

Tomáš Kuhn

**RHYTHMIC AND MELODIC PATTERNS
TO ACCOMPANY POPULAR SONGS USING
CHORD SYMBOLS AND THEIR PIANO
ARRANGEMENTS**



UNIVERSITY
OF WEST BOHEMIA

The background of the cover is a light gray musical score. It features several staves with notes, rests, and chord symbols. Visible chord symbols include 'Gm' in the upper right, 'Cm7' in the lower middle, and a sequence 'Es/B Eb/B F/A' in the lower right. The notation is faint and serves as a decorative backdrop for the text.

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Rhythmic and melodic patterns to accompany popular songs using chord symbols and their piano arrangements

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Introduction

The book covers various kinds of popular song piano stylizations belonging to the jazz music. It is the first Czech publication, which systematically describes and presents rhythmic and melodic patterns designed to accompany popular songs played both, with the melody and without it.

The above described subject has not yet been comprehensively processed in the Czech musical literature. There are existing texts on the improvised piano accompaniments. However, their focus, is mostly devoted to either only folk songs, or – as far as the other genres are concerned – they are treated very briefly or in a simplified manner. I mean for example, *Improvizace klavírního doprovodu písní* by J. Drášil, *Příručka klavírních doprovodů a dirigování písní* by M. Popovič and M. Kodejška, then a publication by Z. Janžurová and Z. Průšová *S písničkou u klavíru* or *Technika klavírního doprovodu lidových písní* by B. Crha and P. Hala. Michal Nedělka and his publication *Klavír jako nástroj tvořivého rozvoje osobnosti* gives the piano improvisation a scientific dimension. Nevertheless, his book deals only with the areas of artificial music and folk songs. Also, publications like *Úvod do harmonizace české lidové písně a do její jednoduché stylizace pro klavír a akordeon* by Jiří Bezděk and *Metodika klavírní improvizace* by Jaromír Bažant are similarly focused.

Furthermore, the existing titles that bind to the studied area are usually narrowed down to a specific issue. The theme in them is therefore not examined as a complex problem. These publications have become the subject of my critical assessment in the analytical part. It is a publication by E. Hradecký *Hrajeme na klavír podle akordových značek*, M. Šolc and J. Veberger *Piano v jazzu* and V. Petrov *Klavír a akordické značky*. I am also including some foreign titles – *Rock Piano I. and II.* by J. Moser, then *Blues Piano I. and II.* by the same author, and last but not least *Europäische Klavierschule I., II., III.* by F. Emonts.

The next part of my publication examines the rhythmic and melodic patterns and their use in the accompaniments from the perspective of music theory, i.e. rhythm, harmony and chord symbols. I pay a considerable amount of attention to the latter. Knowledge of the so-called “symbol harmony” is essential for the accompaniment of popular songs. I focus on the chord symbols also because of the present lack of unity in writing the chords. I have tried to unify it in this publication.

The text of my work is divided into two parts. First one introduces the analytical part focusing on music theory from the perspective of the examined issue. I follow up the style of piano composition, harmony, rhythm, chord symbols. At the same time, I critically evaluate publications that also deal with the examined topic. The second part consists of the typology of rhythmic and melodic patterns and variations of accompaniments which are suitable to accompany popular songs. They are arranged according to the used genre, or measure (dance, march and popular music). In this section a brief description of the genre also appears for each chapter, as well as a suggested type of accompaniment and a corresponding short song example.¹

All the songs that I used as an application material come from literature referred to at the end of this work. I intentionally used many of the songs multiple times; for example, one song is used to show various options of piano chord progression in the right hand (Red River). In other songs, I pointed out the variability in the choice of accompaniment which is not fixed or codified. It depends merely on the artist's decision what accompaniment he or she chooses to be the most appropriate (*Honky Tonky blues*). Some songs serve to demonstrate both, example of an accompaniment with melody and without it (*Girl from Ipanema*). I would also like to stress the fact that this book is only a theory. The ability to apply individual patterns and examples on the live music practice depends entirely on music improvisation skills and musical invention of each musician.

¹ Citing the whole songs would enormously increase the price of this publication, since most of them are subject to copyright.

