Conversation with Giorgio Carnini[1]*

Maurizio Corbella

*included in the booklet of the box set Ennio Morricone/Bruno Nicolai, *Dimensioni sonore: musiche per l'immagine e l'immaginazione*, Dialogo, 2020

Before establishing himself as a renowned classical concert performer, Giorgio Carnini, the dedicatee and first performer of Ennio Morricone's Fourth Concerto *(1993), carried out an intense activity as an organ and keyboard session player for RCA and other major Italian record companies, as well as for RAI, over a time period spanning from 1967 to about 1975 (with some later experiences). He was also a composer and arranger for theatre and film and put out numerous records, including plenty of library music. As a session player he regularly worked with Italy's major film composers, including Ennio Morricone, Bruno Nicolai, Luis Bacalov and Nino Rota.*

Maurizio Corbella:

The tracks in this box set feature a great deal of organ: I'm inclined to think that you took part in the recording sessions, given the collaborative continuity that Morricone sought with his closest collaborators. The six hours of music were likely not recorded all at once, but probably in quite a condensed time span. The recordings arguably took place at RCA studios in Rome, between 1971 and 1972.

Giorgio Carnini:

I listened to the sample you shared with me. I can't be completely sure that it was me playing, but statistically speaking I am almost certain. I can tell you that Morricone would always call me... unless I was busy in another session, for instance with Nino Rota: Morricone would not schedule a session if "his" players were not available, he had the authority to pick his own collaborators.

MC:

For this box set, as for other works by Morricone from that same period, the kind of language employed is quite experimental. He likely adopted a composing method he called "multipla," consisting of short composed fragments, whose cueing and layering were extemporaneously called by the conductor (I think Nicolai) during the recording sessions. Do you think this is the case?

GC:

They were short independent fragments, which were combined to form a complete composition.

MC:

[1] This conversation draws on three different phone calls which took place on the 24, 29 and 31 August 2020.

Did the conductor choose which instruments should play those fragments, or was this decision made by the composer?

GC:

It could go either way. Many times, the choice had already been planned at the composing stage, other times there was an exchange of instruments during the recording session. The "modules" were often collective. They were written in such a way that it was possible to decide from scratch which instrument would enter as well as how many instruments should play a specific combination. The duration of each call was the changing parameter. We would keep on playing until the moment in which Nicolai decided to fade some of us out, while the others ad-libbed...

MC:

Morricone and Nicolai decided to share the copyright equally for each and every track in this box set. So I think that, at least for a good number of tracks, there could be a "pre-composition" stage carried out by Morricone and then an "improvisation" stage by Nicolai. Hence the conductor could be considered as an integral part of the composition process, an essential step for the final version of the pieces to come into place...

GC:

Nicolai was perfect for this task, because he “composed on composition,” so to say.

I clearly remember the sections that were composed in “modules.” With a gesture of his hand he would indicate that one group had to be ready to stop and another group had to start. It was all pretty much improvised and Nicolai was very effective in doing this.

MC:

When the "multipla" were used in film music, I guess the difficulty increased, as the ensemble had to keep in sync with the images…

GC:

Nicolai was also pretty well versed in synchronising the music to the images. He was very good at it.

MC:

Can you confirm that Nicolai himself adopted a similar composing method for some of his own music? Battisti D'Amario recalls that Nicolai sometimes did show up with “modules” of this kind.

GC:

They say it was in this context that the separation between Morricone and Nicolai came to be, although Morricone himself denied it. Be that as it may, it was inevitable that some of Morricone's stylistic traits would "stick" to Nicolai’s own music, since he conducted his works

for such a long time. After all, Morricone is a composer who "leaves a trace." He definitely came up with some actual inventions. Sometimes they were repeated, but they were still inventions. Every morning we were waiting for his arrival only to find out what spell he had come up with that day.

