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INTRODUCTION

Learning from the styles of the masters has always been central to music pedagogy. For years, these styles were drawn almost wholly from European classical traditions. When jazz, blues, and rock began to be incorporated into music education, it was often as a dessert, a departure from more serious studies. More recently, however, these styles have commanded new attention and respect in the world of pedagogy. The challenge now is to find educational materials that do justice to these styles and are compatible with traditional, classically-based teaching methods.

The goal of the *Masters for Piano* series is to provide exciting and stimulating pieces for keyboard students while inviting them to explore the traditions and great artists of jazz, blues, and rock. Unlike many student-level pieces of a popular nature, the *Masters for Piano* format allows the student to associate the music he or she is playing with an actual artist. It is clear that a student's motivation increases greatly when he or she associates an assigned piece with real music—music by influential, well-known personalities who are amply represented on recordings. This can enhance the student's sense of pride and set the stage for learning about other great artists in any style. The personalities presented in the *Masters for Piano* series are not meant to represent the “best” or “most important”; rather, each is simply part of a diverse cast of great artists. These artists cover a wide spectrum of styles and time periods, and each has left a rich legacy for musicians and music lovers.

Teachers and self-directed students using the *Masters for Piano* series need not be experts in these styles. While these books are rooted in traditional piano pedagogy, the pieces themselves remain true to the styles that inspired them. They can be used as technical studies, recital pieces, or repertoire for just jamming out. Teachers can be comfortable knowing that in studying these pieces, students will receive reinforcement in reading, rhythm, fingering, phrasing, and other important areas. Students need only enjoy themselves as they explore some wonderful styles and artists. The bottom line is that the music is both educational and fun.

The pieces in this book are arranged progressively, starting with some that are suitable for beginning keyboard students. By the end of the book, the pieces incorporate more challenging technical elements and stylistic nuances.

Enjoy!

In the Style of

ARETHA FRANKLIN

Soul Is a Lady

Aretha Franklin has come to be identified by her admirers as “Lady Soul,” and indeed, there is no one more worthy of such a title. It may have been inevitable that Franklin would become a musician; her father, the Reverend C. L. Franklin, was a famous preacher and gospel singer, and sisters Carolyn and Erma also went on to successful careers as singers. But achievements like Franklin’s can’t be predicted. She is the most important female singer in the history of soul music and one of the greatest and most influential singers of either gender in pop music history. To top it off, she is also a fantastic pianist.

Aretha Franklin grew up in Detroit and began singing in church with her sisters at a young age. In the early 1960s, the famed producer and talent scout John Hammond signed her to Columbia Records, where she was moderately successful. It wasn’t until 1967, though, that Franklin’s career really took off, with a string of hits on the Atlantic label that catapulted her into the fore of American popular music. Following in the footsteps of singers like Sam Cooke and Ray Charles, she brought the passion of gospel music to decidedly secular songs like “Respect,” “Chain of Fools,” “(You Make Me Feel Like) A Natural Woman,” and “Think.” Franklin’s star as a pop artist waned somewhat in the 1970s, but she came back with a vengeance—and several hits—in the 1980s. By the 1990s, when pop “divas” seemed to be everywhere, Franklin was widely recognized as the queen of them all.

ESSENTIAL LISTENING:

30 Greatest Hits

This two-disc collection of highlights from Aretha’s albums for Atlantic Records includes some of the best soul and pop music ever made, from early classics like “Dr. Feelgood” to later hits like “Rock Steady.”

I Never Loved a Man the Way I Love You

On this, her first hit album for Atlantic Records, Franklin helped define the sound of soul music; this was also the album on which she introduced her signature tune, “Respect.”

Aretha Now

This groundbreaking, influential soul recording features hits like “I Say a Little Prayer for You” and brilliant obscurities like “Hello Sunshine.”

Amazing Grace

Franklin goes back to her gospel roots in this passionate live recording, which also features the Reverend James Cleveland and the Reverend C. L. Franklin.



Aretha Franklin (born 1942)

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EXERCISES

“Sliding Home” is a medium-tempo song. After a mellow eight-measure introduction, it changes key from C to D and continues in a rocking blues style, providing a taste of Raitt’s musical world, where ballads and blues coexist. “Sliding Home” also touches on the types of phrases Raitt uses when playing *slide guitar* (which calls for a glass or metal cylinder that allows the player to “swoop” to or from a note). Because this effect isn’t possible on the piano, *grace notes* (rapidly played decorative notes, notated smaller than usual, which come just before a main note/beat) are used to approximate the slide-guitar sound.

