

1473. Isn't She Lovely

Backgrounds Of S. Radic

"Isn't She Lovely" is a song by Stevie Wonder from his 1976 album *Songs in the Key of Life*. The text celebrates the birth of his daughter Aisha Morris. Wonder worked on the song with the Harlem songwriter and studio owner Burnetta "Bunny" Jones. "The song opens page 3 of *Songs in the Key of Life* and begins with the first cry of a baby recorded during an actual birth. A recording of Wonder bathing Aisha as an older toddler is brought into the final section of the song, mixed with Wonder's extended chromatic harmonica solo.

All the instruments heard in the song are played by Wonder, with the exception of Greg Phillinganes on some of the keyboard instruments. During the recording process, bassist Nathan Watts established a bass guitar line that would serve as a guideline for Wonder, but Wonder eventually replaced it with his own keyboard bass performance. "The more than six-minute song was not released as a single because Wonder was unwilling to shorten the song to fit the format 7" with 45 revolutions per minute. As consumers demanded a single, Tamla compromised at the end of 1976 and a promotional version was made available to radio stations. This edited version, which was 3:12 long, received so much airplay that it reached number 23 on the Adult Contemporary charts in January 1977. Since then, the song has become a jazz and pop standard that is covered by many artists.

Wonder played the song live for Queen Elizabeth II at her Diamond Jubilee Concert on June 4, 2012, changing the lyrics to refer to the Queen.



Stevie Wonder and daughter Aisha Morris with "Isn't She Lovely" at the GRAMMY concert on February 10, 2015 at Nokia Theater LA LIVE



Remarkable cover versions

- Singer David Parton released the song, which was a number 4 hit in the UK, in mid-January 1977 and spent nine weeks in the charts. It was the 54th biggest hit of the year. Parton's version gave it the status of a one-hit wonder in the United Kingdom.
- The jazz guitarist Lee Ritenour recorded the song in 1977 on his instrumental album *Captain Fingers*.
- Pianist/percussionist Victor Feldman recorded a jazz instrumental version for his 1977 album *The Artful Dodger*. Feldman also played congas on the version of Ritenour released the same year.
- Clarinetist and bandleader Woody Herman sang a big band version on the 1978 album *Fatha Herman and his Thundering Herd*.
- Saxophonist/Arranger Bill Holman recorded the song in 1987 on his album *The Bill Holman Band*.
- In November 2012 an acoustic version, sung by cancer victim Jimmy Higham and his friend and colleague John Walmsley, reached number 41 in the British singles charts, surpassing Taylor Swift and Rihanna. The song was released and the proceeds from the electronic sales were used to raise money for a scholarship fund set up in Higham's memory at Wellington College in Berkshire, where he had worked as a staff member. As a result, the original version of Wonder entered the British single charts and reached number 94.



Triolen-Disco-Beat, T=120

Main 1

Chords: Am7, D7, G7, C

Rhythmic patterns: 1/5, 2/6, 3/7, 4/8

Main 2

Chords: F, E7, Am, D7

Fortsetzung
Seite 2.

Programming instruction

"Normally" the length of Parts Main1/2 will always be the same, mostly 1-2 bars - and everything will always be programmed in C-Major, so that the Transposer function of the Style control delivers the chords as needed by wrapping around the correct chords. There is a kind of "vamping" (free accompaniment) in play here: The chords of the style accompaniment are identical in the Main1/2 each for itself - and so I had the idea to organize the whole thing as a kind of "half-sequence". In Main 1, the same 4-beat chord sequence Am7-Dm7-G9/13 and C6 is played twice (hence the name "1/2", "2/6" etc.). In Main 2, on the other hand, 8 different bars are played, which end with a tutti interlude. The last two Main 2 bars are then used to make the ending with "minus one note"! (continued on page 2)

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Tutti

5 ----- 6 ----- 7 -----

Ending

8 -----

Programming instrucion

The gameplay of this unusual programming is as follows: **NO CHORDS ARE CHANGED DURING THE PLAYING!** Why and why not? Because this chord sequence is already pre-programmed in both main, intro and ending, you only have to enter the **BASIC CHORDS** of the title key at the beginning. In versions 1 this would be C major - and in verse 2 this would be F major - so only the basic triad (in C=c-e-g and in F=f-a-c). For this, a single split octave in the UM (or UM-split) is sufficient. The rest of the unoccupied style control keys in the UM can then be used for free play like the OM. Attention, as soon as you have pressed one of the style control keys by mistake, you only need to press the root keys to make the accompaniment run properly again!