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A SOCIOLOGICAL ANALYSIS OF THE SOCIAL ROLE OF FEMALE ARTISTS DURING COVID-19²

Abstract

During the pandemic, artists have created new works, initiated political actions and civil activism, supporting the health prevention policy with the “I stay at home” campaign, but also organizing, at a later stage, protest movements, in defence of the right to perform one’s work, broadening the criticisms to a macro vision: in defence of the environment and the weakest groups, against violence against women, increased by 30%, for aid to immigrants, in denouncing urban marginality (street art), and the depopulation of small towns. The lack of attention on the part of politics, in Italy, and in other European countries, has then generated real opposition movements, an exemplary case being the song “Danser encore,” whose lyrics expressed a protest against government-imposed restrictions, and which turned into flash mob events in many countries. The depoliticization of contemporary art, of which Yves Michaud wrote, is a past concept, because we can see artistic movements shifting towards the safeguarding of universal rights and duties, up to the latest interpretations of what justice is and how to overcome social inequalities according to the visions of Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum.

Keywords: depoliticization, art, artistic movements, female artists, COVID-19 pandemic

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² As soon as distance learning began in our Department, I launched a research project with my students, asking them to find out and write about which of the artistic forms were making the best use in this period and with what motivation/purpose/results. The research ended in May 2021.

Between April and May 2020, I collaborated on the World Children Orchestra project, which brought together children and young people from all over the world to play and sing the “Hymn of Joy,” an event recorded on video. The project was conceived by a teacher called Barbara Riccardi, ambassador of the Global Teacher Prize, sponsored by the Italian Department of Education, UNESCO, UNICEF, CIDIM, and Curci Editore. It premiered on the Italian State Broadcasting Company’s channel RAI 1 on 13 May 2020.

How did male and female artists respond to the Covid 19 epidemiological emergency of 2020? The artists in question were strongly affected as a category by the restrictive measures which practically brought their professional activities to a grinding halt. In Italy, during the summer of 2020, while indoor discotheques were granted permission to reopen, musicians, actors and other workers involved in theatrical and cinematographic activities which did not take place outdoors, were not allowed to operate.

The idea that artistic activities have no significant impact upon the nation's GDP might be seen as a self-deceptive feature of political planning in Italy, while, in reality, the artistic sector is and can be a growing driving force within the country's economy both directly and indirectly. Despite this, our country fails to implement territorial actions capable of giving rise to a virtuous circle of art, culture and tourism, such as to promote lifelong education of the population. In this practically inert situation, the management of the pandemic-caused crisis has practically impoverished artists, already overlooked and disregarded (besides being frequently relegated to the function of pure entertainment), their role marginalised – even though, since ancient times, they have been fundamental to the education of both young people and adults (Adorno 1974; Bourdieu 1998; Nussbaum 2004; Heinich 2009; Zolberg 2007; Ferrarotti 2020).

In the nations most affected by the pandemic, professional and amateur artists availed themselves of all possible media to continue to exist, shape emotions and represent values and respond to the shock wave which shook the public, generating the profound sense of insecurity, disbelief, and anger caused by the deathly virus. Many artists organized events with the overall, general intention of affirming a sense of community and sharing, of respect for the official norms passed by the authorities to control the situation and prevent contagion, denoting a considerable degree of public responsibility on their part during various phases of the pandemic. During the first Italian lockdown, at the end of March 2020, the idea of joining and singing from the windows and balconies of our homes was promoted through social media, which indicated the lyrics they believed best represented the collective identity, from a song by Domenico Modugno to other pieces of classical and pop music. As is often the case during war and civil events, choral singing often unites and reinforces ideas and identities as part of the ancient, ancestral collective memory (Halbwachs 2001).

When, however, the lockdown ended, and a gradual reopening of work activities began to take place, the artists remained “unemployed,” despite the reopening, during the summer, of musical clubs, bars, restaurants, and

the re-establishment, in autumn, of Black Fridays.³ Therefore, from May on, the artists united to organize civil petitions,⁴ endorsed by thousands of people, to demand that due attention be paid to their role in society.

³ Among other things, the original definition of Black Friday had nothing to do with commerce. It was used to define the civil demonstrations held in London on Friday 16 November 1910 by the suffragettes, many of whom were beaten and killed by the police.

