

MUSICAL CULTURES OF
THE TWENTIETH CENTURY


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MUSICAL LISTENING IN THE AGE OF TECHNOLOGICAL REPRODUCTION

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Musical Cultures of the Twentieth Century

Volume 1

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Edited by

GIANMARIO BORIO

University of Pavia and Giorgio Cini Foundation, Italy

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Published by
Ashgate Publishing Limited
Wey Court East
Union Road
Farnham
Surrey, GU9 7PT
England

Ashgate Publishing Company
110 Cherry Street
Suite 3-1
Burlington, VT 05401-3818
USA

www.ashgate.com

British Library Cataloguing in Publication Data

A catalogue record for this book is available from the British Library.

The Library of Congress has cataloged the printed edition as follows:

Musical listening in the age of technological reproduction / edited by Gianmario Borio.
pages cm. – (Musical cultures of the twentieth century)

Includes bibliographical references and index.

ISBN 978-1-4724-4216-1 (hardcover : alk. paper) – ISBN 978-1-4724-4217-8 (ebook) –
ISBN 978-1-4724-4218-5 (epub)

1. Music appreciation. 2. Music and technology. 3. Music – Philosophy and aesthetics.
I. Borio, Gianmario, editor.

MT90.M888 2015
781.1'7 – dc23

2015021667

ISBN 9781472442161 (hbk)
ISBN 9781472442178 (ebk – PDF)
ISBN 9781472442185 (ebk – ePUB)

Bach musicological font developed by © Yo Tomita



Printed in the United Kingdom by Henry Ling Limited,
at the Dorset Press, Dorchester, DT1 1HD

In memory of Giovanni Morelli

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Chapter 7

Remediation or Opera on Screen? Some Misunderstandings Regarding Recent Research

Michele Girardi

My remarks in this chapter on the concept of remediation – an apt neologism that gave the title to a hefty volume (Bolter and Grusin 1999) – will start from Marshall McLuhan’s renowned maxim, formulated forty years ago in a bible on the sociology of mass communication, *Understanding Media* (1964): ‘the content of a *medium* is always another *medium*’. It is the representation of a means of mass communication within another, or rather, the use of some characteristics of the first within another. Opera – a true semiological *monster* in itself – seems to be suitable for studies in the field of remediation, considering that this genre is today growing in popularity and has considerably expanded its own boundaries of reception, thanks to new media.

I am borrowing the definition of ‘opera on screen’ from Emanuele Senici’s fine 2009 article because I find it flexible at the right point: it encompasses ‘film, opera in the studio, films of opera in the theatre’ on different media, from the PC to home video, which can be acquired in stores, supermarkets, service stations, kiosks, but also especially via YouTube, the Library of Alexandria for moving images of our time (Senici 2009: 278).¹ Senici wrote his essay when musical theatre, film and other material were available only in clips of ten minutes or so, whereas now we can view them one after another, and even download (in accordance with copyright laws) complete operas such as the *Götterdämmerung* (more than four hours of music). This immense and vibrant archive offers complete operas of any genre, including special stand-outs such as the most recent productions of the theatrical season and festivals, as well as historical recordings of great interest: for example, *Lulu*, with Act III completed by Cerha and directed by Boulez (Paris, 1979), films linked to the operatic repertory of unquestionable precocity such as *Carmen* by Cecil B. DeMille (1915), the last production in the field of *Regietheater* recorded for a television broadcast and made available on a website with free access.

¹ For an updated bibliography, see Senici (2009): 275–7 (nn. 4–6). See also: Senici (2010), Esse (2010), Morris (2010), Will (2011), Scognamiglio (2011), Senici (2011), Wells (2012), Cenciarelli (2013) and Grasso (2013).

I would like to start with a question: Who is the author of the production of an opera on screen? Does a name such as Humphrey Burton mean anything? Burton, with a solid music training, outstanding biographer of composers such as Bernstein (Burton 1994), is one of those pillars of opera on screen that enthusiasts are not well acquainted with, and of whom no critic speaks. Together with other legendary figures such as Brian Large, and with Kirk Browning, Peter Maniura, Tony Palmer, or with the younger generation such as François Roussillon (Robert Carsen's regular collaborator), as a director and producer Burton created the most significant opera DVDs on the market, but also documentaries, films of concerts.

The role of these silent protagonists is the first theme to highlight. According to the well-known Brian Large, musician *in primis* and omnipresent television director (who has filmed more opera productions than anyone else): 'The television director must translate a production conceived by a stage director into a video production. As always, the video director begins by preparing a storyboard from the score, although changes will be made after the stage version has been seen.'² Large also describes the method used:

The different shots are joined in a sequence, the pacing of which is determined by the types of shot used and the length that each lasts. Visual interest is created by the frequency of cuts: a quick succession can increase the pace and excitement, while a wide-angle shot may be used to set a mood or relax the pace. Directors often derive the usual pacing from the rhythm of the music itself, as determined by the harmonies, chord structure, orchestration and other factors. In choosing the shots and the pacing of cuts, the director may also be influenced by the opera's period and style, aiming to create a visual style appropriate to the artistic period in which the piece originated or is set.³

Hence, the television director begins working independently of the theatre director, finding later a point of convergence and translating to the screen what has been conceived for the stage.

One would then state that the author is the one who films a production, which might be a live staging or realized in the studio and so on. Without going back to the theoretical formalization of *Remediation* (Bolter and Grusin 1999; see also Chapple 2006), it is easy to agree on the fact that an opera on screen is very different from a theatrical production. On the other hand, the two scholars seem reluctant to treat music and specific problems concerning opera, as they discuss the immediacy of hypermediation by referring to video editing in the field of popular music. And if we obviously agree with someone who writes that 'performance's only life is in the present', it is not taken-for-granted to agree with its consequent corollary, that a 'performance cannot be saved, recorded, documented' (Phelan 1993: 146) –

² Brian Large, 'Filming', *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:80/subscriber/article/grove/music/0901619> (accessed 30 June 2015).

