

—————SCORE REVIEW—————

La corrispondenza

By Patrick Bouster

Giuseppe Tornatore tells a romance between a young woman, stuntgirl, and an older man, astronomer. The plot and the cast are intimist, revolved around two main actors: Olga Kurylenko (French-Ukrainian) and Jeremy Irons. Surely not an important film, some sort of transition for the director.

This soundtrack had a special preparation and birth. We can guess that the composer found ideas in the first half of 2015, before and during the shooting began in March. Afterwards Tornatore needed time to edit the film and to get a more precise vision of the music and its location within the film sequences.

We have some information, thanks to the material gathered around the soundtrack for Tarantino that, miraculously, just came in between inside a small hole, in June-July 2015. So, in August, he resumed his work on Tornatore's movie. August is also the month of his broken leg. A convalescent, immobilized Ennio did however compose the score. And at last, he didn't conduct it, during the recording in Prague, in October 2015, a fact confirmed by the CD booklet (it is such an exception that no conductor is credited, only an «orchestra coordinator»: Dusan Mihely).



After a great number of stunning music for his friend Peppino, this one leaves an odd impression: not bad, not high, with good moments and some «vacuity», or immobility (so to speak). Maybe it is justified in order to illustrate blank moments, the longing, the wait...

For the good side, which still represents a good half of the CD, the electric guitar brings novelty to the orchestration, in a cool, relaxed way. *Improvvisazione in sol* is especially

remarkable, listenable by everyone (yes, even your friends!) but very enjoyable for its tender and relaxing character. This guitar is more discreetly found in *Una luce spenta* too, dominated by the sweet strings, and present of course in the last track *Disperata chitarra*, welcome for ending the CD, not sadly as opposed to what its title suggests.

What is new in this score is the sweetness, and even a neutrality sometimes, avoiding tension and difficult music, as opposed to many of his scores like **The Best Offer** to mention another Tornatore movie. And it works, in *Il ritorno di una stella*, *L'infinito spazio*, *Calco*, all beautiful, and with a nice violin for the latter. Even *Parabola astratta* is in the same soft vein, whose title could suggest a very difficult piece. The more «action» or suspenseful tracks, quite sparse, are brought by the nice *Stuntgirl* (in which we really perceive the danger) and *Veloce corsa* (not quite speedy though).

Another noticeable change is the leading piano for another group of major tracks, rare since **L'immoralità**, **La storia vera della signora dalle camellie**, **La leggenda del pianista...** and a

few others. The piano illuminates nice pieces such as *Due camere in hotel*, *Una storia nella storia* (intimist, Chopin-influenced), *Invenzione breve*. It confers a cozy atmosphere to the entire score.

A last group of immobile tracks, the weakest ones, brings together the slow *La casa sul lago* (well done but surely too long) and chiefly *Una stella, miliardi di stelle*, again too long with its 13 minutes, difficult to follow until the end, it could have been summarized in half its duration. This second track makes a variation around the first notes of **Close Encounters of the Third Kind** (Williams), surely deliberately, as a wink because the man is an astronomer. The track *La corrispondenza* oddly belongs to the dull category: a weak synth, a banal rendition and an impression of blankness. For once, the film's title track is not a leading one.

We weren't able to watch the film, only aired in Italy in the first quarter of 2016. But certainly the score follows the plot, which is by exception, rather reduced and intimist according to some Italian viewers, without the shiver of **The Best Offer**. So we are dealing with a «small» Tornatore, maybe waiting for bigger projects (see also in "News" for one of them). Sometimes, it is normal to be disappointed, that's life.

So, caro Giuseppe, will you finally make **Leningrad**?



But let's go further: why this neutral music, leaving an impression of «vacuity»? Tornatore and his composer are experienced enough to think about the style needed for the plot and to deliberately choose the tones.

The knot in the film appears to be relationship, including love, through (and often exclusively) apparels and telecommunications means (phone, SMS, computer, video via internet, etc.). Of course it questions the nowadays communications in love affairs and their troubles in a part of the population: anxiety to begin or to be in relationship, fear about sex or desires, anguish about to be engaged or to fail, lack of understanding between people, sexual abstinence... A contemporary topic, indeed. So with this subject (and its consequences: love without reality, without body, virtual reality, machines masking or transforming the human's truth), it is not a surprise to get disembodied music, between blankness and false sentimentality, New Age-inspired at some moments. The impossible or difficult love, the frightening relationship in love: the parallel could be done with **Lolita** (and its «disembodied» music, in a certain way); oddly (or not), in both films, the main actor is Jeremy Irons.

Maybe Morricone's music does say that to the audience, a more interesting purpose than what the first listening suggested. Of course it doesn't change the average level of the CD.

In order to leave a chance to the renowned director to develop a reflection he obviously has at 59 years old, below are two interviews excerpts found on the net.



Interview with Giuseppe Tornatore (in movieplayer.it, on January, 12, 2016) by *Federica Aliano*

Translated from Italian by Patrick Bouser. Testo originale in Italiano:

http://movieplayer.it/articoli/la-corrispondenza-la-nostra-intervista-a-giuseppe-tornatore_15383/

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Q: Love seems to be always, above all recently, the pivot of your stories.

GT: In my films there has been always love as a motor. And in some works it is more evident, in others it stays more hidden. I don't know, perhaps with the course of the years, you end up appreciating more certain things. Love is one of the wonders of our existence, and I realize that in the present time, in which we are infested by problems of other nature, which seem inopportune or straight rhetorical. But we live with that. I see that the children cannot wait growing to discover what it is, the adults are never get tired to know the love they possess in them, and those who don't have it live in the longing to find it. Then the older ones never get tired to have the possibility to still fall in love, before the end arrives. We live like

that, always, therefore I believe that it is an eternal theme.