MC:

I have focused on the "multipla" technique because the sonic result which one can hear in the tracks of this box set seems to prelude to the aesthetic principle of "dynamic immobility," which Morricone speaks extensively about in his biography,[2] and which he would then properly develop in his concert compositions.

GC:

Absolutely: his later artistic outcomes are indirect consequences of those experiments he was immersed in. In reality, however, I am sure that "transfers" often took place in the opposite direction as well, that is, from absolute music to applied music.

MC:

In addition to your many studio collaborations with Morricone, did you also collaborate with Nicolai on his own soundtracks?

GC:

Yes. We were a very busy group. We used to work up to four sessions per day, from 9 am to midnight. At times at RCA, during the break between sessions, we could even be asked to go to room B and record overdubs for some other tracks.

9 am to midnight... money was not a problem, back then ...

MC:

I guess this sustained work relationship entailed a certain degree of chemistry between the musicians. For Morricone, working regularly with the same team was also key to achieving a certain outcome, a certain kind of sound.

GC:

Exactly. We knew each other *musically*.

MC:

When did you start working as a session player at RCA?

GC:

[2] Alessandro De Rosa, Ennio Morricone, *Ennio Morricone: In His Own Words*, translated by Maurizio Corbella, Oxford University Press, New York 2019.

In 1967. It was [Gianni] Boncompagni who took me to RCA. He was a regular at the restaurant we owned near Via Sardegna and Via Veneto: it was called Sayonara Club, a sort of branch of the neighbouring Tokyo Restaurant. The Tokyo was then moved to Piazza di Spagna and we took over the restaurant, only to fail miserably. Our customers were from Rome's high society. It was the aftermath of "La Dolce Vita"... A *decadent* "Dolce Vita"...

On its own, the piano bar was very successful. It went on until '67. Many musicians came to play there. A very young Gabriella Ferri performed there. Musicians from all over the world, even some American jazzmen visited every now and then.

Boncompagni noticed that I played an electronic organ with integrated rhythm accompaniment – it was a Seeburg (I later switched to a Thomas). He invited me to a public audition for RCA, they had set up a stage in room A. That's how I got to make my solo albums with RCA.[3]

MC:

Basically, those albums consisted of your own organ arrangements of popular pieces.

GC:

Yes. I made the first record alone with a drummer, [Vincenzo] Restuccia, and another guy called Tonani.[4] For the basses I used the organ pedals. Since the first album sold well, they gave me a double-bass player for the second one. Then they added a guitar and, because the records kept on selling well, they added more people until I was given an orchestra. There were strings, a full orchestra ensemble, so I was granted a perfect setup to write proper arrangements.

Already after my first album, a violinist and friend of mine, who worked as a session player, told me, "Why don't you start too? There's good money in it, and plenty of gigs."

The biggest soloists of the time were also used to working as session musicians: Severino Gazzelloni; Mario Gangi, before Bruno Battisti D'Amario took over as a guitar soloist; even Domenico Ceccarossi, the great hornist; or the famous mandolinist Giuseppe Anedda...

When I began, they were approaching the end of their career as session players.

Even Franco Ferrara, the conductor, worked in sessions. The great, magnificent Franco Ferrara!

MC:

Is it correct to say that, in a sense, Bruno Nicolai took over Ferrara's baton as a prominent studio conductor after he quit?

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[3] Among them: Giorgio Carnini, *All'organo Thomas*, RCA KAS 24, 1967; Giorgio Carnini, *All'organo Hammond X-66*, RCA KAS 25, 1969; Giorgio Carnini, *Le 24 canzoni di Sanremo*, RCA KAS 29, 1969; Giorgio Carnini all'organo Thomas, *Tutti i successi del XX Festival della Canzone – SanremoSettanta*, RCA KAS 34, 1970; Giorgio Carnini, *Sanremo '71*, RCA KIS 246, 1971.

[4] Franco Tonani, drummer for Modern Art Trio (with Franco D'Andrea and Bruno Tommaso) and credited for some library music albums in his name.