³ *Ibid.*

in any event, 'television director' refers to a staging, whose peculiarity does not disappear at all in the transposition, but becomes re-elaborated. Moreover, to give credit to Brian Large's method, the hypotext always remains the point of reference, when a score of music theatre is performed on stage, and when it is recorded there for the visual medium. If the recording for the screen indeed follows its own rules, complex and very articulated, which put the language of the image in relationship with the musical differently from what the director does onstage, the object in the limelight remains the same. This canon is well summarized by Lionel Salter:

Fewer changes of image accord with the tempo and mood of slow-moving music: quicker changes can underline the excitement or agitation of fast movements. These changes of shot should take place only where the musical structure allows, never in mid-phrase: camera cuts are appropriate at starts of clean-cut phrases (in which case they need to be made with precision, neither too early nor – even worse – too late); but, if the music is fluid, dissolves correspond better (slow lingering cross-fades, however, only draw attention to the technique employed): after a series of mixes, a cut can have the effect of a sudden *sforzando*. A camera tracking in usually suggests an increase in tension or a crescendo, as does a panning or tracking shot across a section of the orchestra (as for a Rossini build-up); quick zoom-ins look melodramatic and should be used only in exceptional circumstances: a zoom-out, at whatever speed, is better avoided, as it gives the impression of retreating or fleeing from the music. Superimposition of images of instruments is usually undesirable musically except, for example, in ostinatos such as in Ravel's *Bolero* or Holst's 'Mars'. Some emphasizing of the structure of, for example, a sonata form movement can be achieved by adopting for the recapitulation the same image sequence as in the exposition. All this of course necessitates the director's planning his or her camera treatment from the score. All shots should be musically motivated: those made purely for pictorial effect, or cutaways to members of the audience, detract from concentration on the music and suggest that the director has lost interest in it. Works with colourful orchestration (e.g. Rimsky Korsakov's *Spanish Capriccio*) and concertos are the musical forms most adaptable to television, the interplay between soloist, orchestra and conductor in the latter offering quasi-dramatic interest.⁴

Prelude: Rewriting a Musical Dramaturgy

The *Candide* production directed for the theatre by Robert Carsen and filmed for television by François Roussillon, which premiered at the Théâtre du Châtelet in 2006 and went to the Teatro alla Scala of Milan in 2007 in the wake of bitter

⁴ Lionel Salter, 'Television', *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com/BO/SJbscriber/article/grove/music/41850> (accessed 30 June 2015).

polemics and with some politically motivated censorship,⁵ seems to me a good way to introduce the subject of this chapter.

When the conductor enters, we see a television screen already positioned before the curtain (Candide 2006; Figure 7.1) and the overture accompanies a broadcast dated 1956 (but already in Technicolor!) of VOLT-AIR TV; the *Allegro molto con brio* starts (Candide 1957: 2) on the opening rolling credits of the theatrical production; at the Cantabile (15; bar 95) a film begins on the United States during the 1950s–60s prosperity, reassuring images of healthy families with well-nourished children, electric appliances, well-stocked supermarkets, military parades; then, missile launches into space towards the moon in the Apollo mission, John Kennedy dancing with Jacqueline Bouvier on their wedding day (1953), then they are amid a sea of adoring people; Broadway with parades of famous stars including Marilyn Monroe and Ronald Reagan, glittering Las Vegas, Elvis Presley in military uniform; the screens goes off and Lambert Wilson, in the role of Voltaire, starts off the performance.

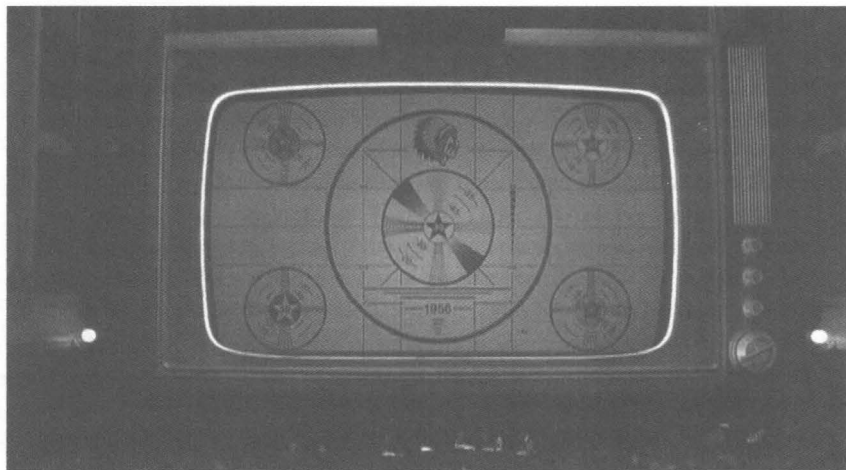


Figure 7.1 *Candide* (2006)

Bernstein and Carsen's *Candide* is a real semiological *monster* because, in addition to the natural complexity of opera itself, there is a rewriting of the theatrical text and a massive use of technology in an interactive relationship between *media* realized onstage, such as the film described above. There is nothing irregular, after all,

⁵ See: 'My Big Fat Candide Review', *Opera Chic*, 22 June 2007, http://operachic.typepad.com/opera_chic/candide/ (accessed 30 June 2015); see also Anna Cirillo, 'E il Candide taglia la satira sui preti', 19 June 2007, *la Repubblica.it Archivio*, http://www-5.unipv.it/girardi/saggi/2007_Candide_press.pdf (accessed 30 June 2015).

in Carsen and his dramaturg Ian Burton's operation: this libertarian opera had undergone rewriting by the author himself until 1989, the year before Bernstein's death, when he directed a performance in concert form at the Barbican with a stellar cast (*Candide* 1989), directed by the same Humphrey Burton.

In the following pages I will analyse four operatic sequences, connecting the musical dramaturgy with its theatrical staging and version on screen.

Fidelity to Performance?

A review of the video recording of Act II of *Tosca* from Covent Garden in 1964 will help us understand the communicative power of a television production at the dawn of its history, celebrated among the aficionados for the epic encounter between Maria Callas and Tito Gobbi (*Tosca* 1964). As the curtain opens, the zoom focuses on Scarpia. The camera remains fixed until Spoletta enters, then follows the action. The frame recaptures the entire stage only when Tosca has killed Scarpia, then the curtain closes.

The producer Bill Ward followed the instructions of the director Franco Zeffirelli, who at the time was also launching his cinema career. The film's intention is to affirm emphatically that we are in the theatre, considering that the playbill of the show scrolls after the first frame. At the same time, a formal strategy emerges and highlights the macro-structure of the act: only when Tosca commits the crime, saving Rome from a monster, does the camera return to frame the entire stage until the curtains close. Precisely this last shot demonstrates how the issue of fidelity to performance, which could be achieved with a fixed onstage camera, is pure Utopia: not once did my eyes abandon Floria Tosca's actions in this finale, not least because of the structural connection with the stage music studied with meticulous care by the composer (Girardi 2002: 181–7).

