

MICHAEL GUNDLACH

THE

COCKTAIL PIANO

METHOD

VOLUME

1

TECHNIQUES OF STYLISH PIANO ENTERTAINMENT

www.migu-music.com

MIGUMUSIC

DOWNLOAD PDF FILE

Table of Contents

Explanation of Contents	6	Lovely Day	48
Harmony – Part 1		Harmony – Part 6	
Diatonic harmony	8	Passing tones dominant (6,#5,5)	53
Basic rules of piano entertainment	9	The 'sus' chord	55
Leaving notes out	9		
Adding notes	12		
Harmony – Part 2		Typical Harmony Sequences – Part 1	
Minor passing chords dominant seventh	15	Chord insertions – part 1	57
Diatonic passing chords	17	Passing chords major / dominant seventh	58
Beautiful Smile	22		
Harmony – Part 3		Fills – Teil 2	
Possibilities for the left hand	26	Fill / augmented triad with chromaticism	60
Rhythm for the left hand	28	Fill / diminished with chromaticism	63
Harmony – Part 4		Walk By My Side	66
Altering notes	29		
Adding the sixth to the chord	32	Ending "Basie-Fill"	72
Harmony – Part 5		Harmony – Part 7	
The diminished chord	34	Dominant augmented with b9	74
Fills – Teil 1		Harmony – Part 8	
Possibilities with fills	39	The half diminished chord	76
Fill / minor7 th chord	40	II – V – I – minor cadence	76
Fill / major7 th chord	43		
Fill / dominant seventh chord	44		
Fill / dominant seventh #5	45		
Fill / diminished chord	46		

Fills – Part 3

Fill / Blues scale..... 79

Sunrise Avenue84

Typical Harmony Sequences – Part 2

Chord substitutions.....88

Rhythm To Me91

Typical Harmony Sequences – Part 3

Chord insertions – part 2.....95

Swanee River98

Fills – part 4

Fill / four-note progression 103

Intros, Transitions / Bridge Passages, Endings

Secondary intros..... 105

Free-style intros 106

Transitions / bridge passages 108

Endings 110

Cocktail Piano Christmas

Silent Night 113

We Wish You A Merry Christmas..... 119

Cocktail Piano Classic

Lullaby 122

Liebestraum 126

Cocktail Piano Gospel

This Little Light Of Mine 130

Swing Low, Sweet Chariot..... 131

Tips and Tricks 136

Meaning of Chord Symbols 139

The Intervals 142

**Blues scales
In All Keys** 144

Chord Tables 145

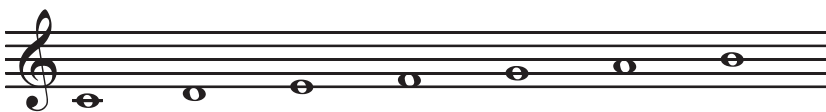
Harmony – Part 1

To be able to develop your own stylish piano arrangements from songs you first need a good fundamental knowledge of harmony. We will work step by step through this chapter on elementary basic principles.

Diatonic harmony

By “diatonic harmony”, we mean the chords that can be created using the notes of the normal major scales. We will start with the key of C major and the accompanying C major scale:

C major scale



If you form a four-part chord with each note, or each step (scale degree), of the normal major scale you get the following chords:

Cmaj7

D m7

E m7

Fmaj7

G 7

A m7

Bm7b5

A musical staff in treble clef showing the diatonic chords of the C major scale. The chords are represented by vertical stacks of four notes: Cmaj7 (C, E, G, B), Dm7 (D, F, A, B), Em7 (E, G, B, D), Fmaj7 (F, A, C, E), G7 (G, B, D, F), Am7 (A, C, E, G), and Bm7b5 (B, D, F, A).

I

II

III

IV

V

VI

VII

Steps (scale degrees) in Roman numerals

Almost all the chords that you need, to play popular songs, are at your disposal in the major scales. To understand them better, let’s look at which chords are on which step (scale degree).