GC:

There were many other conductors: [Francesco] De Masi, Franco Potenza... all from a slightly earlier era. But Nicolai became the most requested conductor, at least as far as the music of Morricone and others was concerned.

MC:

Nicolai was also an organist: did he also play in sessions on some occasions?

GC:

Nicolai was an organist and played in sessions before I started.

MC:

The dates add up: Nicolai started writing and conducting soundtracks more or less at the same time Morricone did, in the early 1960s; clearly, he already played organ at RCA, then in 1964-65 Morricone started to call him more often to conduct; after some time, you entered the scene...

A little piece of trivia: were you somehow involved in the organ quotation of Bach's *Toccata and Fugue* in *For a Few Dollars More*?

GC:

No, *For a Few Dollars More* was made in '65. It was Nicolai, almost certainly.

MC:

What was the typical line-up of an RCA session in the years of your activity there?

GC:

Restuccia played drums. Sometimes other musicians were called, in the event some of us were booked elsewhere. If, for instance, Restuccia had another gig, another drummer would fill in. For example, Gegè Munari and his brother Pierino.

In the beginning, Maurizio De Angelis, one of the De Angelis brothers, was on the guitar.

MC:

The De Angelis brothers were better known as the Oliver Onions...

GC:

De Angelis played amazingly. Later, it was the turn of a young Silvano Chimenti. Sometimes there was also Filippo Rizzuto. Sergio Coppotelli was there too.

MC:

But Morricone also worked with Battisti D'Amario on such occasions.

GC:

Yes. But usually Battisti D'Amario didn't play rhythmic guitar, but mainly solo parts, especially with Morricone.

There were two quite disparate strands, although we belonged to the same circles: the strand of "song" recording, which required specific rhythmic features, and in this case Battisti D'Amario was usually not present; and the "soundtrack" strand, in which Battisti D'Amario was always present, with his famous electric guitar sounds.

MC:

Alessandro Alessandroni was probably there too…

GC:

Of course, Alessandroni, then also Franco De Gemini on the harmonica.

MC:

What about bass?

GC:

At first there was Giovanni Tommaso. Then Daniele Patucchi took over. Also Tonino Ferrelli.

We worked together many times, one could say that Restuccia, De Angelis, Giovanni Tommaso and I were quite fixed as a rhythm section... Some productions would prefer [Antonello] Vannucchi on the Hammond organ, because of his jazzy feel...

As for the strings, Dino Asciolla played viola...

MC:

Morricone dedicated *Suoni per Dino* to him.

GC:

Exactly. Then there was the first violin, Franco Tamponi.

MC:

So Tamponi was the first violin of the RCA orchestra?

GC:

Franco Tamponi was in the Unione Musicisti di Roma, the organisation supplying the musicians to the record companies... there was not *an* RCA orchestra; we all worked *at* RCA, but also at Fono Roma, at the Ortophonic Studio, at the Dirmaphon, in Via Pola. Then there was the International Recording, with an exceptional sound engineer: Federico Savina.

MC:

Did the personnel of the rhythm section change, depending on whether it was "pop" music, arrangements, or film music?

GC

It depended on the needs. There was a lot of simultaneous work in various rooms... a lot of work in progress.

MC:

This activity of yours coincided with deep transformations in popular music in Italy: from 1968 to 1972 the music scene changed a great deal... Were you keeping yourself up to date?

GC:

Yes. At that time, the equipment changed fast... When I started, there was the 3-track Ampex at most.

We would use up two of the three tracks for a stereo recording. Then we would mix the two tracks and transfer their premix onto the third track. Then we overdubbed, further mixed, and then back again with more overdubbing. It was extenuating.

Then another model came: a Grundig, I think... a 4-track, then came the 6-track, then the 8-track Ampex. Already from the 6-track onwards the track was double, two inches, if I remember correctly. Then came the 16-track, finally the 24-track. With the multi-track banks full of sliders our recording techniques also changed...