This technical perfection allows the fruition of details that otherwise would not be noticed in the theatre. For example, thanks to the enormous progress in sound technology, in a recording of *Věc Makropulos* we can hear the viola d'amore, nearly inaudible in the theatre, which Janáček uses more for the semantic implications of the name than for its specific timbre (Girardi 2013: 33). Likewise, the camera eye can bring details into focus that enrich the reception, as described by Salter: 'Television's ability to focus closely on small but important details of the action, such as Michele lighting his pipe in *Il tabarro* or the Count pricking his finger on a pin in *Le nozze di Figaro*, increases their significance.'⁶

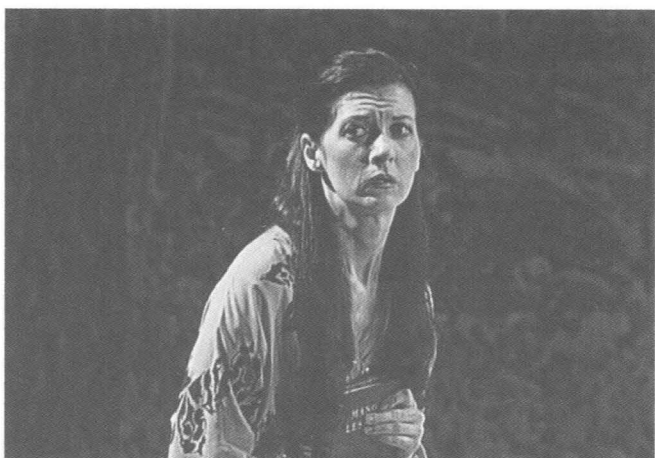
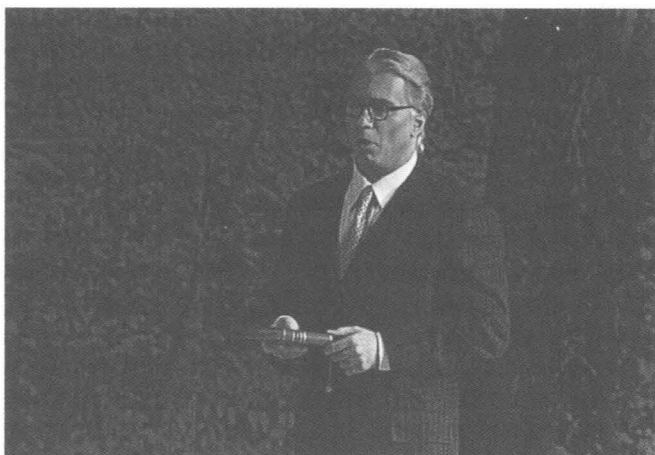
⁶ Lionel Salter, 'Television', *Oxford Music Online*, <http://www.oxfordmusiconline.com:BO/SJbscriber/article/grove/music/41850> (accessed 30 June 2015).

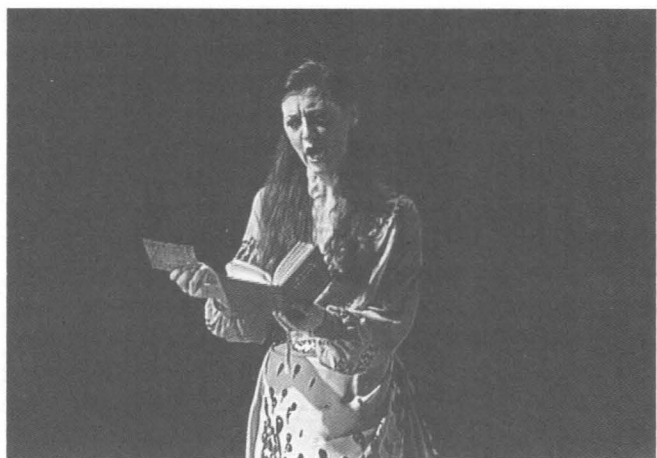
Details in the Foreground

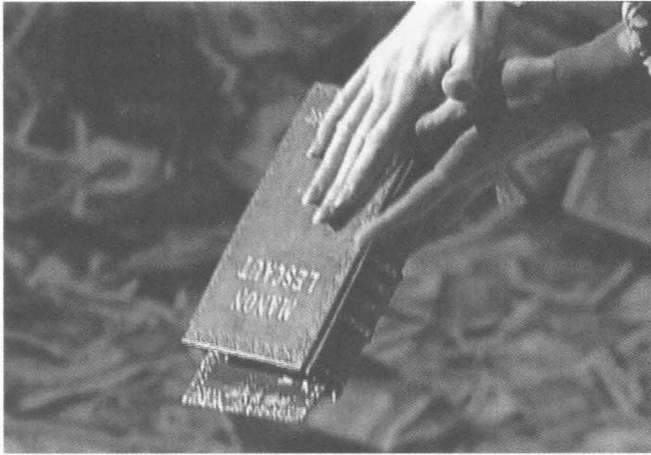
However, I would like to focus on a performance I personally attended and can directly compare with its video transposition. *La traviata*, opening the 2004 season of the Teatro La Fenice (after the 1996 fire), is a perfect example of the interaction between two different visions (stage and screen), both in general and in detail. Even if the television director does not sign off and has often worked with the most renowned directors (from Brian Large to François Roussillon), on this occasion Robert Carsen's choices made for the theatre prevail over any request by Renata Carmine, director of the DVD that 'textualizes' the performance.⁷ The key moment of Act II is no doubt the encounter between Violetta and Germont: Carsen sets up a double strategy, to benefit both theatrical and televised action, in which the details can be managed to create meaningful associations.