Q: And here however, love is put to the test by the distance...

GT: Here I liked the idea to talk about love through the lens of the distance. Knowing that at times it is really the lens of the distance that reveals the intensity of a love relationship. Seneca said that what the heart knows today, the mind will understand tomorrow. Always the heart arrives before.

Q: The distance we speak about, the change, ties even more this girl, perhaps in an absolute and selfish way too.

GT: There is this component and in the film I revealed and faced it. Love is mysterious and elusive, sometimes it is excessive and can become unbearable, hard. It is a terrible contradiction that perhaps makes it eternal

precisely for that. We all tried to explain it, but a mystery will always remain. The poets, the singers, the writers always spoke about that, but an inexhaustible theme remains, having some contradictions included. The pure instinct, the great love, of our protagonist to keep on being in this girl's life, verges on stalking. However it is the distance that baits the desire to still possess, to continue, to maintain somehow the relationship. It is difficult to understand love. And perhaps for this it will always remain the beginning of everything. An absolute love can be also difficult to bear, but more when there is no love.

Q: It is very curious and interesting too, also poetic, that the two protagonists are astrophysicists. How has this idea come to mind?

GT: It is always a very complicated phase, but for me essential, to find a profession to my protagonists. To my rescue came the great emotion I have always experimented when being in the country, during those starry nights, without electric light around, and enjoying a sky starry as never. To know that the greatest part of what you see doesn't exist anymore for thousands of years, but you keep on seeing it, has always struck me. It seemed to me the most appropriate allegory. I believe the idea that when you choose a story, all the elements must have a coherence to the selected theme, I thought that Amy and Ed should be astrophysicists.

Q: The film suggests that a love could survive to death. But do you truly believe in it?

GT: I take the risk to appear downright naive but something in me believes in it. Foscolo said that it is a dowry of the human beings to succeed in maintaining the feeling of love beyond the time, beyond everything. With a divine component. Today the divine component has become technological. Today technology downright helps us to lengthen the life. Even if it will never succeed in equalizing the life indeed: the only perfect machine remains the man.

Q: Do you know that a Facebook app exists to keep on a posting status after death?

GT: I know it for not too long. Today everything is feasible. It is really while I was working on this film that I have discovered different things like the fact that a person can program one or more tweets to leave after his own departure. Really it also speaks today about digital will. A group of important lawyers and notaries in the world is trying to study how to give juridical value to the fact that the will can directly reach by email the recipients for whom it has been conceived. Everything is possible in life. Legally, not yet.

Q: This is also a film on the non-acceptance of death: Amy doesn't accept the death of her father since the beginning and does a job for which she metaphorically dies so many times, but then raises again.

GT: It is really the fact that some stars are dead, their explosion, that make them at times visible. Our protagonist, towards the end, throws out from a paradox that exists, object of studies and I confess you, a matter I worked on for so much time, but it didn't work in other films. The paradox is that the human being in reality is not born for dying, but to be immortal, and nobody can prove that it is not the case. At some point, in the course of existence, all of us make an error, for which we are forced to die. Until now, nobody made exception. Yet one cannot scientifically demonstrate this paradox is unfounded, but it is amusing. At a certain point an error is made, that can be stupid or not, but above all we will never know when it will happen and how we could face it. If we didn't make that error, we would not be forced to die. It amuses me, this ironic way with which Ed embraces the concept of immortality. Some beautiful day, even the stars won't appear anymore, but this is so far that we won't know it.

Interview with Giuseppe Tornatore (in Corriere della sera-Io donna, on January, 12, 2016) by Paola Piacenza. Translated from Italian by Patrick Bouster. Testo originale in Italiano:

<http://www.iodonna.it/personaggi/interviste-gallery/2015/12/04/giuseppe-tornatore-che-grande-mistero-lamore/>

(...)

Q: The Americans like very much the sub-categories. For this one, between the two characters, they would say that it is a love story May-September for the difference of age.

GT: (laughs) It is really a May-September one. But Jeremy Irons is splendid, they were all fascinated by him, young women, mature, when we shot.

Q: You made very avowedly autobiographic films, but in those that don't seem to be, like this one, one recognizes how much there is of yourself?

GT: I often ask myself about that and sometimes, when a film is finished, it seems to me that I can guess – through mysterious ways – that a lot of what I have lived has been transformed, insinuated. Things that I wouldn't want to expose on the screen, in spite of my reluctance, end up there, without even realizing it. Luckily nobody, almost nobody, will realize that something speaks about your nerves, your blood.

*Q: In **La Corrispondenza** there is not even a grain of Sicilian dust.*

GT: After **Baaria**, I felt I had closed that chapter, I have decided to favor an instinct that I have always had: to move myself. I don't like the idea of always being in the same place, of always having the same horizon. My autobiographic impulses had perhaps held to this centrifugal energy in mind, but now it is freed. **La corrispondenza** is made of northern atmospheres, it is developed in England.

Q: Even you have recounted Sicily in many ways, was it painful at the end to decide to move away from it?

GT: On the contrary, it is liberating. Whoever has the fortune – or the misfortune – to have a strong bond with the place where he was born, as it happens to me, knows whether to tell it, or to delude to have told it, strengthens oneself. I now feel stronger. And this allows me to go through the world. For me to leave Sicily was, at this period, a traumatic experience. I had always dreamt to go away. Just the fact of having incubated for a long time this project has made it an experience more important than it really was. To travel during 10 hours by train should not be a tragedy, but for the type of education I received, I felt it as if I had to go over the columns of Hercules.

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Q: Speaking of durable friendships, framed musical scores are affixed to the wall behind you. Are they by Ennio Morricone?

GT: Yes, because sometimes while we are speaking together, he throws down some notes and then he gives them to me.

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