Step	Type of Chord
I + IV	Major7 chord (= major triad with major seventh)
II, III + VI	Minor7 chord (= minor triad with minor seventh)
V	Dominant seventh chord (= major triad with minor seventh)
VII	Half diminished chord (consists of two minor and one major third)

1a

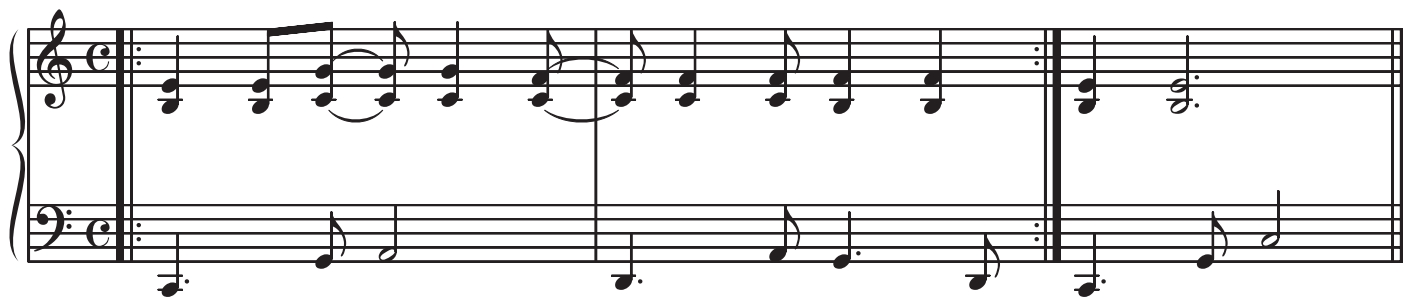
CMaj7

Am7

Dm7

G7

CMaj7



1b

FMaj7

Dm7

Gm7

C7

FMaj7



1c

GMaj7

Em7

Am7

D7

GMaj7



1d

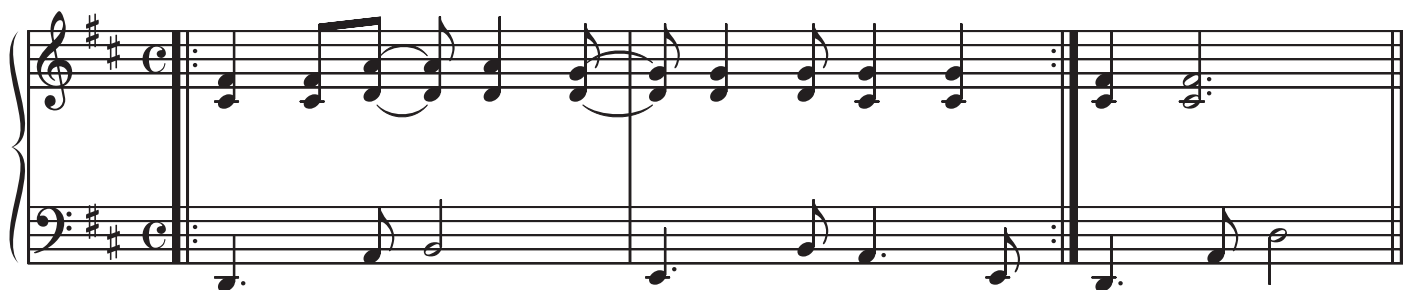
DMaj7

Bm7

Em7

A7

DMaj7



Beautiful Smile

Lead Sheet

Music: Michael Gundlach

Arr.: Michael Gundlach



D.C. al Fine

© 2015 MIGU MUSIC

We'll practice what we just learned with the song "Beautiful Smile". If you bought a songbook in which you have only the melody and chord symbols to work on, the song would be notated as in the above lead sheet.