'Sarà lui che attendo.' Violetta pulls out a red book while Germont enters and throws it to the ground (*La traviata* 2004; Figure 7.2), which will be framed soon after ('a tutti fia mistero quest'atto'). While she sings 'non sapete quale affetto', Germont-père picks up the book, singing 'È grave il sacrificio' (Figure 7.3). 'Lui solo amar vogl'io': Violetta tears the book from his hands, and we catch a glimpse of the title ('Poiché dal cielo non furono | tai nodi benedetti'; Figure 7.4). 'L'uomo implacabil per lei sarà': the woman hurls the book to the floor and is framed by the camera: it is *Manon Lescaut*, or, more precisely, *L'histoire du Chevalier Des Grieux et de Manon Lescaut* by Abbé Prévost (Figure 7.5). 'Conosca il sacrificio': the protagonist picks up the book to slip in the party invitation, in the guise of a bookmark, probably because it will be found by Alfredo ... (Figure 7.6). 'Non ci vedrem più forse': who will she not see again, Germont or Alfredo? 'Addio': she blows a kiss to the book, but in truth to Alfredo (Figure 7.7) and, caressing it, lays it on the floor (Figure 7.8). Saying farewell, Violetta stares at the book, shortly after found by Alfredo, in the duet with the father ('un padre e una suora t'affretta a consolar'). Alfredo discovers the invitation in the book (Figure 7.9), which he angrily throws it to the floor before hurrying off to Paris.

⁷ The filmed version shows the premiere at the Teatro La Fenice in 1853, based on the critical edition (*La traviata* 1997).







Figures 7.2–7.9 *La traviata* (2004)

The theatre spectator can follow only part of the action: the spectator notices a hand-bound book in her hands, perceives that the soprano picks the book from the floor and slips the party invitation into it, and that Alfredo, at the end of the duet with his father, opens it, finds the invitation and exits in fury to follow his love at Flora's home.⁸ Therefore, the protagonist left the book there, hoping that her lover would find it and hopefully take it with him, just like the flower in the preceding act – but the consequences of this act of love will be tragic. Before the book ends up on the floor, it changes hands, it is brandished by the father, and so on. This part of the action, setting up an intertextual relationship between Violetta and another celebrated prostitute of the eighteenth century, Manon Lescaut

⁸ Alfredo exclaims: 'Ah! ... ell'è alla festa! ... volisi | l'offesa a vendicar.'

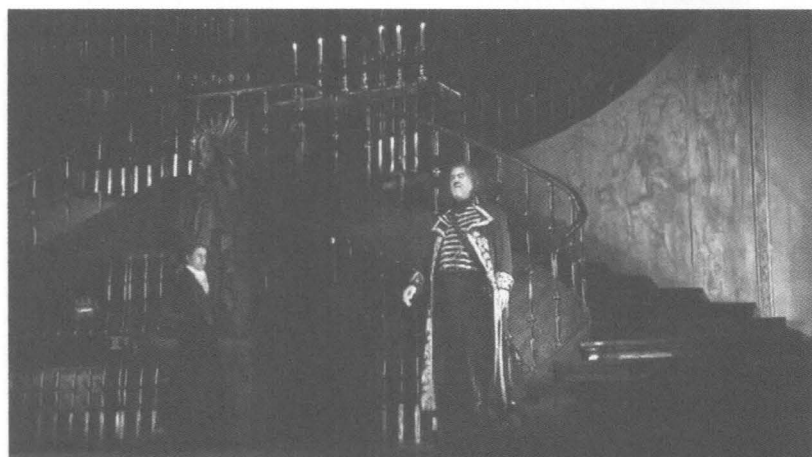
(and, on a second level, involving Verdi, Massenet and Puccini), can only be understood in full by those who see the DVD and read the book's title. This is not only a case of amplifying a detail of the text, but of adding meaning to the action by re-reading the stage directions of libretto and score.

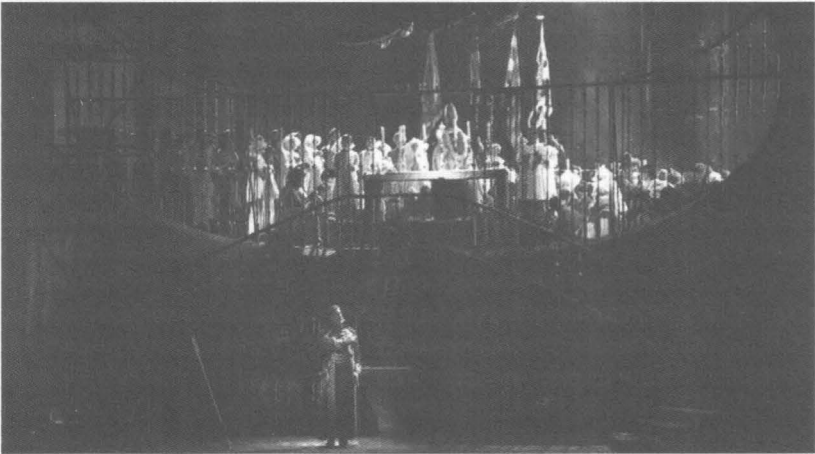
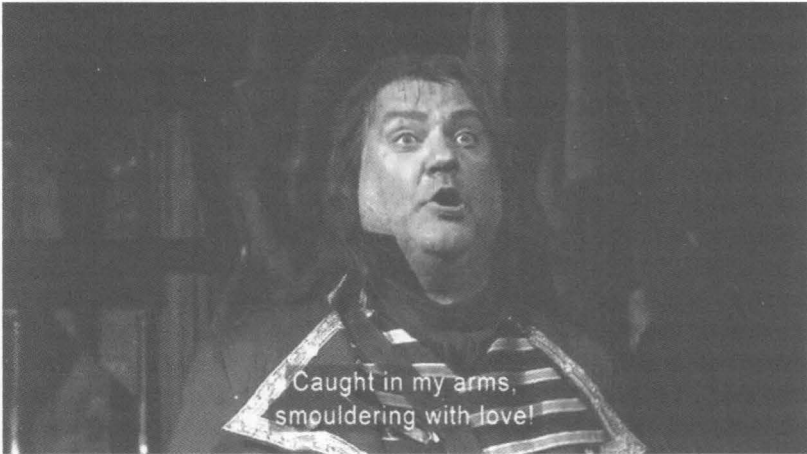
In Agreement with the Score

However, attention to detail is not always useful to opera on screen. Let us return to *Tosca* and consider the finale of Act I. Usually, the television director is drawn to Scarpia's Satanism, showing this in a monologue at the proscenium, where Scarpia mixes the devil with the holy water according to the instructions of the score (bells *ostinato* versus chromatic harmonies in a ninth interval). He forgets that in the background a religious ceremony is unfolding, which is primary to the economy of the event: this is why the television director usually chooses to put the protagonist in the foreground. In a recent recording at Covent Garden, television director Jonathan Haswell attempted to separate the two spheres.