For Example 10, begin by learning the hands separately. The left hand plays a solid, repeated bass line, while the right hand focuses on a rising *minor 6th* (the interval from F# to D, or four whole steps). This figure is decorated with the pitches immediately adjacent to F# (G and F), as in the first measure below).



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Ex. 10

Musical notation for Example 10, a piano exercise in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The piece is marked *mf*. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with grace notes and fingerings: 2 1 2 5, 3 2, 1 2, and 2. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady bass line with fingerings: 5, 3, 1, and 5 3 1.



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Ex. 11

Example 11 includes a number of grace notes. Remember to treat these as decorations of the main note (in this case, B). Work to glide quickly through the grace notes and to keep the rhythm steady.

Musical notation for Example 11, a piano exercise in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with grace notes and fingerings: 2 3, 2 3, and 5 4 3 2. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady bass line with fingerings: 5 2 1, 5 3 1, and 5 3 1.

Example 12 includes more grace notes, which should be played as explained in the previous example. Notice that the first two measures are in *stop time*. This is a device often used in blues in which the rhythm section (here represented by the left hand) plays only on the downbeat, leaving it to the melody (in this case, the right hand) to fill in the remainder of the measure in an interesting, rhythmic way.



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Ex. 12

Musical notation for Example 12, a piano exercise in 4/4 time with a key signature of two sharps (D major). The first two measures are in *stop time*. The right hand (treble clef) features a melodic line with grace notes and fingerings: 4, 2 3, and 5 4 1. The left hand (bass clef) plays a steady bass line with fingerings: 1, 1, and 1.

Correlates to:
Beginning Blues Keyboard
page 51,
Blues Keyboard: Complete Edition
page 52,
Alfred's Basic Adult Piano Course 2
page 52,
Alfred's Basic Adult Piano
All-in-One Course 2 page 98



29, 30
& 31

Shades of Blue

for T-Bone Walker

Laid-back blues feel

4/4

f *mf*

Measures 1-4: *f* *mf*

Measures 5-8

Measures 9-12

Measures 13-16

In the Style of

JAMES BROWN

Workin' It

His nicknames alone—“Soul Brother Number One,” “Mr. Dynamite,” “The Hardest Working Man In Show Business,” “The Godfather of Soul”—suggest **James Brown**’s impact as a musician. Brown’s influence on R&B is immeasurable, and his reach has similarly been felt in rock, funk, and other styles. He has also been a cultural hero to the African-American community, especially during the civil rights struggles of the 1960s.

In his teens, Brown met vocalist Bobby Byrd, a bandmate on and off throughout Brown’s career. They sang gospel together and eventually formed the Flames (later known as the Famous Flames). The Flames made records in the 1950s (including “Please, Please, Please” and “Try Me”) that combined tight R&B with intense gospel-style passion. In the 1960s, Brown had a string of hits for King Records that made him the most successful African-American performer of his day. His live shows, marked by incredible energy, tight choreography, and a band second to none, were equally successful. As the 1970s dawned, Brown and his band began to play longer, looser songs, and he became a formative influence on the funk movement. While his commercial success lessened after this, his position as “The Godfather of Soul” was forever secure.

ESSENTIAL LISTENING:

20 All-Time Greatest Hits

From early tunes like “Please, Please, Please” to later funky masterworks like “Super Bad,” this anthology is a 70-minute course in what R&B is all about.

Live at the Apollo (1963)

This classic album, which documents a triumphant appearance at the famed theater in Harlem, provides a hint of just how precise and entertaining a James Brown show could be.

Soul On Top

This album shows Brown’s versatility, pairing him with the jazz-rooted Oliver Nelson orchestra. He sings some JB classics, but also songs more associated with the likes of Frank Sinatra, and he nails every tune.

Soul Pride: The Instrumentals (1960–69)

This two-disc set shows off Brown’s band, featuring saxophonists Pee Wee Ellis and Maceo Parker and trombonist Fred Wesley. The grooves are positively unstoppable, and Brown does his thing—on the organ!