

The arranging of „Rainbow“

By Benjamin Hartwig

I decided to arrange a melody into a selected Jazz-style. I took “Rainbow”, a song I knew from my cousin. I had a little paper sheet with the melody and a few information about the basic harmonic structure of “Rainbow.” But I have never found something about the composers or about the piece itself. So I am quite sure, that I am the only person in this world, who arranged this piece for a classic Big-Band, and I am quite proud of that fact.

First of all I’ve listened to Jazz music. At this time, I loved Jazz, but I did not really know much about it because I play the violin and have an education in classical music. So I had to get used to the jazzy harmonies and specialities. Then, of course, I had to learn the whole basics of the Jazz harmony studies. It was very difficult for me and I had to spend a lot of time playing piano.

I first had to play the melody in the swing rhythm. In order to do this, I had to change the accompaniment from a Bossa rhythm into a Rag-Time style. Then of course I added a walkin’-bass to get the typical Jazz groove. With the help of my new-acquired knowledge about Jazz harmony I changed the basic harmonies into typical jazz chords. To do this I had to draw up a scale degree analysis.

Then I could start with the most difficult part of my work: The brass instrumentation. The point was to get used to the different notations of the instruments and to distribute the chords from the piano to the 13 instruments of the Big-Band. I needed a lot of concentration and intellectual effort to do this. And then the process of arranging began. I had to learn how to bring my ideas on paper, this was quite difficult because I had never seen any Big-Band music before. And of course, the most important for every arranger: “Who plays what, and where?” And my favourite part of my work is the piano intro I wrote, actually unusual for this kind of swing-style.

I like this version of my arrangement, but there would be many ways of keeping working on it and other arrangers would have produced different results, so I will do.