Parts of the melody can be played very well with the fourth sixth chords of the major scale. Because the piece is in the key of Gmaj, we need the chords from the G major scale:

Fourth sixth chords of the G major scale

In bars 11 and 16 we can use these triads in the right hand:

notated in bar 11:

what you can play:

notated in bar 16:

G



what you can play:

G



As we have already learned from page 15, the dominant can be varied in the right hand with three minor chords. In the key of Gmaj the dominant is a D7 chord and Am, Bbm and Bm are the three variation chords, that can be used in bars 8, 14 and 24 due the chromatic melody.

notated in bars 8 and 24:

D7



what you can play:

D7



notated in bar 14:

D7



what you can play:

D7



In four bars of “Beautiful Smile” we find a dominant with a ninth in the melody-voice. Thus the dominant with the ninth, which we learned on page 12, inevitably comes into practical use:

notated in bar 2:

C7



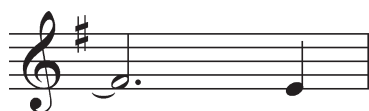
what you can play:

C7



notated in bar 4:

E7



what you can play:

E7



notated in bar 10:

C7



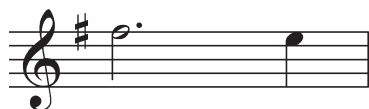
what you can play:

C7



notated in bar 12:

E7



what you can play:

E7



Tip: Try to put into practice that which you have learned from the lead sheets from “Beautiful Smile” before you attempt to play the complete composition!

Beautiful Smile

Music: Michael Gundlach

Arr.: Michael Gundlach



♩ = 152

G

C7

G

E7

Am7

D7

G

D7

G

C7

G

E7

Am7

D7

G

Harmony – Part 4

Altering notes

Single notes of a chord can be raised or lowered a half-tone. In technical jargon we call this “alteration”. In this chapter, for the time being, we want to concentrate on the altered fifth of the chord. A lowering of the fifth is shown by the sign “b” before the number (b5) and sometimes with a minus sign before the number (-5). An example:



The raised fifth is notated with a sharp sign before the number (#5), or with a plus sign before the number (+5). Sometimes we see a plus sign without a number after the chord symbol (e.g. “G+”). The raising of the fifth in the dominant seventh chord adds a wonderfully new tone color to the music, very popular among cocktail pianists. Therefore we want to examine this altered dominant chord more closely. A G7 chord with a raised fifth looks like this:



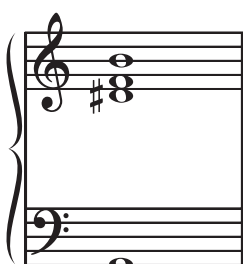
The upper three notes of the chord are played with the right hand and the keynote is played with the left hand:



The three notes of the right hand can be played in two inversions:

1st inversion

G7#5



2nd inversion

G7#5



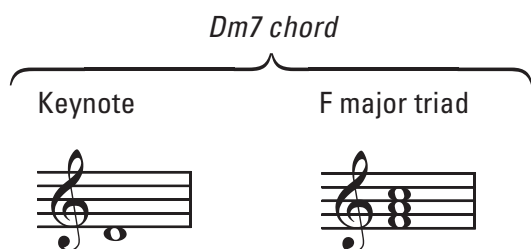
Certainly the most attractive fill for many pianists is inventing his own little melody. The question naturally arises, which notes can I play and how can I best put them together? The last example shown on page 39 already gives us an indication: The notes of the triad in the right hand have been separated into single notes and played one after another. A variation of the melody-fill exists therefore in the use of the single notes of a chord.

Fill / minor7th chord

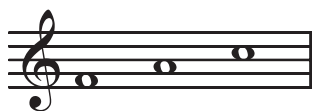
Let's take a Dm7 chord:



In a Dm7 chord there is, apart from the keynote "D", an F major triad:



F major triad separated into single notes



The three notes of the F major triad lend themselves very well to playing a fill with a Dm7 so we want to practice this extensively. Every one of the following examples consists of three exercises, each with two bars. In the examples 14a – 14c we will practice the fills in an ascending movement, while the examples 15a – 15c are given in a descending movement. Furthermore, in each case the examples are printed in three keys.

