal strength are numerous, and we cannot help but remember at least some of them: the importance of silence, tranquillity, empathy, the science of listening, strict discipline, attraction to the new, elegant, and clear gestures, simplicity, rigor, special attention to the smallest details, calmness, enthusiasm, and modesty in music. Musical creativity based on in-depth interpretative research with efficiency and listening-based led him to the idea that “la musica sia concepita come principio fondamentale e imprescindibile”<sup>137</sup>.

The continuous improvement of the mnemotechnical principles acquired at Swarowsky's school is revealed in the awareness that each studied score represents a new opportunity for analysis and rediscovery that offers the conductor new interpretative valences. The result of the thorough research on the musical text is in the archive of the personal scores of the master<sup>138</sup>, where are found important and valuable information that he kept secret during his life, materialized and synthesized in a customized semi graphic code, facilitating assimilation at the mnemonics level in the early stages of study. These schemes are a living testimony that highlights the highly meticulous work on specific study methods, through analysis and contextualization in the master's soul and the attention he attaches to programmatic-cognitive aspects and applicability in interpretive practice.

Abbado was concerned about the concept of the principles of rethinking, reorganizing, and recreating new typologies of concert halls, the most representative creation in this respect being the wooden ark designed by Renzo Piano for

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<sup>135</sup> September 16, 1899, Budapest - September 10, 1975, Salzburg. Swarowsky studied conducting with Richard Strauss and together with him founded the famous *Vienna State Opera Conducting School*, where the great conductors were formed: Claudio Abbado, Zubin Mehta, Daniel Barenboi and Giuseppe Sinolopi.

<sup>136</sup> In 1969, *Casa Ricordi* initiated a pilot project in the field of musical philology from which started other editions on Italian opera, which included the creations of G. Donizetti and V. Bellini, up to G. Verdi and G. Puccini, and appeared in the final edition in 2009, for the *Critical edition of G. Rossini's creation* of the *Rossini Foundation* from Pesaro.

<sup>137</sup> Music is conceived as a fundamental and essential principle (t. a.).

<sup>138</sup> Wolfgang Schreider, *Claudio Abbado*, Beck C. H., 2019, p. 79

*Prometeo*<sup>139</sup> by Luigi Nono<sup>140</sup>, because of the collaboration between the architect, the composer, and the conductor. The work proposes “Listening in silence, living in music, and adjusting the space, because what remains is only the sound that dominates”<sup>141</sup>. This is the musical space created by Renzo Piano for *Prometeo*, and if we carefully follow the project further, we will note that listening is not only a musical theme, but also an architectural one, because attention, “listening” for space - time - memory is particularly important for the architect.

Abbado's permanent concern over the music-space relationship was correlated with artistic thinking, with the most appropriate valences of sound modelling adapted to the requirements of the score, and in this respect, the collaboration with Nono represented an artistic partnership based on common visions on openness to the new and the release of the traditional concert hall conceptions. In the last years of his life Abbado was very involved in the conception and even the design of concert halls, and here we mention the *Auditorium Giovanni Agnelli* in Turin (inaugurated in 1994) and the *Auditorium del Parco* in Aquila (2012).

Abbado introduced aesthetic principles into the artistic practice, was concerned with the organization of the acoustic space, provided support to young talents and remained in the memory of all artists with whom collaborated a great personality, a great artist characterized by science, art, talent, enthusiasm, instinct and curiosity (professional), a master conductor with whom it was a real pleasure to experiment, to create, to create, express and interpret with great courage and confidence. Abbado knew how to offer a huge and varied range of possibilities to make music at the highest level, gradually, at different stages of work. And because the music “moves” according to *tempo*, it requires conducting gestures and architectures that need their own development space, and the freedom of movement in this space remains emblematic in front of the fascinating sound universe that this great master created.

## 7. Conclusions

The role of the orchestra conductor as we know him today, wins its affirmation at the beginning of the 19th century in parallel with the development of society, when composers begin to impose themselves in front of singers, and the orchestra continues to develop and organize in specific institutions. Today's conductor must strive for the perfection of the performance without altering the original requirements of the score, through a work ethic conforming to its training from which result the conducting gesture and the expressive force it wants to highlight in the approached works. He must know and understand very well the work that he must conduct to be able to provide correct explanations to the orchestra, especially since nowadays they have a limited time for preparation (as opposed to soloists or choir), the number of repetitions being more restricted.

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<sup>139</sup> The traditional typology of the hall has been reversed in *Prometeo*, especially in the central scene, in that this time the audience is surrounded by the orchestra.

<sup>140</sup> Venice, January 1924 - Venice, May 1990; was a composer, writer and politician.

<sup>141</sup> Gastón Fournier-Facio, *Claudio Abbado. Ascoltare il silenzio*, Il Saggiatore, 2015, p. 109

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