⁴ The petition “Vissi d’Arte” [I lived by art] promoted by *Cultura Italiae* in September 2020, and signed by 105,000 people, was addressed to the Italian government in writing and read as follows:

“Dear Prime Minister Conte, Minister [of culture] Franceschini,
regarding your intention to close theatres and cinemas contemplated explicitly in the draft of the next Dpcm, [PM’s decree] and any other fundamental places of culture not yet mentioned explicitly, in an attempt to avoid its approval which would have harmful consequences upon the entire cultural sector and on the spirit of citizens, we draw your attention to the following points:

1) the workers of the live entertainment sector have engaged their extraordinary and personal commitment to reopen theatres and cinemas in full compliance with the protocols for the protection of health. They are safe places where the audience is seated wearing masks and does not speak during performances. Exit and entry are regulated and respect the norms of distancing. Today, these places represent a virtuous example of the management of public spaces in a pandemic era;

2) we have painstakingly won back our audiences, often hesitant and confused by fluctuating and angst-generating communiqués, encouraging them to buy tickets again, reassuring them of the safety of the shows and the scrupulous adoption of all security measures.

3) As to theatres, we have reassumed the production activity of shows previously put on hold, thus investing again in their reorganisation. Moreover, all the vouchers issued for these shows will be reissued again if they were cancelled to avoid burdening the theatre cash desks;

4) We have rescheduled tours, concerts, cinema releases, assuming enormous risks, investing, and, therefore, betting on the future, despite the prevailing state of uncertainty;

5) We have welcomed back all the employees who were receiving Cig [unemployment benefits], guaranteeing them not only fair salaries, but above all the dignity of employment;

6) the last point to which we ask you to pay attention is the most important of all: those who work in the field of culture are aware of its importance, especially during difficult times like the these we are faced with. It would cause serious damage to citizens if they were deprived of the possibility of dreaming and being transported beyond the confines of their daily lives.

It is, above all, in the name of the importance of not depriving Italy of its collective imagination that we ask you, on behalf of the *Associazione Cultura Italiae* that I represent, and therefore of all the sectors and genres of live entertainment, of all film producers, artists, art galleries, museums, concert halls, to keep all places of culture without distinction open!

As in the oxymoron of the usefulness of the useless, Nuccio Ordine clearly denounced the fact that the political and educational idea that intangible, humanistic knowledge is not useful because it fails to produce great profits, keeps spreading in Italy. For centuries, the experience of art has been linked exclusively to talent and an “innocent” kind of knowledge, by its very nature free and immune from commercial strategies. Once traditional patronage came to an end, artists were forced to find useful independent sources of income for their survival. Once the monopoly of dependence on a patron (a process that began in the late 17th century), broke down, everything changed: “A new statute of art appeared, which upset the economic status of the work and the entire economy of art. By entering into the game of competition, it became an object from which income might be made without requiring a monopoly: it was preparing the way to subjection to the rules and contradictions of the capitalist economy”.⁵

The independence of artists is linked to the value of what they create and this value is determined when art becomes a commercial product. Its value, or rather the artist’s value, is translated into money. The difficulty in considering the artist as an independent professional (rarely identifiable in censuses) in the population, as a male or a female entrepreneur, depends on two attitudes: first, the social imagination still strongly rooted in the history of patronage; secondly, today, the direct and indirect income it generates, the effects artistic creation has on the public, and the influence it exerts over the so-called consumer choices regarding other tangible and intangible goods. The history of the arts has significantly conditioned the idea that artists have no primary, utilitarian-economic purpose and that, as a result, their activities, despite having economic repercussions, are considered too often marginal, if not downright useless.⁶

Finally, the effects of the Covid19 pandemic, rather than fostering policies of greater national, international and intercontinental solidarity – inspired

We are important to civil society because we support you in the difficult institutional task of keeping citizens’ spirits high, fully aware of the suffering they are experiencing at personal, family and professional levels. It is especially during this second wave that we need it most.

The theatre and the cinema cannot stop because they represent an invisible reservoir of meaning for the public and the individual life of our fellow citizens.

We protect the visible part of this reservoir of meaning.

We have faith in you.”

⁵ A. Serravezza, *La Sociologia della Musica*, EDT, Turin, 1980, p. 183.