Floria exits after the duet: Scarpia does not hide his passion for the female sex (*Tosca* 2011; Figure 7.10), a passion that obsessively extends to the vivid depictions (Figure 7.11) – the television director indulges in the protagonist overwhelmed by his fantasies, leaving less space to the entire stage (Figure 7.12). A few instants to extol the suspicions of his erotic idol and to take a look at the ceremony taking place above his delirium (Figure 7.13), which requires a close-up of the baron while the erotic tension grows glaringly, almost until the liberating orgasm (Figure 7.14). Only in the concluding section, eros and religion unite dramatically in the sign of the cross (Figure 7.15).



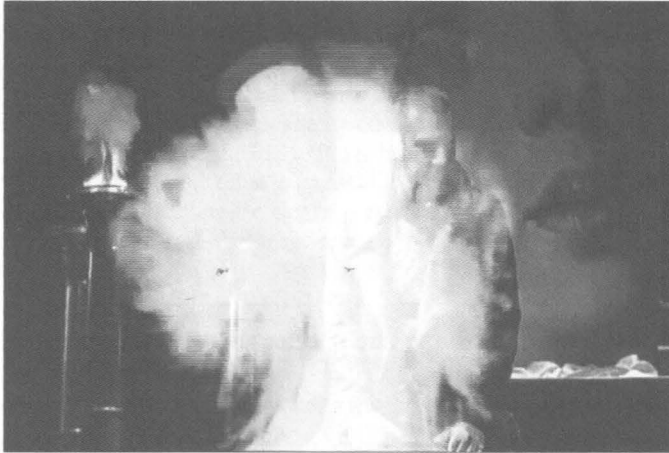




Figures 7.10–7.15 *Tosca* (2011)

This penalizes the authors' will, calling for two simultaneous actions because they represent a single sign: on the one hand the *eros* of the individual, on the other the bigotry, which is also a manifestation of religious power. The bishop and crowd in prayer must be mixed into the monologue and the scene must be viewed in a general frame. I find Lehnhoff's direction of this scene (Amsterdam, 1998), conceived basically also for the video recording, more in agreement with the score. The lighted candles symbolize the ceremony.

Scarpia (Terfel again) leaves Tosca at the end of the duet, not without gallantry and begins his monologue: the promise of 'un pronto sospetto' triggers the devotion, and the candles together with the cannon's boom (faith unites with suspicion; *Tosca* 1998; Figure 7.16). The choir begins to pray: a row of candles is lit ('Auditorjum nostrum | in Nomine Domini'; Figure 7.17). In the *Te Deum*, the fire embodies Scarpia's theme (major triads of B₃ > A₃ > E₃ trace the arc of a tritone also at the finale of the act, with enormous emphasis), his faith and his perversion: the demon (or *diabolus*) invades the scene (Figure 7.18).



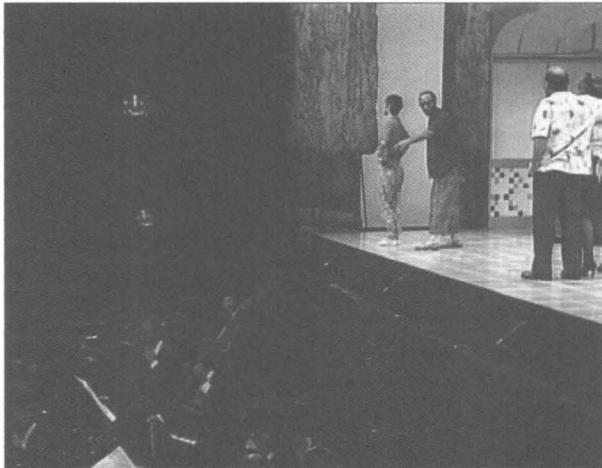


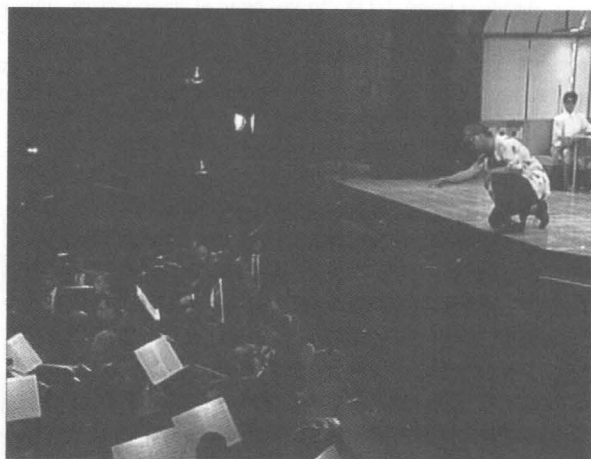
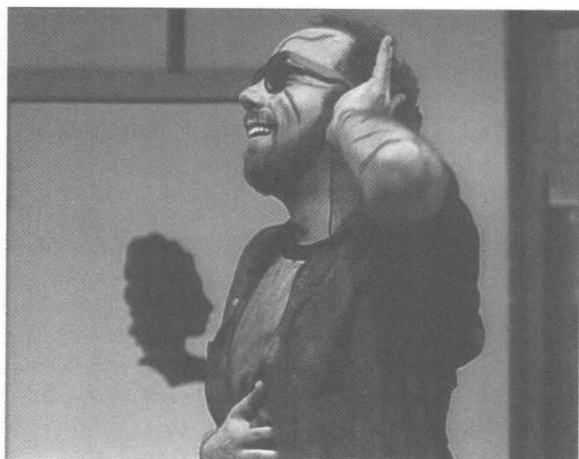
Figures 7.16–7.18 *Tosca* (1998)

Between Video and Stage

I would now like to consider a theatre director and cinematographer who filmed his own productions, giving us unbeatable hermeneutic perspectives, such as with *Theodora*, Handel's penultimate oratorio (Glyndebourne, 1996; see Martino 2004–5). Peter Sellars has received somewhat more critical attention than his colleagues, as noted by Senici, because his case is not unique (one may recall Jean-Pierre Ponnelle; see Bendikas 2004; Faroni 2014) but not that frequent – 'the director of the performance and that of the video identify with one another' (Senici 2009: 275; for a glance at the collective body of his work and his Mozart productions, see Citron 2000). In his celebrated Mozart trilogy, the overtures are treated as in a film (on the staging, see Littlejohn 1990): New York is the protagonist here, both for *Le nozze di Figaro* and *Don Giovanni*, in the first case with scenes of the luxurious city centre (Manhattan), in the second showing the desolate suburbs, the ideal background for a degraded hero. Events have been modernized (for a comparison with similar stagings, see Porter 1992) and take place in a space that is not entirely defined, yet still recognizable, as in the *Nozze*, where the characters come together at the entrance to a skyscraper (for a critical account of the rehearsals, see Trousdell 1991). The audience legitimately think they are attending a film-opera up until the third scene, when this misconception creates problems ('Is this a video of a live performance, or in the studio?'; Senici 2009: 288). This happens in three distinct situations during the first and second acts of *Così fan tutte*, which establish a precise musical relationship with the baritone's two arias and propose a dramatic suggestion tied to Don Alfonso's expression. After Fiordiligi's firm refusal in her grand aria 'Come scoglio', it is in fact her fiancé who starts off the courtship. With its ruffian tone, the orchestra proclaims the high jinks and the baritone listens to the sound supporting him.