MC:

Did you only play the organ or also other kinds of keyboards?

GC:

I played the synthesizer as well. I started around 1971-72 with the Arp 2600, one of the first exemplars that arrived in Italy. Amedeo Tommasi and I were the ones who could play the ARP 2600 in all Rome; he was working on his own, making libraries, whereas I was the one who was called in studio sessions with that synthesizer. I bought it together with Luis Bacalov. He wanted to experiment a bit, but then I ended up using it. If needed, I could also play the Fender [Rhodes]. Sometimes, when Arnaldo Graziosi wasn't there, I even played the piano ...

MC

Another almost ubiquitous instrument in these recordings is the harpsichord...

GC:

Sometimes I have played the harpsichord too.

MC:

What about other synthesizers, such as the Moog?

GC:

I used the Moog when I was working at RAI. I joined RAI together with Restuccia: they had called us several times and that qualified as a continuous collaboration in terms of labour rights, so they hired us permanently around 1971-72.

I made my first gigs at RAI with Marcello De Martino and [Enrico] Simonetti... Restuccia and I were the only two who were engaged as freelancers at RAI's rhythm orchestra called "Ritmi Moderni," where [Roberto] Pregadio played the piano. At the same time, I still worked as a session man. Surely I was already at RAI when Loretta Goggi made her debut at *Canzonissima '72*: I remember playing the opening theme song "Vieni via con me (Taratapunzi-e)."

MC:

Do you also remember the Synket, Paolo Ketoff's synthesizer?

GC:

Yes. But I didn't play the Synket; Walter Branchi did.

MC:

Was it ever played in the same sessions in which you were also playing?

GC:

Sometimes Branchi was there too.

MC:

Since you were familiar with Morricone and the people surrounding him... did you ever have any relationship with the Gruppo di Improvvisazione Nuova Consonanza?

GC:

Not an artistic one.

MC:

What about the album *Neuro Tensivo*, credited to Egisto Macchi and yourself, under the pseudonym Zanagoria?

GC:

We didn't *co-sign* that album: one side is mine and one side is Macchi's.[5]

MC:

I see: it was a compilation created by Gemelli, which featured music by Macchi and yourself. This doesn't mean that you collaborated in any way...

GC:

I knew Macchi. I played in some of his soundtracks.

MC:

Did it ever happen that you watched a movie and recognised yourself in the soundtrack? I'd reckon yes, since you made so many...

GC:

Sometimes I'd go watch a movie in which I played, to hear how I played.

MC:

Do you remember one in particular?

GC:

Once Upon a Time in the West, one of the first I recorded at RCA. I remember this beautiful theme, "Jill's Theme" with Edda Dell'Orso... her voice wasn't classically trained... it was pure diamond.

MC:

Edda Dell'Orso is another frequent presence in Morricone's music, in this box set as well...

GC:

No one, after Edda Dell'Orso, has ever expressed that diaphanous and clean timbre, neither classical nor coached, yet natural. She was quite unique. Though Morricone collaborated with other great renowned singers, such as the amazing Susanna Rigacci, none of them has ever achieved that kind of timbre, not even the established opera singers...

MC:

[5] *Neuro Tensivo*, Gemelli GG-ST 10.008, 1971. Actually, the album features four tracks on Side A and the first track on Side B by Macchi, while the remaining four tracks on Side B are by Carnini.

You mentioned *Once Upon a Time in the West*. Leone used the music on his set, in order to shoot in sync with the playback. I guess those cues were re-recorded afterwards.

GC:

We recorded both the "rough copy", or *brogliaccio*, and the final version of the piece. There was a lot of money so they could afford that. Many times, especially with the most important composers, this is how it was done. The cue was played on set and the actors did their job. The use of music on set inspired them.

