



## A Minute with Bruno Bozzetto

*A brief interview by Jake Friedman*

Maybe you've seen *Allegro Non Troppo*, an Italian tribute to Disney's *Fantasia*. Or perhaps you have watched the Oscar-nominated film *Grasshoppers (Cavallette)*, about the rise and fall of civilizations. Or maybe your aunt sent you an "LOL" e-mail link to the web-cartoon (via [www.bozzetto.com](http://www.bozzetto.com)), *Female and Male (Femminile & Maschile)*, a take on gender differences illustrated with geometric shapes. Or, just possibly, your life was changed after watching the simple portrait of birth-to-death existence, *Life in a Tin (Una Vita in Scatola)*.

This is just some of the work of the most popular independent animator to come out of Italy, Bruno Bozzetto. He has reached across oceans and cultures with his films, which are, for the most part, free of any dialogue. Simple in design but rich in character, these films epitomize the ideals that we, as a community of indie animators, hold so highly – charm, edge, voice ... and not necessarily a high budget.

In his "Best Of" compilation video of 1997, Bozzetto explains that he had always been moved by books on animal behavior, environmental issues and nature itself. As a young filmmaker, he began animation when he was about 19 years old, and loved the freedom that a live-action film crew lacked. He concludes his introduction by saying in his native Italian, "you will be able to see how an important story can be told in just a few minutes. The possibility of exploring a serious concept and at the same time making people laugh is something that's always fascinated me about animation."

Despite (or because of) all the sources out there, there were some questions on my mind about Mr. Bozzetto. Recently, I had the opportunity to quell my curiosity.

**JF:** Who are your greatest influences?

**BB:** It was Walt Disney, when I was a child. But when I decided to make animation (at the very beginning), I was very influenced by "*Blinkity Blank*" of Norman McLaren, by U. P. A. and John Hubley, George Dunning, Richard Williams, Dusan Vukotic (and Zagreb film). Anyway, I was also influenced by Fellini, Kubrick and Jacques Tati.

**JF:** You work in different media – pencil, wash paint, computer graphics, etc. Which is your favorite?

**BB:** No one of them and all of them at the same time. It all depends on what I want to tell in the film.

**JF:** How long does it take you to complete a film?

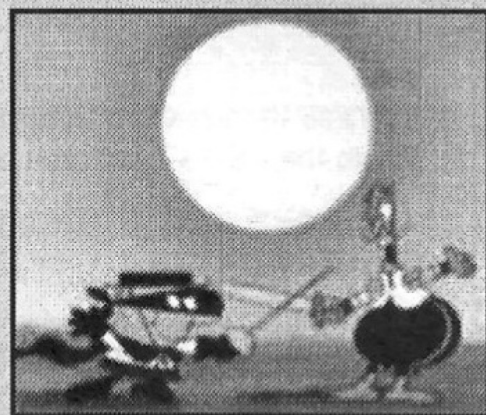
**BB:** From one week (short) to two years (feature). When I work alone I spend much more time in writing the story than making the film.

**JF:** What's the secret to making a good film?

**BB:** To have a good story.

**JF:** How has the Italian culture inspired your filmmaking?

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Scene from  
"Mr. Rossi's Dreams."

*Bozzetto interview continued from page 5*

**BB:** I couldn't tell, but I don't think it really inspired my filmmaking. My films are based on story, society and humor and they always touch a universal topic.

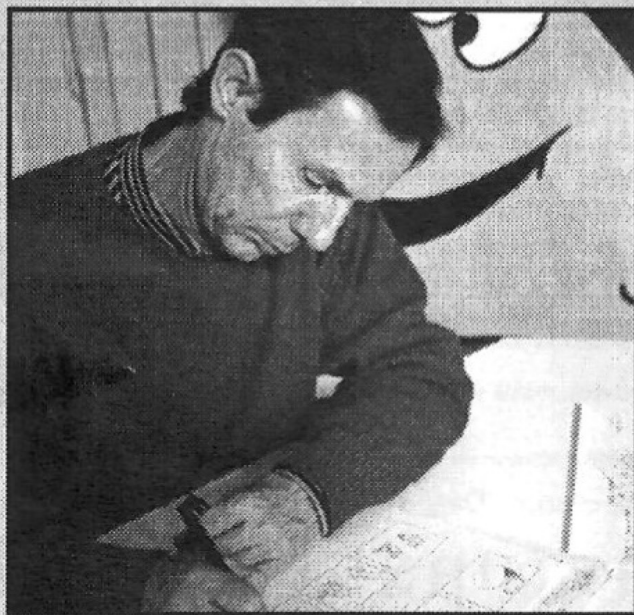
**JF:** If you were stranded on a desert island with only one film to watch, which would it be?

**BB:** It [is] too difficult to choose ONLY one film. I would say "impossible."  
I like too many films ... Mmmh --- "*Robinson Crusoe*".

**JF:** In your video, you talk about the importance of storytelling in film, and the ability that animation has to say serious things in a funny way. Is there anything you want to add to that?

**BB:** I can only add that, ten years after, I'd still have the same idea.  
This means that this is a very solid concept in my mind.

Jake Friedman is a New York-based animator.



Bruno Bozzetto at work

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