I.11, no. 15: Guglielmo goes to the proscenium to sing his aria 'Non siate ritrosi, occhietti vezzosi' (the substitute aria, now in current use), and here, suddenly, the pit appears (*Così fan tutte* 1990; Figure 7.19), just when the orchestra plays the first bars of the aria and Guglielmo listens satisfied (Figure 7.20). In the next act, the two 'Albanians' are making their final attempt at seducing the two ladies of Ferrara: II.4, *recitativo* after no. 21, 'Il tutto deponete sopra quei tavolini'. Don Alfonso should turn 'ai servi che portan un bacile di fiori', but instead once again violates the film fiction and returns to the theatre, speaking to the orchestra from the stage ('cos'è tal mascherata?'; Figure 7.21). In closing II.8, *recitativo* after no. 25: the 'winning' baritone (Guglielmo has just succeeded in courting Dorabella), unable to console the tenor's broken heart, performs the accompanied *recitativo*, and little by little, reveals the production's features. 'Certo caso quest'è da far stupore': The image reverses for an instant, as if the perspective itself has been turned upside down. Guglielmo, meanwhile, first approaches the cameras that are filming the scene (Figure 7.22), and then, with a microphone sings aria no. 26 'Donne mie la fate a tanti', moving among the music stands (Figure 7.23). 'Io vo' bene al sesso vostro, ogni giorno ve lo mostro' (Figure 7.24). Some other gags involve the audience, then Guglielmo sings the finale of his aria assuming the camera's perspective, after passing again in front of the orchestra. At the end, the image reverses once again: the situation goes back to 'normal'.







Figures 7.19–7.24 *Così fan tutte* (1990)

When in the following act Alfonso sends the two men away (and Guglielmo will soon achieve the first success), the orchestra takes over. The puppeteer here begins the decisive phase of the seduction that began with aria no. 15, and the two appear in striking disguise, leaving speechless the two women – who in the preceding three scenes had decided to surrender. But even more important is what happens while Guglielmo performs the accompanied recitative and aria no. 26, ‘Donne mie la fate a tanti’: also, in this case, after Fiordiligi has sung a solo – the rondo no. 25, ‘Per pietà ben mio perdona’ – what emerges is the fragility of a rock that is no longer so immovable (on Sellars’s direction, see also Robinson 1986). The director’s choice seems to support the characteristics of the only didactic aria of the opera with a transversal artifice overlapping theatrical staging, screen and audience. The first meta-theatrical artifice is the microphone, contextualizing a meta-aria as if it were stage music. Then the perspective turns to the encounter

between the baritone and the camera in the wing, again while it passes in front of the orchestra in the pit, and finally when it reaches the audience on the risers, involved by the performers in a gag that is intentionally predictable. Sellars thus proposes *Così fan tutte* as a masterpiece of artifice, the disguise being more real than reality itself and turning it upside down. At the same time, it declares the rules of a theatrical game that involves the spectators, also retrospectively. The illusions achieved through remediation – which reappropriates the theatrical dimension from the opera film – become purely vertiginous and reveal the aesthetic potential of the entire trilogy (for an in-depth analysis of Sellars's conception of opera in the television production, see Citron 2002).

Is Remediation a False Problem?

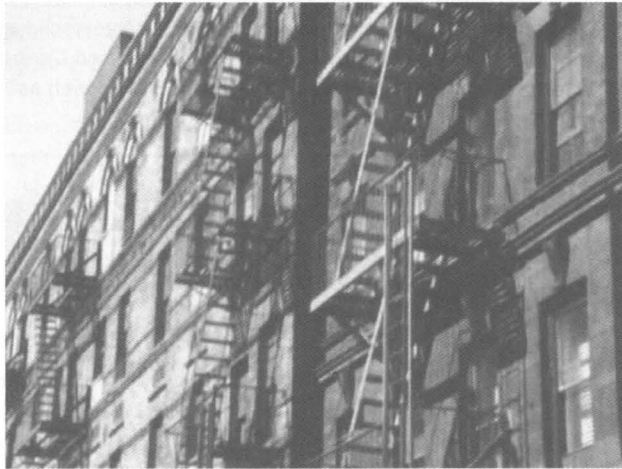
The final case does not concern the relationship between a theatrical production and its recording on video, but it allows us to broaden the view and to understand the real possibilities of video to communicate aesthetical messages connected to opera: *Leonard Bernstein Conducts 'West Side Story': The Making of the Recording* (1985). The title places the author and his creation in the foreground, and as a subtitle, the dual natures of the work itself – opera and document – are immediately combined. The DVD was directed by Christopher Swann and produced by Humphrey Burton, whose undisputed authority is evident in how strongly he influences every aspect, from the visual choices to the narration. Even if this does not concern the recording of an opera for the screen, there is a tight connection between the rehearsals conducted by the composer and the events recounted by Leonard Bernstein, Stephen Sondheim and Arthur Laurents, who straddle different media and genres, from Broadway to the multi-award-winning film with Jerome Robbins' choreography (the architect of this modern *Romeo and Juliet*, about the gang wars that haunt New York's slums). The *Making* provides us with new perspectives for *West Side Story*'s reception, recorded in a complete audio version in 1985 (for an in-depth study on the opera, see Simeone 2009; for an updated and more general view of Bernstein's musical theatre, see Smith 2011). Bernstein had never conducted his masterpiece during his successful 30-year worldwide career: thanks to this project supported by Deutsche Grammophon, he could enjoy a full orchestra, compared to the 32 musicians crowding the Broadway stage at the 1957 premiere. The cast of *West Side Story* (1985) also recorded the opera and this was released as a CD by Deutsche Grammophon Gesellschaft (457 199–2), with only one difference: no. 13d, 'Somewhere', is sung by Marilyn Horne, whereas in the *Making* it is sung by Kiri Te Kanawa (who obviously cannot perform both the offstage voice and Maria's role in the opera).

