

= Confusion (album) =

Confusion is a studio album by Nigerian Afrobeat musician Fela Kuti and his band the Africa 70 . It was arranged , composed , and produced by Kuti , and released in 1975 by EMI . He recorded the album after choosing to emphasize his African heritage and nationalism in his music . Confusion is a commentary on the confused state of post - colonial Lagos and its lack of infrastructure and proper leadership at the time . Kuti 's pidgin English lyrics depict difficult conditions in the city , including a frenetic , multilingual trading market and inextricable traffic jams in Lagos ' major intersections .

Confusion is a one - song Afrobeat album that begins with an entirely instrumental first half , which features free form interplay between Kuti 's electric piano and drummer Tony Allen . It leads to an extended mid - tempo section with Allen 's polyrhythms and tenor saxophone by Kuti , who subsequently delivers call and response vocal passages . In retrospective reviews , the album was praised by music critics , who found it exemplary of Kuti 's Afrobeat style and recommended it as a highlight from his extensive catalog . In both 2000 and 2010 , Confusion was reissued and bundled with Kuti 's 1973 album Gentleman .

= = Background = =

After becoming dissatisfied with studying European composers at the Trinity College of Music , Fela Kuti formed his first band Koola Lobitos in 1961 and quickly became a popular act in the London club scene . He returned to his native Nigeria in 1963 and formed another band that played a rhythmic fusion of traditional highlife music and jazz . Kuti dubbed his hybrid style " Afrobeat " , which served in part as his critique of African performers whom he felt had forsaken their native musical roots for American popular music trends . In 1969 , he toured with his band in Los Angeles and was introduced by a friend to the writings of Black nationalist and Afrocentrist proponents such as Malcolm X and Eldridge Cleaver . Inspired by what he had read , Kuti decided to write more political and critical music , and changed the name of his band to Nigeria 70 and later on Africa 70 .

During the 1970s , Kuti began to emphasize his identification with Africa and its culture in his music and opposed the colonial mentality of identification with Western powers such as the United States and the United Kingdom . His albums during this period expressed aspects of his ideology such as his African heritage and nationalism . On his 1973 song " Eko lie " , Kuti declared that Lagos was his home rather than London or New York City , where he had performed earlier in his career . Lagos and its landmark events became common themes in his songs . He revisited the theme on Confusion in 1974 to acknowledge that he identifies with the city despite its problems .

= = Composition = =

Confusion is a one - song album with a duration of 25 minutes and 36 seconds . The album 's first side is entirely instrumental . It begins with a free form introduction , which musically depicts the disorienting impact of Lagos ' problems . Although he occasionally used amplified instruments , Kuti rarely employed elaborate electronic effects and instead relied on more natural sounds . Kuti , who plays electric piano , and drummer Tony Allen start the introduction out of tempo and exhibit abstract musical techniques , including dramatic free jazz interplay between their instruments . Although he was known for his critical background in classical study , Kuti allowed Allen to improvise in the Africa 70 's rhythm section and viewed him as a drummer with the mind of a composer , or " one who composes on the spot " .

The introduction 's keyboard fantasia gradually opens the band 's languid , expansive interplay . The song 's groove is established with the introduction of a bass guitar ostinato at 4 : 50 . Rhythm and tenor guitars and a horn section are played in the next two minutes . During the bridge , Allen 's drumming intensifies within the song 's seven - minute mark , which leads to a fully developed Afrobeat section . Afrobeat is a type of loose funk music embellished with African syncopation , R & B - styled horn instruments , and improvisatory solos . Confusion 's extended mid - tempo

section has complex arrangements of danceable grooves , multiple solos , and Allen 's polyrhythms . In this section , Kuti plays tenor saxophone , which he had learned after Africa 70 's original tenor player Igo Chico left in 1973 . The music is complemented by his outspoken call @-@ and @-@ response vocal passages . The song 's final 10 minutes comprise raucous trumpet , tenor saxophone solos , and Kuti 's lead vocals . Its closing section revisits the abstract interplay of the introduction .

= = Lyrics and themes = =

Confusion is a commentary on the confused state of post @-@ colonial , urban Nigeria , particularly Lagos , and its lack of infrastructure and proper leadership at the time . In the opening lines , Kuti comments on his social reality : " When we talk say confusion / Everything out of control " . His lyrics decry what he viewed as the colonial mindset of some Africans and employ pidgin English , which was the lingua franca of most people in English @-@ speaking West Africa ; he sings the phrase " pafuka " , which means " all over " or " finished " , and the interjection " o " to add emphasis .

