

555. Mambo Nr.5

Backgrounds of S. Radic

Mambo No.5 is the title of a Mambo and Jive dance piece originally written by Pérez Prado in 1949, and a later version of Prado served as an instrumental model for the song Mambo No. 5 (A Little Bit Of...) by Lou Bega, who became a worldwide seller of millions and a summer hit in 1999. Measured by world turnover, Mambo No. 5 is the most successful German music production of all time in the pop music sector. (Source: Wikipedia)

The origin story of the original begins in 1949, when the Mambo conductor Pérez Prado composed the song Mambo No. 5. Since then, he has been registered as an author with BMI[7] and won a BMI Award. For Prado, a total of 433 titles are protected by copyright. There are countless recordings of Mambo No. 5 by the original interpreter; often other instrumental tracks are mistakenly listed as Mambo No. 5 on CD covers.

When Prado, the "King of Mambo", composed the instrumental song Mambo No. 5 and other titles, he was under contract with the Mexican record label Mexicana, a subsidiary label of the US major label RCA Records. The latter then signed a record deal with Prado because of his local success to facilitate the release in the USA. Prado's first single for RCA was Qué rico el mambo / Mambo No. 5 (RCA 47-3782 and 20-3782). Both shots were taken in Mexico City on December 12, 1949 (A-side) and November 1949 (B-side). This single, available as 78 rpm as well as 45 rpm, took North America by storm with its vulcanizing wind sections and convincing percussion, triggering the mambo fever. In 1950 a record with blue vinyl and the titles Mambo No. 5 / Blue Mambo was released with the catalogue number RCA 51-5062. Prado found an increasing following with his music in the USA and started a nationwide US tour in April 1951 at the "Puerto Rico Theater" in the Bronx, New York. Dave Barbour was the first to record a cover version with his orchestra under the title The Mambo, which reached 27th place in the pop hit parade in September 1950.

Lou Bega's million-dollar seller. The 24-year-old Lou Bega was still unknown in the music industry when Mambo No. 5 was selected from the repertoire by the Hamburg repertoire managers of the American music publisher Peermusic, which has its European headquarters in the Hanseatic city. According to its own statements, the music



publisher holds the rights to over 500,000 music titles from the past decades. The Repertoire managers systematically analysed the stock of their music publishers in search of titles whose music genres could once again be successful on the current market. One of those titles was Mambo No. 5, which fell into the hands of a team around Goar Biesenkamp. Biesenkamp, who held various positions at BMG Ariola from 1987 to 1996 and founded the music production Unicade Music in 1997, was joined by Frank Lio and Donald Fact, both from "Syndicate Musicproduction" (responsible for No Angels, among others). In addition, the progressive record label "Lautstark" was founded in 1997 and belongs to the BMG Group. His artist-development had specialized in "extraordinary" talents. This cooperation of parts of the German music industry is considered to be the discoverer and developer of Lou Bega and his hit. Pérez Prados Mambo No. 5 received a text and a new chorus melody by Lou Bega and Christian "Zippy" Pletschacher. The producers Frank Lio and Donald Fact took care of the dance style of the original Mambos in the Munich recording studio (Baldham/Vaterstetten), from which original parts were cut (sampled) into the recording. Since it was - from the point of view of the time - an arrangement in the copyright sense, the heirs of Prados as the composer's legal successor had to have permission granted by the music publisher Peermusic, representing them. Legally controversial was later whether Bega's version was only a cover version of the old Prado song or even a separate work because of the editing parts. According to the BMI, Begas version is independently protected, but together with Prado as co-author. This work also received a BMI Award. Mambo No. 5 appeared in DE in April 1999 and internationally in August 1999 and became a world hit in summer 1999. In Germany it occupied eleven weeks place 1.



Disco-Mambo, T=175

The musical score is presented in a system with five staves. The top two staves are labeled 'C-Dur-Part (Main1)' and 'G7-Part (Main2)'. The instruments are Flute, Sax, Guitar, Bass, and Drums. The score is in 4/4 time and features a consistent triplet pattern across all instruments. The Flute and Sax parts are in the treble clef, while the Guitar, Bass, and Drums parts are in the bass clef. The Drums part shows a complex rhythmic pattern with triplets. The G7-Part section shows a change in the melodic lines for Flute, Sax, and Guitar, while the Bass and Drums parts remain identical to the C-Dur-Part section.

Programming instruction

Considering the four full program bars above, the question arises whether these are also necessary. Actually not, because the C major part, programmed here as MAIN 1, consists of "almost" identical phrases in all important instruments (except the sax). Now comes the big "But": If you play the C major phrase in the G7 chord of the title (there are actually only these two chords and nothing else), then the instrument automatically transposes this phrase to the fundamental G. The bass and the drums remain unchanged, but all other parts play "somehow wrong"! That's why I took the trouble to write down the "G7-Part" programming, which should be programmed as MAIN 2! Now comes the crucial question: How can you play such a "double chord" programming live? The answer is amazingly simple and at the same time totally bizarre: at the beginning you enter only C major into the keyboard and then don't change the chords with chords, but simply switch the variation (Main2) on when G7 is released and off again when C major is released! Have fun!