Maria and Tony, that is, Kiri Te Kanawa and José Carreras are performing the Balcony Scene no. 6: suddenly, after the two sing the last verses of 'Tonight' ('But here you are | And what was just a word is a star | Tonight!'; *West Side Story* 1985; Figure 7.25) and before the concluding dialogue of their scene, the camera cuts to the recording studio, until then full of life, now gloomily empty. Bernstein enters and performs a sort of 'epilogue'⁹ while leafing through a score (Figure 7.26). He says: 'At the beginning of this project I was not all that secure about what was going to happen. It was an extraordinary idea. I thought it might for one thing seem dated. It is fifties music, and what I found out of all that insecurity is a tremendous feeling of security. This poetic language of Jets and Sharks that was created by Arthur Laurents is something truly poetic in a sense that it lasts as a poem lasts. I feel that this piece is, in its funny little crazy way, a classic.'

The music starts again in the orchestra and while the two lovers take leave of one another ('MARIA: What does Tony stand for? | TONY: Anton. | MARIA: Te Adoro Anton. | TONY: Te adoro Maria'), the camera borrows a shot from Robert Wise's film (*West Side Story* 1961) of the stage set where the love story takes place (*West Side Story* 1985; Figure 7.27), that already appeared at the beginning of the *Making*, before the opening titles. The end-to-end cross-reference of the video emphasizes the milieu in relationship to Romeo and Juliet's love, looming over all, contexts and epochs. The scene closes and with it, the entire *Making*, with Te Kanawa and Carreras singing the last four verses of their duet ('Good night, good night, | Sleep well and when you dream, | Dream of me | Tonight').



⁹ I use this term in the accepted meaning of 'finale of a comedy ... common ... in certain modern dramaturgy that is fond of declaring the theatrical, fictional character of the work'. See 'Commiato (Congedo, Licenza)', in *Enciclopedia dello spettacolo* (Rome: Le maschere, 1954–65). An example in opera is illustrated by the spoken epilogue in Puccini's *Gianni Schicchi* (see Girardi 2002: 433–44); Bernstein's statement also performs the function of an authorial epitext (Genette) commenting upon the primary text. Thanks to Laurie Schwartz and David Rosen for the stimulating discussion regarding this passage.



Figures 7.25–7.27 *West Side Story* (1985)

Bernstein's poetic and aesthetic intent with this video was to affirm the classicism of his creation, since he had under his baton both a talented orchestra and a stellar *belcanto* cast, thus affirming the true nature of his work, from a Broadway production to opera (it was with this label that *West Side Story* arrived in 2000 at the Teatro alla Scala in Milan). One only has to take a look at the index of the DVD (booklet of *West Side Story* 1985: 3–4) and compare it with that of the score (*West Side Story* 2000: ix–x) to realize that the new order of the pieces aims to communicate, almost quintessentially, the transcendent power of love binding the two protagonists by using the power of Bernstein's musical bonds which are revealed (see Figure 7.28). 'Tonight', no. 10, is rehearsed as an ensemble piece anticipating the conflict between the rival gangs [4], but soon

after Carreras sings with the piano accompaniment [7] as in the Balcony Scene. Immediately after, 'Something's Coming' [8] expresses Tony's presentiments of love, in its *incipit*, with the interval of the descending augmented fourth, ('Who knows?'), which in reverse generates Maria's theme. The lover's anxiety is a long-lasting wait (00:10:10) in the *Making*: when Carreras rehearses 'Maria' [20] and begins to record it, the B₃ unfortunately breaks, discomfoting an author who is extremely participatory and affectionate to him [21]; Carreras immediately repeats it, giving his best [22], thus confirming that the part, when entrusted to an opera tenor, acquires depth.

A tragic destiny weighs on Tony and Maria's love: while this remains the pessimistic conclusion of the work, in the *Making* it is realized in a less tragic manner, keeping in mind the thematic references that the score puts into action.¹⁰ The Balcony Scene ends with a short motif that reaches towards an ideal breath of life (see Example 7.1), sounding like a premonition of the following events. After Bernardo's murder, Tony and Maria sing in despair, 'Somewhere there's got to be some place for you and for me' (no. 13a, Ballet Sequence); shortly after, a girl answers (an offstage voice, no. 13d, 'Somewhere'): 'There's a place for us | Somewhere a place for us' (see Example 7.2). In the final bars of the opera, during the funeral procession, the same motif returns to recall the fulfilment of the sorrowful destiny (see Example 7.3).



Example 7.1 Leonard Bernstein, *West Side Story*, no. 6, measure 151

Source: *West Side Story* (2000): 167.



Example 7.2 Leonard Bernstein, *West Side Story*, no. 13d, measures 123–6

Source: *West Side Story* (2000): 369.

¹⁰ The many intertextual connections in *West Side Story* score would require a separate chapter (see Simeone 2009); one may recall only that the melody of no. 15, 'I Have a Love' (*Andante sostenuto*, from bar 68, *West Side Story* 2000: 440), contains two references: the first to the so-called theme of Brünnhilde's glorification ('Im Feuer Leuchtend') that celebrates the sacrificial rite in the finale of the *Götterdämmerung*; the second, 'I love him', refers instead to Delilah's sensual phrase in *Samson et Dalila* ('Ah! Réponds à ma tendresse!').