⁶ Cf. Nuccio Ordine, *L’utilità dell’inutile*, Bompiani, Milan, 2013.

by the utopian project of a Europe founded on brotherhood – are degenerating into greater conflict and competition for supremacy in the management of political and economic power.

At national level, the “restorative” measures have favoured show-business only workers employed permanently by the media and theatres, but, as we know, as many as 80% of our artists have no permanent contracts and therefore have not been able to avail themselves of these measures. How many have had to abandon art and seek other means of survival? So, to what extent will our society be culturally impoverished because of this?

Franco Ferrarotti outlined three fundamental human discourses: the religious, the poetic-mythical and the scientific-technical, linked together by a relationship that is dialectical and ambiguous at the same time. Thanks to art, human beings recapture the fullness of their humanity, which “indicates where to excavate. It points to the right spot. For this reason, a society without its artists is lost” (Ferrarotti 1998).

Art is dialectical as an indispensable activity, complementary to all other significant human activities, which together comprise the worldwide society.

It is indicative that Martha C. Nussbaum (1996), Professor of Ethics at the University of Chicago, uses literature to reconstruct the pathway, the formation and enrichment of judgment, of the code regulating civil life.⁷ Her main intention was to induce her students – seeing that society is full of refusals from which no one is immune – to develop a greater capacity for sympathy so that with feelings of participation and compassion they could imagine what others were experiencing.

SOCIOLOGICAL PERSPECTIVES IN THE VOICES AND WORKS OF FEMALE ARTISTS

Male and female artists, of the past and present, have spoken and acted more and more to affect social and political life, making use of all the media available for the spread of their works and thinking. During the first and second phases of the pandemic, they created new works, and gave rise

⁷ The most frequent literary works quoted by Nussbaum are Whitman and Dickens, in the former’s works, the need for a public function of poetry emerges on the grounds that narration and literary imagination are not the opposite of rational argument, but can be essential component parts of it.

to political and civil action like backing the government's health prevention policy with the "I stay at home" campaign. Later, they spoke out in favour of the right to do one's work, but also in defence of the environment and the most vulnerable members of society. They condemned violence against women, which increased by 30% in Italy during the pandemic crisis, advocated aid to immigrants whose cause has fallen silent over the last nine months, and supported denunciation of urban marginality (in street art) and depopulation of small towns.

In Italy, Ezio Bosso, Gigi Proietti, Franco Arminio, Chandra Livia Candiani and Andrea Bocelli⁸ emerge as those most frequently present in various media. Many of them, already in 2019, were engaged in social work, financing the *Sea Watch Mediterranea* ship whose mission it is to rescue shipwrecked immigrants.

Francesco Maria Battisti considered art a privileged vehicle for transmitting utopian ideas and for the peaceful resolution of problems. Utopia, he wrote, is an integral part of society because it comes from the social imagination present in every era. Analysing the fear felt by young Italians towards the massive entry of immigrants, he observed that:

(...) Ethnicity becomes a reason for the exclusion of those who are not Italian, who are given „inferior“ treatment within the ambit of rights and privileges. (...) If these problems manage to find a peaceful and satisfactory solution over the coming years, it will depend on the spread of a „culture of democracy“ that does not consist only in the diffusion of shallow democratic images, of programmes that are promptly set aside after the elections, of broadcasts aimed at the general public, and a systematic concealment of the real dimensions of the social problems that need to be addressed. (Battisti 2002; 194)

In the work of today's artists, we witness the rebirth of social criticism and utopia as visible public action and the spread of the work of art as a reworking of the collective consciousness (Goldmann 1972).

The depoliticization of contemporary art, about which Yves Michaud wrote,⁹ is a past concept, because we now see cultural and artistic groups siding with the protection of the environment and with biological and

⁸ Singer Andrea Bocelli was one of the first to fall ill with Covid and speak about it publicly on television. The aim was to foster compliance with health regulations as much as possible.

⁹ Y. Michaud, *L'art a l'etat gazeux*, Hachette, Paris, 2003.

social respect for the individual. It is a question of reconciling the age-old separation between nature and culture. In recent years, Erri De Luca defended, even in the law courts, the rights of the inhabitants of unspoiled natural areas where high-speed railway routes are being built, while writer Michela Murgia, even before the virus, was engaged in denouncing fascism, racism and violence against women; Franco Arminio (2015) spoke out about the abandonment of small urban centres and founded a landscape association, in hopes that small towns may be brought back to life. Chandra Livia Candiani was engaged in teaching poetry in schools in Milan while Ezio Bosso was striving to make classical music popular and Banksy used street art to protest against capitalism and the degradation caused by urban marginality.