According to Nigerian historian Toyin Falola , Confusion depicts the complicated , frenetic , and multilingual market of the Ojuelegba crossroad , and in doing so addresses the " infrastructural nightmare of Lagos and the continued hegemony of the West in all aspects of African life " . Kuti makes reference to three dialects and currencies that make trading in urban Nigeria difficult : " Dem be three men wey sell for roadside @-@ o / Dem three speak different language @-@ o / Dem speak Lagos , Accra , and Conakry / One white man come pay them money @-@ o / He pay them for pounds , dollars and French money @-@ o / For the thing wey he go buy from them / He remain for them to share am @-@ o / Me I say , na confusion be that @-@ o / He go say he pafuka o . " African Arts journalist E.J. Collins interpreted the latter verse as a reference to the protracted nature of transactions in Lagos .

Kuti uses ironic humor to express pride in Nigerians ' ability to drive and work within difficult conditions : " Before @-@ before Lagos traffic na special , eh / Number one special all over the world / You go get Ph.D. for driving for Lagos , eh / You go get M.A. for driving for Lagos , eh / You go get M.Sc. for driving for Lagos , oh / For me for me I like am like that , eh / Ah @-@ ha @-@ ha @-@ ha , na my country ? why not ? / For me for me I like am like that , eh . " He subsequently describes major intersections throughout Lagos , including Surulere , Ojuelegba , and Ogogoro Centre , which lack the supervision of a traffic officer . They are characterized by aggressive , temperamental drivers , who force their vehicles into inextricable traffic jams : " For Ojuelegba , moto dey come from south / Moto dey come from north / Moto dey come from east / Moto dey come from west / And policeman no dey for centre / Na confusion be that @-@ i o / He go say he pafuka o . " According to The Rough Guide to World Music (2006) , the album uses a " hectic crossroads in Lagos ... as a metaphor to explore the problems of an entire corrupt nation . "

= = Release and reception = =

Confusion was first released in Nigeria in 1975 by EMI . It was reissued in 1984 by EMI Records . In a retrospective review for AllMusic , Sam Samuelson gave it five stars and called it " a highly recommended 25 @-@ minute Afro @-@ beat epic " . He said that it shows Kuti and his band at the peak of their instrumental skills and vague jeers , which he felt became more explicit and intense on 1977 's *Zombie* . Samuelson found Confusion to be exemplary of Kuti 's " genius " formula , in which he startles musically enraptured listeners with his commentary . Music journalist Peter Shapiro called it a lyrical masterpiece and said that the bridge following the song 's " cosmic " introduction is " pretty much the pinnacle of Afro @-@ futurism " . Nic Harcourt recommended Confusion as a starting point for new listeners of Kuti 's music .

In 2000 , MCA Records reissued and bundled Confusion with Kuti 's 1973 album *Gentleman* . It was the last installment in a 10 @-@ CD , 20 @-@ album reissue project for Kuti . Rob Brunner of Entertainment Weekly gave the album 's reissue an " A " and viewed it as one of Kuti 's best works , while Derrick A. Smith from All About Jazz cited Confusion as one of his " best statements on any

instrument " . In a four @-@ star review , Down Beat praised his combination of " raw energy and sophistication " , and said that it is as noteworthy as when it was first released . Robert Christgau gave the two @-@ album reissue an " A ? " in his review for The Village Voice , calling Confusion " one Fela song / track / album it would be a waste to edit ... the proof of Africa 70 's presumptive funk . " He ranked the reissue number 80 in his dean 's list for the Pazz & Jop critics ' poll in 2000 .

In 2005 , New Nation ranked Confusion 91st on their list of the " Top 100 Best Albums by Black Artists " . In his 2008 book 1 @, @ 000 Recordings to Hear Before You Die , music journalist Tom Moon wrote that it is both one of Kuti 's best albums and " a demonstration of just how rousing Afro @-@ Beat 's deftly interlocked rhythms can be . " In 2010 , the album was bundled again with Gentleman by Knitting Factory Records as a part of their extensive reissue of Kuti 's 45 @-@ album discography . Michaelangelo Matos of Paste magazine gave it a score of " 9 @.@ 3 / 10 " and cited it as the essential release in both the reissue and Kuti 's catalog : " an oasis in a sandpaper @-@ like catalog . "

= = Track listing = =

All songs were arranged , composed , and produced by Fela Ransome @-@ Kuti .

Side one

" Confusion Pt . I " ? 14 : 08

Side two

" Confusion Pt . II " ? 11 : 28

The album was released as a single track on its subsequent CD reissue .

= = Personnel = =

Credits are adapted from the album 's liner notes .

James Abayomi ? sticks

Tony Allen ? lead drums , solo drums

Africa 70 ? band

Lekan Animashaun ? baritone saxophone

George Mark Bruce ? bass guitar

Segun Edo ? tenor guitar

Henry Kofi ? first conga

Daniel Koranteg ? second conga

Tony Njoku ? trumpet

Emmanuel Odenusi ? engineering , mixing

Isaac Olaleye ? maracas

Remi Olowookere ? graphics

Fela Ransome @-@ Kuti ? arrangement , tenor saxophone , piano , production , vocals

Tutu Shoronmu ? rhythm guitar