MC:

It was quite common for musicians to set up their own studios alone or collectively, often producing film or library music... For instance, that's what Piero Umiliani did with his Soundworkshop.

GC:

We worked with him in his studio several times. Then there was a studio that belonged to Bruno Canfora: it was near Piazzale Clodio, in Via Muggia. Antonello Vannucchi's quartet, I Mark 4, often worked there, with Maurizio Maiorana on double bass, Carlo Pes on guitar, and one of the two RAI drummers [Roberto Podio]...

MC:

Battisti D'Amario told me that I Mark 4 were very close to Armando Trovajoli.

GC:

Trovajoli was one of those composers I met later. He worked a lot with Vannucchi... but we also did sessions together.

MC:

Then there was of course the Ortophonic studio, founded by Morricone, Bacalov, Piccioni, Trovajoli... who also established the General Music label.

GC:

There was also [Enrico] De Melis, who managed General Music. The Ortophonic studio, which would later became Forum Music Village when Patrignani took over, was wired to the organ of the nearby Church, in Piazza Euclide, a beautiful three-keyboard pipe instrument. On that organ I played several overdubs for Morricone — they would send me the guide track from below... Usually those were more complex pieces, unlike those usually brought to the sessions, which you could immediately read and record.

At some point Eduardo Ogando and I, together with other musicians, opened our own phonology studio, the Axon studio; often Bacalov also came. There I produced a lot of library music, especially with electronics involved, a good deal of it was together with [Sandro] Brugnolini; they were records that we decided to self-produce, always counting on very

moderate economic resources. I took care of all the overdubbing. An Arp 2000 was sent to us as a trial, it was a massive wall of modules, some of which were very interesting and it also came with a sequencer[6]... In the studio we had the Hammond... the piano... and also the violin, because Georg Mönch was one of the studio's partners. Once Dino Asciolla visited us and we recorded some improvised stuff.

We made several things for the publisher Sermi Film, with [Sergio] Pagoni and Mimmo Consolo... so much so that we went from being at RAI to forming the quartet called I Gres with Restuccia, Pregadio and Chimenti…[7]

MC:

You recorded a lot of library music under the pseudonym Zanagoria.

GC:

Zanahoria, with "h", means "carrot" in Spanish. The popular use of Buenos Aires has changed it to Zanagoria.[8] By extension of use and meaning, Zanagoria means "potato head." Are you familiar with [Stefano] Torossi?

MC:

Of course.

GC:

Torossi called himself Farlocco.[9] Picking joking pseudonyms was a common game in that field.

MC:

Like Brugnolini, who called himself Narassa.

GC:

[Library music] could be divided in two strands. On the one hand, there was music "by the metre," a type of stuff composed hastily just to make some money, as happened with many pop music productions. Brugnolini and I decided to put out some "music by the metre," because he and his friends at RAI were able to have it aired. This was the way to have your music on TV, you needed to know someone at RAI's music department who would push it through.

[6] He arguably refers to Arp 2500, actually quite a big modular instrument, also featuring a sequencer. It was not possible to get any information on a 2000 model matching the description.
[7] I Gres, *I Gres*, Globevision GV 001, 1974; I Gres, *I Gres Vol. II*, Gemelli GG.ST 10.032, 1975; I Gres, *I Gres Vol. III*, Globevision GV 002, 1975.
[8] Originally born in Genova, Carnini spent his childhood and youth years in Argentina.
[9] "Farlocco" is colloquial for "Fake".

Generally, I took care of all the electronic sounds, which I made at our phonology studio [Axon], together with Ogando — who was himself a composer, rather than a sound engineer, but never made libraries.

One of the first library albums we made was signed by five people: Brugnolini, [Massimo] Catalano, [Stefano] Torossi, [Giuliano] Sorgini and myself. I remember the title of one track, "Quinto Capannone" [Fifth warehouse]:[10] that was a “by the metre” ostinato, which we deemed of little musical value. I’m surprised that there are exegetes of that music today...