Objectives and methodology of the work

Active knowledge of the topic included in the title of this publication— *Rhythmic and melodic patterns to accompany popular songs using chord symbols and their piano arrangements* - is for current and future music educators immensely beneficial and useful. A decisive factor in its concept was to indicate the content and the ways of my own pedagogical journey in teaching popular songs accompaniment at various technique development stages with respect to the needs of students of all music school types and the teachers of piano playing. That is why in the analytical part I felt it was necessary to clarify basic terminology in music theory, e.g. chord symbols, style of piano composition, linking chords, creating melody using chord progressions and melodic tones. I also felt it was crucial to name currently available books or sheet music titles which are put into practice and are well established in both, the Czech Republic and the neighbouring country – Germany, some titles then in the whole Europe, and at the same time to make their critical assessment.

The concept of the second main chapter is based on my own forms of teaching. I take into account the needs of future teachers when creating their own accompaniment of popular songs. The main content of the chapter is the elementary typology of accompaniments according to the genre and metre. The typology is preceded by a short treatise on piano accompaniments, i.e. basic classification and main principles for piano accompaniment creation. From the conception view it is important to distinguish between playing the song melody (the accompaniment is played in left hand only), and playing the accompaniment without the song melody (both hands play only accompaniment). I mention several times throughout the book that the basis of the correct accompaniment creation are not only good piano technique skills, but also active and creative mind of the player. This stems from the improvisational talent related mostly to the level of harmony thinking and rhythmic feeling. Creativity of the individual plays an invaluable role here. Each topic is introduced by a short history of the genre, then the appropriate rhythmic and melodic pattern follows, and at the end the applied example material is given.

The main objectives of the book are, first, to determine the principles for popular song piano accompaniment, second, to analyse and critically evaluate thematically similar publications of Czech and foreign authors and to compare them with my own concept of accompaniment which is described in the systematic part of the book as an overview of various types and ways of accompaniments.

Piano accompaniment of popular songs as a theoretical problem²

Generally, creation of the piano accompaniment is closely associated with improvisation. It is an impromptu activity conducted off the cuff (from Latin adjective *improvisus* or adverb *ex improviso*), or the activity of the unpredictable (from the Latin *improvisibilis*)³. Improvisation in contrast to composition is made by the unity of the creator and artist.⁴ Because both processes (composition and interpretation) are taking place at the same time, the improvisation does not have to bring any innovation, as is the case of an artistic product.⁵ Music improvisation is characterised by majority of unpredictable moments although their occurrence can be expected to certain extend, especially in cases when the improvising performer is using predictable music tools such as scales, chord sequences strictly following the rules of harmony, or when creating and altering melodies according to certain templates, etc..⁶ Improvisation is also one of the main characteristic features of jazz music. It mostly depends on the power of invention and the level of technical skills of the artist. The same as the jazz musicians improvise individual themes (chorus), it is

² In this chapter, we follow some citation from the publication: NEDĚLKA, M. *Klavírní improvizace v přípravě hudebního pedagoga*. Praha : Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Pedagogická fakulta, 2005. 164 p. ISBN 80-7290-214-8.

³ Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart. Sachteil 4. Kastel – Basel – London – New York – Prag: Bärenreiter, 1996, p. 539.

⁴ SEDLÁK, F. *Psychologie hudebních schopností*. First edition, Praha : SPN, 1990, p. 263.

⁵ SÝKORA, V. J. *Improvizace včera a dnes*. 1st ed. Praha : Panton, 1966, p. 11.

⁶ NEDĚLKA, M. *Klavírní improvizace v přípravě hudebního pedagoga*. Praha : Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Pedagogická fakulta, 2005. p. 17.

also possible to create variations of rhythmic and melodic patterns used to accompany a song which is the central point of this publication.

Many Czech art schools and colleges often mistakenly include accompaniment of folk and popular songs using chord symbols in the subject called improvisation, even though the skills taught there have very little in common with improvisation. The skills much closer tied to improvisation are harmonising the songs, playing general bass, or the basic elements of stylization and composing simple strophic song forms. In Czech music literature, we can find some previously mentioned publications which are devoted to this issue (Jaromír Bažant: *Metodika klavírní improvizace*,⁷ Jiří Bezděk: *Úvod do harmonizace české lidové písně a do její jednoduché stylizace pro klavír a akordeon*⁸).