On the 30th of October 2020, Chandra Livia Candiani wrote:

Let's not overlook breath, it is still there, it is not guaranteed, it is good to remember it, feel it, release it, prolong our exhalation a little and learn how to release our breath. Each breath teaches you how to release it. Inhalation takes, but it knows how to do so by itself, exhalation, on the contrary, releases, goes out into the world, teaches us to let go. In the woods, I always carry a mask with me; if I meet someone (a rare occurrence but, at times when one can gather chestnuts, mushrooms, humans spring up), if I cross their paths even for a very short time, I don my mask and smile at them, a bit like in the past when men raised their hats, as a sign of respect, recognition of one's common fragility. Learn to greet each other, to honour each other because we are passing by.¹⁰

Even more evident in the visual and plastic arts are the works of artists created to denounce the injustices of this century. Just think of *the forty-eight statues at the bottom of the sea off Pizzo Calabro*, "*End of dreams*" by Nikolaj Bendix Skyum Larsen, sculptures in memory of many migrants who died during their voyage towards hope; *The Giant Hands* by Lorenzo Quinn, exhibited at the 2017 Venice Biennale, and which support Ca' Sagredo in the Grand Canal.¹¹ Then there was the act of protest by the artist

¹⁰ Cf. Chandra Livia Candiani, "Imparare a salutarci," www.doppiozero.it, 30 ottobre 2020.

¹¹ The installation, between eight and nine meters high, was publicly displayed from 13 May to 26 November 2017. For the entire period of the exhibition, some versions of other works by Lorenzo Quinn were on display inside the Ca' Sagredo Hotel.

called Blu who destroyed twenty years of street art in Bologna as soon as he found out that they would become a subject to appropriation.¹²

For many years now, the artists who work in the suburbs all over Europe have been heading towards the side opposite of individuality. The social enjoyment of artistic work, for example in the case of *neighbourhood* murals, now defined as *Street Art* or *Eco Art*,¹³ becomes a collective experience (Becker, 2004), an expression and a sharing of discomfort, social opportunities, new institutional pathways with psycho-social consequences regarding self-perception and the construction of a new identity.

Alessandro Dal Lago (2006) seems to respond to the proposals made by Strassoldo (2009) in a timeless dialogue with Walter Benjamin, in his volume *Mercanti d'aura*, where he investigates the postmodern and immaterial logic of contemporary art, often perverse and polluted by rationality far removed from the pure and classical idea of beauty, where the paradox of the logic of selling and buying artistic gold is of greater weight than the artist's brush. Street art is then treated by Dal Lago from different points of view: aesthetic, social and cultural, starting from an analysis of the motivations that drive writers, as well as those of anti-writers (institutions, citizens, art critics). He pointed out that analysing "graffiti also always means talking about something else that is dear to the speakers" and if there is "a cultural phenomenon that wonderfully illustrates the tautological and

¹² Blu assigned to his writer friends from the Wu Ming collective the task of publishing and commenting on his gesture of protest on the Giap blog: "the 'Street Art' exhibition is a symbol of a conception of the city that needs to be fought against because it is based on private accumulation and the transformation of life and the creativity of all for the benefit of a few. Faced with the arrogance of landlords, or colonial governors, of those who feel free even to remove artworks from the walls, all that is left to us is to have the artworks disappear thus making hoarding impossible. It is no wonder that the former president of the most powerful city banking foundation is behind yet another privatisation of a piece of the city. This exhibition legitimises and glosses over the hoarding of street artists' works, to the immense joy of unscrupulous collectors and merchants of works stolen from the streets. It is not surprising that [the person in question is] the friend of both centre-right and centre-left politicians who, on the one hand, criminalise graffiti, put 16-year-old writers on trial, and praise urban decor, while, on the other, celebrate the city as the cradle of street art and claim to recover it for the art market".

¹³ Lorenzo Quinn says that „Venice is a floating city of art that has inspired cultures for centuries, but in order to continue, it needs the support of us and future generations, because it is threatened by climate change and the ravages of time“.

circular functioning of social mechanisms in a complex world, this is graffiti and the campaigns to erase it” (Dal Lago 2016, pp. 19-53).