On the other hand, there was the "research" strand. *Neuro Tensivo* and other albums I made, such as *Insight Modulation*, can be categorised under this label.[11] For instance, I perfectly remember how we worked on one track, "Jazz Modulation." First, we recorded a trivial swing on a standard blues riff. Then we processed the recording in the studio with a ring modulator, which gives the sums and differences of the input frequencies, thus multiplying the sounds. Finally, we processed them through a voltage control filter. Through this process we were able to achieve a completely different result, which only retained the rhythmic pulse of the original material. We had recorded that piece with our quartet, as an improvisation. We then worked on that. That was the "research" part.

I also remember a brutal work of tape cutting and splicing on the piece "Su 60 impulsi" [On 60 pulses]. It was a period of intense experimentation... even if they asked you to make something banal, you, as a musician, tried to redeem it through orchestration or harmonisation, making the counterpoint flow in parallel... it was a dignifying process in order to gain personal satisfaction.

MC:

To find a reason in what you do.

GC:

Otherwise it becomes frustrating, lessening...

Back then certain effects were simply not possible... there was no computer. You had to cut the quarter-inch tape so many times and in so many different ways, depending on the effect you aimed to obtain… different kinds of oblique cuts, to get diminuendo, crescendo or crossfading; or straight cuts, if you wanted to achieve a “suction” sound effect.

This is how tape music was made back then. It was a “scissors job.”

MC:

My feeling is that in the field of library music the musicians enjoyed a certain degree of freedom to experiment, perhaps with some composers more than with others. Or did it depend on the kind of project?

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[10] First track off the LP: *Musicorama – Vol. 7*, Ricordi LR 7, [1970?]. On the album the tracks are all credited to Giorgio Carnini.

[11] Zanagoria [Giorgio Carnini], *Insight Modulation*, Gemelli GG.ST 10.011, 1972.

GC:

It depended on the context. Morricone, unlike others, used to write down to the last note. He would never weigh on the musicians except to conjure up some specific sounds he had in mind. For instance, on the film *Investigation of a Citizen Above Suspicion* [1970], he asked me: "Find me a musical 'raspberry'." He had composed this sound made of three notes together: D, F and F#. I played them on the Hammond X-66, along with the bassoons. Morricone referred to it as "the raspberry."

Bacalov made me improvise a transitional solo between two keys, starting from C# minor. It was when we worked on the *Concerto Grosso per i New Trolls*.[12] I recorded that improvisation on the organ of the Church in Piazza Euclide. Another time [Piero] Piccioni made me improvise some *fugati* for no less than nine minutes!

To give you another example, I took part in the recording sessions of some albums by Fabrizio De André: in those cases, Nicola Piovani did the arrangements and we were often asked to invent something.[13]

MC:

In those arrangements by Piovani you can really feel the influence of film music, especially of westerns, but not only.

GC:

Each composer had his own peculiarities...

We worked with all kinds of people, especially at RAI: the good and the less good. Sometimes certain things happened... composers were hired who were absolutely unfit, self-taught without even self-taught studies, and they made a mess. Sometimes the melody was played by the full orchestra... things like that.

MC:

And in those cases the musician had to step in and fix it...

GC:

In some cases, there was nothing to fix because those scores came written in that way.

Another composer who innovated film music because he also worked with small ensembles was [Angelo Francesco] Lavagnino. I got to work with him before he retired. I also worked with [Carlo] Rustichelli — he was a true opera composer, he was really trained — and with [Mario] Nascimbene...

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[12] The reference here is to the soundtrack of *The Designed Victim* (1971) by Maurizio Lucidi, which features tracks by Bacalov played by New Trolls, later reworked for the album *Concerto Grosso per i New Trolls*, Fonit Cetra, 1971.

[13] Fabrizio De André, *Non al denaro, non all'amore, né al cielo*, Produttori Associati, 1971; Fabrizio De André, *Storia di un impiegato*, Produttori Associati, 1973.