Improvisation affects creation of song accompaniment only to certain extent, and that is as far as varying different rhythmic and melodic patterns through melodic tones and rhythmic variations is concerned. These skills are surely regarded as the improvisational skills of the pianist. To play the popular song accompaniment using chord symbols greatly limits the hypothetical ability of the pianist to freely harmonise (in case that the harmonisation is already given by the written chord symbols). However, it does not prevent him from seeking a more interesting harmonisation according to his own creative abilities. A great platform for improvisation can be found in creation of rhythmic and melodic patterns of the song (those can be based on its arrangements) and then, of course, as already mentioned above, in the formation of different variants to these patterns.

From the theoretical point of view, the term rhythmic and melodic pattern can be found under various names in music literature. Whereas in foreign literature we can most frequently encounter the term pattern⁹ or a rhythmic figure (leaving alone the melodic part), Czech literature usually uses the term pattern to describe characteristic figure, rhythmic and melodic formula, the accompanying figure or just the song accompaniment. In my concept, I use the term pattern to designate one to two measure long characteristic rhythmic and melodic motives which may also appear in the role of the so-called orchestral riffs.¹⁰ Rhythmic and melodic patterns are used in rock and pop songs in the framework of one style or a style derived from another one. Such a pattern usually serves sufficiently to accompany the whole song. However, thanks to the performer's improvisational skills, it is often varied, or resulting from the song melodic or rhythmical changes, it is even replaced by another suitable pattern.

To accompany a song using chord symbols, possibly to improvise an accompaniment to folk and popular songs, or their harmonization belong to the basic skill criteria for the profession of a music teacher. Also, Michal Nedělka is writing: *"Improvisation of accompaniments to folk and popular songs is for a teacher essential. It is the most transparent part of his piano performance. Therefore, during his studies and preparation for the future profession he should live up to at least a minimum"*¹¹.

Considering the topic of my work I will now look at and critically assess publications dealing with the accompaniment of popular songs. This issue is closely related mainly with playing songs using chord symbols. Therefore, I chose titles which deal with this music skill. These are Czech and foreign titles that found wide acclaim among music professionals worldwide. In my critical assessment, I briefly describe the work and then I mainly focus on the originality of the ideas or the processing, or I choose a comparative perspective with my work.

⁷ BAŽANT, J. *Metodika klavírní improvizace*. 1st ed. Plzeň : Eset, 1997, 268 p.

⁸ BEZDĚK, J. *Úvod do harmonizace české lidové písně a do její jednoduché stylizace pro klavír a akordeon*. 3rd ed. Plzeň: Západočeská univerzita, Pedagogická fakulta, 1999, 118 p. ISBN 80-7082-517-0.

⁹ Pattern – English terminology.

¹⁰ Riff – short rhythmic and melodic pattern which is 2-4 measures long. It creates an elementary unit of a song.

¹¹ NEDĚLKA, M. *Klavírní improvizace v přípravě hudebního pedagoga*. Praha : Univerzita Karlova v Praze, Pedagogická fakulta, 2005. p. 17.

Overview and critical assessment of the literature

The book by Mark Levine *The Jazz Theory Book*¹² belongs among the most complex textbooks on jazz theory and harmony with more than 750 music examples. The book contains elementary knowledge of chord structure, jazz cadences, scales suitable for improvisation and rhythm changes. It also brings information on how to read “lead sheet” (the main melodic line) or how to memorize a song well. The author of the publication Mark Levine belongs among popular jazz pianists and is also an excellent educator and music theorist.

In his chapter on chords the author has some interesting insights. For example, the chord symbol for major seventh chord (in Czech terminology called the “hard” major seventh chord) is usually as follows: **Cmaj7**, **CM7**, **CΔ**. Levine is inclined to use the symbol **CΔ** which corresponds with the most frequent usage. He describes briefly the symbols **D-7**, **Dm7**, **Dmi** for the minor seventh chord, however, he is inclined to use the symbol **D-7**. And it is here where I see a significant difference from the commonly used chord symbols because we can see **Dm7** in the sheet music material and publications relating to this issue. I also use **Dm7** in my publication. Nevertheless, it is necessary to note that in the jazz standard symbol usage we primarily see for example **D-7**, because then it is not possible to confuse it with **Dmaj7**. Considering the fact that the content of my work is accompaniment of popular songs, I prefer the symbol **Dm7**.