It was in Italy that Patrizia Bonardi (2020) opened an association fostering dialogue between artists and sociologists, because, as she puts it, art needs sociology and sociology of art. Patrizia Bonardi lives near Bergamo and is the founder of a gallery in Leffe, a place heavily experienced during the first tragic phase of the Covid 19 epidemic. At that time, she created the work entitled “Culture,” and here she talks about its origins and about her daily life during the first phase of the pandemic:

I did nothing significant on an artistic level while Covid reigned here in Val Seriana in March 2020. Its shadow of death stretched out on sunny days, which saw the most intense moments in the daily meetings with my sister in the garden. Our shared garden was the only free zone to meet her, who, as a nurse, assisted the first Covid patients, those who, within a few days, ventilated in dramatic conditions, perished. She constantly wore devices in and out of the hospital to protect herself and to protect us. Her eyes and her words were a sort of front row in the horror that was happening. But there was also a family tranquillity with Pietro and the children returning from the various places where they lived as students. And always the worries about how to protect our parents, still there. I had regressed to small and infrequent affectionate drawings, portraying the loved ones and classical elements. The awakening of the desire to move on, to be out there, to depart once again was dictated by an invitation from Maestro Franco Cipriano, who was curating an exhibition in Parabita, in the summer, dedicated to Mater Nostra and the patron saint of the place, which made me regain concentration and energy.

This invitation at the end of the lockdown permitted me to return to the studio and to draw strength from materials, gestures and thoughts – for me, a source of catharsis.

So the bandages dipped in beeswax came to form a trinitarian triad I called “Coltura,” just like the patroness of the town of Salento, the voice of those who see true culture in the art of cultivation.

What culture is greater than the marvellous, generating force of nature? The wounds inflicted on her were now ours and her maternal womb had given birth to seeds of death.¹⁴

¹⁴ Cf. Patrizia Bonardi approved this interview to Milena Gammaitoni on 30 November 2020.

All men and women think as members of a social group and not as isolated beings;¹⁵ in a Goldmannian sense, they comprise the possible collective consciousness of a group but are not totally exhausted by this. Goldmann had already introduced the ideational and imaginative scope of the artist who can indicate new utopian and social dimensions.

Today, within the pandemic crisis, the artist, as an intellectual, demonstrates the ability to experience the contradiction inherent in every aspect of existence, s/he does not evade this condition, but lives it to the fullest, making it a matter of inspiration and leaving a precious, rare testimony of the human condition. It does not mean withdrawing from the circumstances, placing oneself above them, but living and describing them while remaining rooted in them, in a condition of existential equality.

The revolution of poetic language is, for Kristeva, one that constitutes the logic of the speaking being in that s/he speaks, relentlessly repeats his/her breaches; the power to constitute a meaning of reality, to innovate language, the power to eternalise it in writing, thanks to scansion of thing/sense/sound. It consists of the power to name the unknown through sounds, colours, through unsuspected and unpredictable words that renew language.

Kristeva writes again:

We have entered a new phase of discourse that the West has been carrying out for two thousand years now. We know that until the tenth or eleventh centuries Western art was sacred or assimilated to sacrifice, an offering to God, to the bishop or the lord. After William of Occam separated faith from knowledge, art and literature that were not at ease in either ambit became imaginary and gradually detached themselves from the sacred (not in a necessarily abrupt fashion); they were humanised and practiced as a language – at times realistic, at others not – of the fragility of the individual, of her/his inner crises, of his/her social dramas. (Kristeva 1979, 13)

Artistic language has become increasingly a means of action when planning processes of social transformation, precisely at the moment when it records these very processes.

Art, as a mask, a metaphor for metaphors, can answer the sociological question.

¹⁵ I believe that it was Mannheim who dispelled the Romantic idea of genius as a being in isolation, detached from the society in which s/he lived.

The mask, writes Marià Zambrano (1991), is an instrument of participation, it becomes the object of contemplation *a posteriori*, it is used to obtain something, a tool to make contact with a kind of reality that can only be touched on by imitation, a form of imitation that is transformation.