14a Dm7 G7 Dm7 G7 Dm7 G7

Typical Harmony Sequences – Part 1

If you analyze the songs of popular music, you will often find the same, or rather similar harmony sequences (cadences). If you know these (and can master them and play them well) your own interpretation of songs will be much easier.

Chord insertions – part 1

Typical harmony sequences are often already notated in a lead sheet. If such cadences are not already available, these can be created through inserting additional chords later and therefore enriching the song harmonically. Let's assume we would find in the music-score a C major chord that was in three consecutive bars (key of Cmaj, 1st scale degree):

|| C | C | C ||

The first alternative (in order to avoid boredom) would be to insert just one chord, for instance the dominant:

1st variation || C | G7 | C ||

Instead of the dominant you could insert a sus chord

2nd variation || C | F/G (Gsus4) | C ||

These two variations have already been practically implemented in "Lovely Day" (page 50 bars 15–17) with the chords Eb, Ab/Bb and Eb.

With cocktail piano, the dominant with the raised fifth also fits nicely:

3rd variation || C | G7#5 | C ||

If you have one and the same chord over a longer period of time you can, of course insert more chords. So our three bars of Cmaj can be augmented with a II. and V. scale degree:

4th variation || I | II V | I ||
C Dm7 G7 C

In addition to the II. and V. scale degree, the VI. Scale degree could also be inserted:

5th variation || I VI | II V | I ||
C Am7 Dm7 G7 C

It is a matter of personal taste as to which of the five variations are employed. You must consider, however, that the melody must fit with the newly inserted chords. If this isn't the case, melodies can be modified and made to fit in.

Swanee River

Swanee River is one of those songs that display, in it's original, a very simple harmony, as the lead sheet shows:

Swanee River

Lead sheet 1

Traditional

Arr.: Michael Gundlach

Chords: C, F, C, G7

Measures: 1, 5, 9, 13

© 2009 MIGU MUSIC

The song is in the key of C major and in the original version, uses the chords of the I., IV. and V. steps. The obvious suggestion, therefore, is to insert the new harmony sequences from the previous chapter. Although there are only 16 bars in the complete piece, you can use this harmony sequence several times. If you analyse "Swanee River", you will find the harmonic sequences from the I., IV. and I. steps altogether four times, in the bars 1–3, 5–7, 10–12 and 13–15:

	I	VI	I	
	C	F	C	

Transformed into the typical harmony sequence, the three bar cadence looks like the following:

	C	C7/E		F	F#dim		C/G	
--	---	------	--	---	-------	--	-----	--

Besides inserting the typical harmony sequence, we will also insert (in bars 3 and 4) a VI. step and a II. step converted into a dominant (compare “Typical Harmony Sequences – Part 2”, explanation to the variation No. 5, pages 89–90):

written in bars 3 and 4		augmented harmony sequence	
C G7	→	C/G Am7 D7 G7	

If you notate all of the explained chord-augmentations in the music, the lead sheet will look much more interesting:

Swanee River

Lead sheet 2

Traditional

Arr.: Michael Gundlach

Chord sequence for Lead sheet 2:

- Staff 1: C, C7/E, F, F#dim, C/G, Am7, D7, G7
- Staff 2: 5, C, C7/E, F, F#dim, C/G, G7, C
- Staff 3: 9, G, C, C7/E, F, F#dim, C/G, G7
- Staff 4: 13, C, C7/E, F, F#dim, C/G, G7, C

© 2009 MIGU MUSIC

Before you play the following piano arrangement of “Swanee River”, try to play through this second lead sheet, with the new additional chords.

Swanee River

Traditional
Arr.: Michael Gundlach



♩ = 76

C

C7/E

F

F#dim

C/G

Am7

D7

G7

C

C7/E

F

F#dim

C/G

Gsus4

G7

C

G7

G7#5

CMaj7

C7/E

F

F#dim

C/G

G7#5