

INTRODUCTION

Music sets me free! I love listening to different versions of the same song. My playlists are full of different artists playing the same piece of music, yet they all have their own individual identity!

One of the highlights of making music for me is that you can interpret it in your own way. There is a freedom that comes with feeling the music, putting your stamp on it and letting it take you to another world. You may have heard a song many times, played by hundreds of different musicians, yet there is an excitement that comes from adding your uniqueness to it – your own magic.

There are amazing composers from all around the world in this book that I have been influenced by throughout my career. I wanted to celebrate the wonderful work of some of the most amazing black composers and songwriters with eclectic repertoire, soulful melodies, mesmerising rhythms and deep, inspirational messages behind their songs. There are songs that I have played and reinterpreted throughout my musical journey – as well as some that I have recently encountered and am still enjoying getting to know!

As instrumentalists, even though we don't communicate the lyrics with our voice, it's important to have the sentiment of the song in mind when playing. Do listen to the original versions (try my very own Spotify playlist of these songs using the QR code below) and pay attention to the words and the phrasing that the artist uses. Then you can make it your own!

Composing music, creating a melody from scratch and sharing a story in song is such a joy to be able to do and I love performing these songs to audiences. I am so pleased to include two of my own compositions in this selection: *TokYo Sunset* and *Million Billion Love*. Both are a blend of jazz, reggae and soul and have a sentiment of family, friendship and being around those you love.

I hope that this collection leads you on your own musical journey. You'll get to know the artists and their personal expression as you listen. This book provides you with the notes, song structure and dynamics but along with that, continue to develop and add your own style to the songs. Enjoy playing along with the backing tracks or with someone accompanying you on piano. Don't hesitate to experiment and find yourself in the music, and I hope you enjoy playing them as much as I do!

YolanDa Brown



Scan the QR code to access YolanDa's own Spotify playlist of the songs in this collection.

TOTAL PRAISE

Words and music by Richard Smallwood

There is a lot of emotion in this piece, so play with the dynamics and let the music grow.
Pay attention to your tuning, especially in the lower registers, and add some vibrato
for emotion, just as a voice would. Take a deep breath for the grand finale!

Very slowly ♩ = 60

2

p

cresc. poco a poco

8

mf

15

f

19

mp

ff

24

27

p

pp

cresc. poco a poco

33

f

ff

LADY

By Fela Anikulapo Kuti

Bring on the energy and volume! This is such a great song to improvise to – ANYTHING goes, squeaks and all! Use lots of staccato, rhythmic phrases and repetition, and even move to the beat while playing if you can. It all helps to bring the afrobeat vibe!

Energetic Afro beat ♩ = 102

The musical score is written in 4/4 time with a key signature of three sharps (F#, C#, G#). The tempo is marked as 102 bpm. The score consists of five systems of music, each with a piano part (treble clef) and an alternative flute line (bass clef). The piano part features a strong Afrobeat rhythm with accented eighth notes and rests. The flute line provides a melodic accompaniment. Dynamics include *f* (forte), *mf* (mezzo-forte), and *mp* (mezzo-piano). The score includes first and second endings at measures 17 and 25.

5

11

17

25

f

alternative flute line

f

mf

f

mp