To describe flat or sharp tones in the chord (**b**, **#** or **+** and **-**) the author uses a sharp and flat symbol. Because the fourth and eleventh tones in a scale represent the same notes, Levine prefers number **4** with the major chords and with **sus** chords (e.g. **CΔ^{#4}**, **Csus4**) and number **11** to describe dominant and minor chords (e.g. **C7^{#11}**, **C-11**). He also chooses the same option to indicate the sixth (**C6**, **C-6**) and thirteenth (**C7^{b13}**) tone in a chord. I use these symbols in my publication as well.

The publication by the music theorist and composer Emil Hradecký “*Hrajeme na klavír podle akordových značek*”¹³ explains how to accompany a song using chord symbols. The author introduces his readers to the commonly used chords and simple piano accompaniments using both elementary and more advanced chord symbols.

The styles in the book include for example polka, Viennese Waltz, **tango**, **ragtime**, **blues**, **rumba**, **samba** or **Waltz**. The publication contains over 40 Czech, Moravian and Slovak folk songs and about 50 evergreens by Jaroslav Ježek, Jiří Šlitr and Jiří Suchý, Beatles and other authors. The textbook is primarily for students of elementary music schools and highschoools or colleges educating future teachers, but also for music non-professionals. The interpretation of piano accompaniments is clear and understandable.

Now I will focus on the author’s explanation of chord symbols. Hradecký describes the chords and chord symbols categorization very systematically. He goes from triads to ninth chords and he completes the subject matter with the description of how to write and play base tones. In the introductory part, he gives a crucial information on a written form of a major chord with **h** as a root note which in Czech literature is represented by the symbol **H**. However, **foreign** materials use symbol **B**. On the contrary, in Czech music, symbol **B** means a chord with **b flat** as the root note. The author is further explaining that the major chord with **b** as the root note is in English music literature represented by the symbol **B^b**. From my perspective, the use of symbol **H** is acceptable in our Czech music terminology because it cannot be confused with another note name. Hradecký also chooses both letters **H** and **B** to symbolize the major chord whose root note is **h**. Hradecký uses symbol **B^b** to indicate the chord whose root note is **b**.

The following chapter in Hradecký’s book deals with intervals and the necessary knowledge you must have to be able to build up chords. The author describes individual parts of a chord symbol and he explains them in more details in the part of the book called *Akordové značky* (chord symbols). He also inserts here harmony exercises and songs which from my point of view is non-systematic. In my opinion it would be better to focus only on chord symbol explanation and then to look at the issue of linking chords, melodic tones, or some practice tasks.

¹² LEVINE, M. *The Jazz Theory Book*. Petaluma: Sher Music Co., 1995, ix, ISBN 1-883217-04-0.

¹³ HRADECKÝ, E. *Hrajeme podle akordových značek*. 6th ed. Praha : Edit, 1991, 91 p.

Emil Hradecký uses several possible symbols that exist in music literature to indicate almost all chords. As the first symbol, he puts the most common form of a symbol, e.g. minor triad is **Cmi**, **Cm**, **c**, **C-**. The symbol placed as the third one is a guitar chord symbol which I think in some cases cannot be quite clearly interpreted. That is why in my chord interpretation I avoid using this symbol completely.

To represent augmented triad Hradecký uses in the first position symbol **C+**, which I use only as a possibility in my interpretation. In accordance with Mark Levin I prefer the use of symbol **C^{#5}** (or **C#5**) which I consider more accurate, thus more systemic. Similarly, Levin and I indicate the augmented fifth interval (from the root note), or another given interval by sharp or flat symbols with a small number positioned as the upper right index written after the upper-case letter, or it is positioned normally, not as the upper index (an easier form to write). In English and American music theory we often see the symbol **C[#]**. Also, Levine uses the symbol **C^{#5}**. I use the same principle of marking with the symbol **sus** which indicates the added second or fourth interval to the elementary chord, thus it is not a part of the chord, for example **Csus⁴**. Hradecký uses again the non-systemic **Csus4** or **C4**.

I consider the symbol **Czv** to be completely unknown in the music world. Hradecký uses several other rarely used symbols, for example **Czm** (diminished seventh chord) or **Cmj**, **Cj7** (major seventh chord). I avoid using these symbols in my work completely, not only for their unclear interpretation, but also impracticality.