	playing time
[1] Opening Credits / Cast – Vorspann / Besetzung – Générique début / Distribution Arrival of the principal singers – Bernstein on <i>West Side Story</i>	[2'32]
[2] "I Feel Pretty" (piano rehearsal) / Te Kanawa	[0'46]
[3] First session: introduction of the principals	[1'35]
[4] "Tonight (Ensemble)" (rehearsal) / entire cast	[2'00]
[5] "Jet Song" (recording) / Ollmann, Chorus	[1'35]
[6] "Cool" (recording) / Ollmann, Chorus	[5'05]
[7] "Tonight" (piano rehearsal) / Carreras – Carreras on <i>West Side Story</i>	[1'48]
[8] "Something's Coming" (recording: take, playback, retakes) / Carreras	[5'43]
[9] Troyanos on working with Bernstein "Tonight (Ensemble)" (recording) / entire cast	[2'53]
[10] "Tonight (Ensemble)" (recording – contd.) / entire cast	[1'51]
[11] Bernstein talks about the orchestra "I Feel Pretty" (recording) / Te Kanawa with Edeiken, Zambalis, Réaux	[5'04]
[12] Te Kanawa on working with Bernstein	[0'46]
[13] Problem passages / Bernstein, McClure: "Dance at the Gym" (recording & playbacks)	[6'16]
[14] Bernstein talks to the press "Dance at the Gym" (recording - contd.)	[4'07]
[15] Recording Nina and Alexander Bernstein ("Meeting Scene") "Dance at the Gym" (recording - contd.)	[2'37]
[16] Te Kanawa on <i>West Side Story</i> "Somewhere" (recording) / Te Kanawa	[2'58]
[17] Troyanos on recording <i>West Side Story</i> "America" (rehearsal and recording) / Troyanos, Edeiken, Chorus	[6'53]
[18] "One Hand, One Heart" (recording) / Te Kanawa, Carreras	[5'50]
[19] Te Kanawa on singing Bernstein's music	[0'26]
[20] "Maria" (piano rehearsal) / Carreras	[1'41]
[21] "Maria" (recording) / Carreras – interruption	[4'52]
[22] Carreras on the interruption – "Maria" (recording – contd.) / Carreras	[3'30]
[23] Te Kanawa on working with Bernstein	[0'48]
[24] "A Boy Like That" & "I Have a Love" (recording) / Troyanos, Te Kanawa	[6'14]
[25] "Gee, Officer Krupke" (recording) / Livingston, Nelson, Bogardus, Thom, Lester, Chorus	[5'06]
[26] "Balcony Scene" (recording) / Te Kanawa, Carreras	[2'01]
[27] Bernstein on recording <i>West Side Story</i> "Balcony Scene" (recording) / Te Kanawa, Carreras (Nina Bernstein, Alexander Bernstein)	[1'54]
[28] End titles	[1'29]

Act 1	
Scene 1 <i>The neighborhood</i>	
1. Prologue (Instrumental)	
2. Jet Song (<i>Riff and Jets</i>)	
2a. Jet Song Chase (Instrumental)	
Scene 2 <i>A back yard</i>	
3. Somewhere's Coming (<i>Tony</i>)	
3a. Somewhere's Coming Chase (Instrumental)	
Scene 3 <i>The bridal shop</i>	
Scene 4 <i>The gym</i>	
The dance at the Gym:	
4. Blues (Instrumental)	
4a. Promenade (instrumental)	
4b. Mambo (Instrumental)	
4c. Cha-Cha (instrumental)	
4d. Meeting Scene (Underscore)	
4e. Jump (Underscore)	
5. Maria (<i>Tony</i>)	
Scene 5 <i>A back alley</i>	
6. Balcony Scene (<i>Maria and Tony</i>)	
7. America (<i>Anita, Rosalia and Girls</i>)	
7a. America to Drugstore (Instrumental)	
Scene 6 <i>The drugstore</i>	
8. Cool (<i>Riff and Jets</i>)	
8a. Cool Chase (Instrumental)	
8b. Under Dialogue and Change of Scene (Underscore)	
Scene 7 <i>The bridal shop</i>	
9. Under Dialogue (Underscore)	
9a. One Hand One Heart (Marriage Scene: <i>Tony and Maria</i>)	
Scene 8 <i>The neighborhood</i>	
10. Tonight (<i>Maria, Tony, Anita, Riff, Bernardo, Sharks and Jets</i>)	
Scene 9 <i>Under the Highway</i>	
11. The Rumble (Instrumental)	
Act 2	
Scene 1 <i>Maria's bedroom</i>	
12. I Feel Pretty (<i>Maria, Francisco, Rosalia, Consuelo</i>)	
13. Under Dialogue (Instrumental Underscore)	
13a. Ballet Sequence (<i>Tony and Maria</i>)	
13b. Transition to Scherzo	
13c. Scherzo (Instrumental)	
13d. Somewhere (<i>A Girl</i>)	
13e. Procession and Nightmare (<i>Entire Company</i>)	
Scene 2 <i>Another alley</i>	
14. Jee, Officer Krupke (<i>Jets</i>)	
14a. Change of Scene (Instrumental)	
Scene 3 <i>Maria's bedroom</i>	
15. A Boy like That and I have a Love (<i>Maria and Anita</i>)	
15a. Change of Scene (Instrumental)	
Scene 4 <i>The drugstore</i>	
16. Taunting Scene (Instrumental)	
Scene 5 <i>The cellar</i>	
Scene 6 <i>The neighborhood</i>	
17. Finale (<i>Maria and Tony</i>)	

Figure 7.28 In this comparison, the dashed lines highlight the articulation of the plot; the solid lines indicate the point of reference from *West Side Story* (1985) to *West Side Story* (2000)



Example 7.3 Leonard Bernstein, *West Side Story*, no. 17, measures 22–7

Source: *West Side Story* (2000): 474.

In the *Making*, Bernstein also asked Kiri Te Kanawa to sing ‘Somewhere’ [16], explaining this as the pure joy of recording the piece with this soprano. This choice is important for whoever follows the video until the end, when in the final images of the Balcony Scene, after Bernstein’s epilogue, the motif of Example 7.1 returns and ends, no longer as the sign of a tragic premonition, but as the attainment of the endless sorrow of two lovers.

The articulation of the *Making* is that of creating a new perspective for *West Side Story*’s reception, derived from the re-editing of its structure. This video leads us towards an aesthetic statement, based on specific relationships with the motivic texture of the work: *West Side Story* was created as a musical, but thanks to opera singers, it could also enter the repertory of the great opera houses and become a classic, as Bernstein himself claimed. This last example reinforces the way of thinking that I began with: Bolter and Grusin’s concept of remediation is actually a false problem. In fact, I do not believe that remediation creates anything truly autonomous in musical theatre. In crossing between media, not even ‘*West Side Story*’: *The Making of the Recording* – the most radical of the above-mentioned examples – betrays the hypotext, but reformulates its message. In the other cases, the perspective of the stage production remains decisive for reception, and the video fulfils an extremely important task in a modern society so conditioned by images: it allows us to study masterpieces of the past from many different standpoints, confronting us with the art of direction, which is at present in full development.

Translated by Laurie Schwartz

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