MC:

Another great experimenter.

GC:

I remember that on *Fellini's Casanova*, whose soundtrack was recorded at International Recording, Nino Rota started playing the Fender piano, an instrument he wasn't familiar with, but he played it with diabolical skills. There is a scene of *Casanova* in which you can see all the organs around the room... I recorded them in the basilica of Santa Francesca Romana. The engineer was Savina.

MC:

You used to collaborate a lot with Rota.

GC:

Yes. I worked with everyone. A lot with Bacalov too.

Bacalov could be brilliant... he played the piano in a divine way... we weren't just friends, we also partnered on some concert collaborations. We had concerts together when I had the orchestra and he played the piano, or we also played it four hands. He was an excellent and cultured musician. He was very well informed about the contemporary music scene of those years. Together with my then partner Lucia de Laurentiis, he was among the ones who convinced me to resume my concert career. One day at the Ortophonic, he told me, "Giorgio, why don't you pick up studying the organ again? They play it very badly here." The time of [Fernando] Germani was coming to an end and there had been a gap [in terms of concert organists]. Those advices, together with other circumstances like the birth of my son in 1974, convinced me to resume my studies and abandon the sessions.

MC:

You are, of course, the dedicatee of Morricone's *Fourth Concerto* (1993): I imagine that your relationship with him continued over the years even after you quit your sessions activity...

GC:

Yes. It was a friendship. We used to hang out in Mentana, the place near Rome where he lived in the vicinity of Bacalov, Sergio Bardotti, Sergio Endrigo, Franco Pisano...

Countless compositional aspects of the *Fourth Concerto* still move me. It's incredible how, the more I delve into the study of this work, the more I discover some real "gems" in the structure, all of which are hints of a first-class composer. A fragment in the third movement features a complex 11-note sequence, reprised in various moments of the composition and also well hidden. In this sequence, the tone E (Ennio's "E") is the only one missing and occurs only at the end of the period — keep in mind that the concert begins and ends with a single note, precisely the E, namely his signature. Moreover, in the last section of the first movement, there is a long sequence made of double, inverse and retrograde counterpoints, proposed in

such a way that they end up reproducing themselves, until they turn into cells of five measures each. Through consecutive half-tone modulations, they lead to a triumphant explosion in the same key of the beginning. The frequent quotation of the name B.A.C.H. (i.e. the notes B-flat-A-C-B natural, in the German notation) is one additional element one can find in the concert. He loved and knew Bach deeply! It's exciting to gradually enter the constructive process that led to the creation of this work.

There is also a whole section of the last movement in which improvisation is requested by the score itself.

When we performed it for the first time at the IUC [Istituzione Universitaria dei Concerti] in Rome, with [Flavio Emilio] Scogna conducting, everything went smoothly. Then [Morricone] conducted it in Budapest, and during the second movement, which is the easiest, I made a mistake. He later told me, "You didn't trust me." He was right: he always conducted his works as wonderfully as nobody else could, but in that case I really didn't trust one of his attacks after a long pause of the organ...

After the *Fourth Concerto*'s premiere, Morricone told me in Roman dialect: "Ah Giò, I thought it was unplayable". He retold this anecdote during our tribute to him for his ninetieth birthday at the Sala Accademia of the Santa Cecilia Conservatory, closing the *Un organo per Roma* Festival in 2018. Evidently, he could not help point out that he had written the organ concerto after I had repeatedly begged him to write for me: he composed it partly to test me, partly to challenge me. Because he knew how to be "cruel."

MC:

In his biography, he mockingly admitted that he had written certain passages on purpose to push you into making mistakes: "It was a bit like saying, 'You wanted the piece? Now you'll see!'."[14]

(translation: Mattia Merlini)

[14] De Rosa, Morricone, *Morricone: In His Own Words*, p. 252.