Nevertheless, it is necessary to state that in most cases of the symbols, which Hradecký puts in the first or second position of his most frequently used written forms of a chord symbols, he and I are in consensus. The positive side of the publication is also the chord symbol chart which Hradecký gives to make his system clear.

The main part of Hradecký's publication explains the popular song accompaniments. The author sorts them out according to their genre (see above). For every individual type of accompaniment there is a rhythmic and melodic pattern and song examples to be used with such pattern. In the publication, there are only technically easy variants with examples of only melody and chord symbols without accompaniment line in the left hand. All the same, there are no possibilities of piano composition in the right hand. Most example songs given by the author are predominantly from the 60-ies and 70-ies. Unfortunately, popular songs from recent period of the popular music development are missing.

The book by Milan Šolc and Jiří Veberger *Piano v jazzu*¹⁴ is aimed to serve to piano interpreters who want to delve deeper into the issue of piano playing in the field of jazz music. It brings explanation of stylizations of basic jazz styles. The title asks for the elementary knowledge of chord symbols because it does not primarily focus on this issue. The author has already dealt with chord symbols in his book *Tajemství akordových značek*.¹⁵ Similarly as I do in my publication, Šolc presents wide range of illustrative music piece examples, although these are only parts of the songs. The authors wanted to point out the ambiguity of the different elements of the jazz performance practices and give impetus to the player's own creative independent work.

The book mainly sorts out and evaluates the material while leaving readers free to its use. The content is stylizations of European traditional dances (e.g. Viennese Waltz, polka, Waltz), Latin-American dances (e.g. tango, rumba, cha-cha). The final chapter brings explanations of jazz styles (e.g. stride piano, blues, boogie-woogie). All dances are introduced by its short history with basic characteristics, then left hand stylization samples follow as well as possible so called orchestral accompaniment, meaning accompaniment without playing the melody. A large part is also reserved for different variants of accompaniments, one or two measure fills (breaks), introductions and closings.

A practical publication *Tajemství akordových značek*¹⁶ by Milan Šolc is intended to be used by all the musicians, who want to learn how to play their instruments according to chord symbols. The book

¹⁴ ŠOLC, M.; VEBERGER, J. *Piano v jazzu*. Praha: Státní hudební vydavatelství, 1966, 235 p.

¹⁵ ŠOLC, M. *Tajemství akordových značek*. Praha : Bärenreiter Editio Supraphon, [1996] 156 p. ISBN 80-7058-328-2.

¹⁶ ŠOLC, M. *Tajemství akordových značek*. Praha : Bärenreiter Editio Supraphon, [1996] 156 p. ISBN 80-7058-328-2.

introduces the reader in a quite comprehensible way to chords and chord symbols, but also to everything that is needed for music practice. Individual chapters are devoted to the tone terminology, intervals, scales, chords, chord symbols in theory, guitar chords and chord symbols in practice. The book appendix contains a glossary and a list of music pieces used as examples. In the chapter dealing with chord symbols, the author logically gives the whole system of different forms of chord symbols. Similarly, to Hradecký, Šolc also goes from triads to more complicated chords and the written form of the chord symbols stays almost the same in both publications. Unlike Hradecký, Šolc prefers only one form of a chord symbol. To symbolize 7th chord with augmented 5th he uses a slash symbol, e.g. **C7/#5**. To indicate minor, diminished and major chords he uses the common symbols **mi**, **dim** and **maj**. However, the order in his chord symbols is non-traditional. Whereas today, we use a chord symbol **C^{maj}7**, Šolc writes **C7^{maj}**. This form in nowadays written chord symbol characteristic is very rare. When writing a number in the chord symbol for interval indication, Šolc as most authors prefers the number placement in the upper right index, e.g. **C⁷**. Otherwise, he is on the same terms in the use of chord symbols and their explanations with Emil Hradecký.

Methodically focused book by Vadim Petrov *Klavír a akordické značky*¹⁷ is supposed to address mainly young piano players. It includes simple improvised accompaniments to songs using chord symbols.