The Russian poetess Anna Akhmatova wrote in 1957 (Akhmatova, 1992, p. 139):

In the terrible years of the Yezhov terror I spent seventeen months waiting in line outside the prison in Leningrad. One day somebody in the crowd identified me. Standing behind me was a woman, with lips blue from the cold, who had, of course, never heard me called by name before. Now she started out of the torpor common to us all and asked me in a whisper (everyone whispered there):

“Can you describe this?”

And I said: “I can.”

Then something like a smile passed fleetingly over what had once been her face.¹⁶

Today artists experience and interpret the *disenchantment of the world* (Weber, 1921), the fragmentation of life, and powerlessness in the face of tragic events in social and individual history, but also act as claimants, critical witnesses, sentinels of civilisation.

The artist starts from this condition of disenchantment with her/himself and the world, but in some cases, s/he transcends it by tracing new ways of understanding and revealing reality. We can see the transition from this almost disenchanted acceptance of impotence to a vigorous rebirth, typical of people experiencing social and political dramas, as is happening with the Covid19 pandemic.

Female artists and artists are increasingly precious collective social actors, at times forerunners of history and hotbeds of transforming consciences.

Franco Arminio writes:

What has happened to the intellectuals, now that we need them? Where is the radical, revolutionary thought, now that we should plan the future? (...)

Today more than ever it is necessary to think about those places. Villages, the landscape, the woods, the Apennines. It is necessary to regenerate a strategy in favour of inland areas because the pandemic has, objectively, opened

¹⁶ Trans. Stanley Kunitz & Max Hayward.

up spaces for important public intervention. Over the years the state has abandoned the internal areas of our country: it has concentrated services like schools and hospitals in large cities but, today, the metropolises are proving to be inhospitable. To take care of the small towns of the Apennines, from north to south, would be no gift but a service offered to Italy. I am thinking, for example, of my region, Campania, where an immense number of people are concentrated along the coast, while the remaining area is deserted. The countryside, on the other hand, is the ideal dimension, the best one in the world in which to live. The problem is that it is not good for capitalism: then we have to decide whether to continue building a world for the rich or for citizens, for men and women. Of course, this is not easy if the dominated assume the poetics of the dominant, as has happened so far...¹⁷

These female and male artists describe moods, hope for a better kind of society, through an act of social criticism, they propose the age-old catharsis that relieves, indeed, the fear of suffering and death, within a horizon of meaning, they provide the creative word by which not to lose oneself within the loneliness and disorientation of the pandemic crisis. Their voices, their works concern collective life, they are memory, modalities between life and dreams in the present, collective awareness of values, and the imagery of the future. This is because, humanity, as Shakespeare wrote, is nothing other than the stuff that dreams are made of dreams; we cannot stop dreaming of a new world thanks to artists. Society needs to fully recognise the role of art, preserve it, and not reduce it to the rank of mere showbusiness, as if it were a trivialized catharsis capable of removing worries, through pure fun.

During the “I stay at home” campaign, supported by many artists, Gigi Proietti, who passed away recently, spoke to address the elderly, saying, “Let’s lead by example and stay at home”; Ezio Bosso, in one of his last interviews, spoke about the problem of not being able to return to making live music, but also about hope:

What do you miss most?

Making music. And finding myself in the company of the musicians of my Europe Philharmonic Orchestra, they are my brothers, my children. We hear

¹⁷ Franco Arminio, 30 April 2020, <https://www.fanpage.it/cultura/franco-arminio-contro-il-coronavirus-torniamo-nei-piccoli-borghi/>.

from each other a lot but it is not the same. Some of them are going through a period of great suffering, they can no longer play, no longer earn an income.

What will classical music be like “afterwards”?

We are thinking about it together. The new rules of distancing will affect the repertoire. Perhaps for a while we shall cultivate more the chamber-music aspect of my beloved Beethoven more than the symphonies, instrumentally too crowded. We need to redesign maps; I am working with sound engineers and architects. I would like to talk to Renzo Piano about it. We shall begin again, but in another way. Classical music must become an element of growth for this country, it can teach us to stay and act together in an orderly, disciplined manner.¹⁸

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¹⁸ Ezio Bosso, 20 April 2020, www.corriere.it, Coronavirus, Ezio Bosso, “The disease has trained me, the history books help me”. The conductor tells us about his days in quarantine, “I study scores that I may not be able to perform and I am against improper rhetoric and inappropriate lexis,” article by Giuseppina Manin.