The author gives an overview of the most commonly used chord symbols for beginners because it lists symbols only up to seventh chords maximum. He sticks to the designated symbols, e.g. **C7**, **A4**, **C+** etc. In his book, he introduces mainly simple piano accompaniments and he does not pay much attention to chord symbols themselves. The improvised piano accompaniment with the use of chord symbols is directing the reader to simple piano stylization in the comfortable middle voicing position. The author makes flexible voicing skill the key priority. In favour of this skill he completely ignores the harmonic rules for linking chords, also rules for chord alterations and the base line structure. The book is oriented most of all to practise left hand (accompanying hand) accompaniments and both hands together. There is also a recap and reminder of basic precepts of general musical theory and practice of harmonic cadences. Simple examples of rhythmic and melodic chord sequences for one and for both hands in numerous variations follow. Nevertheless, the reader is not informed that the examples for one hand (the left one) are meant to be used to accompany a song with the melody sounding in the right hand and the examples for both hands are to be used to accompany a song without the sounding melody. Confusion could arise as well considering the given overview of the accompaniment scores by genre all together, namely figurative ones. This also applies to the examples for both hands. The next chapters in the book appear considerably non-systematical – variants of folk song accompaniments, compositions to form accompaniments in which the melody is played by other instruments. At the end, Petrov gives an overview of rhythmic models for dances. Historically, the accompaniments are listed only up to the era of rock'n'roll. This indicates that the author has very little awareness of the state of contemporary popular music. After all, his final words tell us about it: *“the following development from rock and roll to contemporary techno-music remains in the field of harmonic twelve-bar structure. Just the off-beat notes accentuation from the swing era is changing to accentuate all the time, while maintaining the syncopated melody”*.¹⁸

Praktická jazzová harmonie by Milan Svoboda¹⁹ is the most detailed textbook of jazz harmony and practically the only one in Czech music literature. It is primarily designed for students of conservatories and music schools, but it is also suitable for jazz musicians who interpret and arrange jazz music. It was written especially for the needs of students of Jaroslav Ježek Conservatory in Prague where the author teaches at the department of music composition and arrangements. The book deals with the construction of the chord, writing harmony by using the chord symbols, principles of functional harmony in tonality through the application of the new theory of chord scales, the use of the modality and non-tonality in jazz harmony and ways of harmonisation of a tone in a melody. When introducing the chord symbols, Svoboda is mainly

¹⁷ PETROV, V. *Klavír a akordické značky*. Jc-Audio, Netolice, 2008, p. 54 ISBN 80-8713-203-6.

¹⁸ PETROV, V. *Klavír a akordické značky*. Jc-Audio, Netolice, 2008, p. 54.

¹⁹ SVOBODA, Milan. *Praktická jazzová harmonie*. Netolice: Jc-Audio, 2013, 381 p. ISBN 978-80-87132-25-8.

inspired by the publication by Mark Levin *The Jazz Theory Book*. He differs in the use of Arabic numbers placed in the upper right index (e.g. **C^{#5}**, **C⁷**, **C^{maj 7}**). Symbols **Δ**, **Φ**, **o** are placed straight after the letter name. So called combined chords (e.g. **Eb7/F**) or to symbolize the chord inversion (e.g. **C7/E**) the author uses a slash symbol, not the symbol –. Svoboda always shows several ways how to write a chord symbol and at the end he states his own rules. To indicate augmented or diminished interval or root note he always uses symbols **#** a **b**. Exceptionally, he uses + with fifth interval (**#5 = +**). The way how to write chord symbols used by Svoboda's publication is the closest to my chord symbols indication (see chapter below). In Jürgen Moser's *Rock Piano*²⁰ we can find two volumes of text and sheet note material including rock music theme focusing on its individual sub-genres. I would sincerely recommend it to every pianist who has a deeper interest in rock music interpretation using key instruments.

Rock Piano I consists of three chapters devoted to chord playing, rhythm and melody playing. The whole album is systematically ordered from the simple accompaniments to the more complicated ones. It brings a wholesome view on the individual genres of rock music for the piano. It gives not only applied sheet music material whose author is Moser himself, but there is also professional text on music theory explaining chords, rhythm and improvisation. The first chapter deals with various types of chords, meaning triads and seventh chords with the focus on blues. Next part is devoted mainly to rhythmic patterns. There are some types of rock genre: rock ballad, jazz rock and shuffle and Latin jazz. The final chapter brings information concerning improvisation, or creating melody and rhythm for beginners in improvisation. All the topics are supplemented by many exercises and example samples. The album includes 31 original music pieces which the author uses to demonstrate his theoretical teachings. Moreover, the title is supplemented by a CD with all the music samples.

The second volume is written in the same spirit as the first album. The difference lies mainly in the higher degree of technical difficulty of the songs. In addition, we can find there a variety of rhythmic and melodic patterns designed for the right hand in each type of the rock genre.

Piano school of Fritz Emonts *Europäische Klavierschule I. – III.*²¹ as one of the first publications aspires to get like-minded candidates of piano playing to creative activity. It is particularly based on knowledge of national songs, which children in early school age are very close to. This school also includes the popular and national folk songs of all possible European nationalities.

In the first volume, the children learn how to accompany a song throughout the whole album. They play simple songs by heart, without music scores, and in the course of the whole of the first volume they accompany the song by using a pedal-tone. At the end of the first volume, a simple accompaniment of tango is given.

Creation of accompaniments is in the second and third volume placed always at the end of each volume. In the second volume, this activity is called *Accompaniments to Songs and Dances*. There are simple rhythmic and melodic patterns to accompany folk and popular songs. At the beginning, the author introduces songs with a pedal-tone. Creation of accompaniments is always completed by practising cadences, which forms a kind of grounding to play melodic lines in chords in different variants. Accompaniments are formed first to those songs, which can be sufficiently accompanied by only two chords, in the next chapter by three chords. At the very end, there are accompaniments to some of the genres and application material (Viennese Waltz, tango, march and boogie-woogie).

²⁰ MOSER, J. *Rock Piano I.: Professional know-how of contemporary keyboard playing*. 1st ed. Mainz: Schott Music International, 2002. ISBN 978-3-7957-5195-1. 132 p.

MOSER, J. *Rock Piano II.: Professional know-how of contemporary keyboard playing*. 1st ed. Mainz: Schott Music International, 2004. ISBN: 978-3-7957-0310-3. 136 p.

²¹ EMONTS, F. *Europäische Klavierschule I.* Mainz: Schott Music International, 1992, 88 p. ISBN 978-3-7957-5002-2.

EMONTS, F. *Europäische Klavierschule II.* Mainz: Schott Music International, 1993, 96 p. ISBN 978-3-7957-5003-9.

EMONTS, F. *Europäische Klavierschule III.* Mainz: Schott Music International, 1994, 112 p. ISBN 978-3-7957-5004-6.

In the third volume, we find the chapter titled *Improvisation with Ostinato Bass Figures*. Here, children will find simple accompaniment options such as Boogie and blues. In the next chapter, they learn to accompany songs with the help of minor triads. Finally, they get acquainted with the basics of jazz harmony, especially chord symbols and interpretation. Evergreens like *Autumn Leaves* and *Tea for Two* are used as examples here.

Although there are listed only simple piano accompaniments, it is necessary to appreciate the laid-out conditions for creative activities of children, so that the music education is not limited to classical piano lessons, but leads to a separate creation of scores at an early age.

Out of other interesting publications we choose a textbook by Tomáš Vránek *Anatomy of Improvisation*²². The author gives a detailed description and examples of options for improvisation offering music expression means and genres. He includes numerous score samples of jazz music.

The basic material of the publication of Bernd Frank *Rhythm-Styles for Piano*²³ are accompaniment figures. At the same time the author also presents chord material for Jazz ensemble performance and for the accompaniment of soloists.

In this critical evaluation, I wanted to draw attention to the titles, which deal with the accompaniment of popular songs and give various options for writing chord symbols.

In the first part of my book I will try to demonstrate my opinion on how to write the chord symbols. To describe actual chords, I use capital letters along with other previously mentioned symbols as digits, accidentals and other graphical markings. It should be noted that we do not have a codified recording system for writing chord symbols in the Czech music theory. In my work, I use the system which I consider logical and easy to read. Still, in some cases, I allow for other chord symbol options.

²² VRÁNEK, T. *Anatomie improvizace*. 1st ed. České Budějovice: Jihočeská univerzita, 1996, 142 p. ISBN 80-7040-167-2.

²³ FRANK, B. *Rhythm-Styles for Piano*. Band 1. 1st ed. Mainz: Schott Musik International, 1996, 66 p. ISBN 3-7957-5111-X.

FRANK, B. *Rhythm-Styles for Piano*. Band 2. 1st ed. Mainz: Schott Musik International, 1997, 70 p. ISBN 3-7957-5111-X.