

= We Are the World 25 for Haiti =

" We Are the World 25 for Haiti " is a charity single recorded by the supergroup Artists for Haiti in 2010 . It is a remake of the 1985 hit song " We Are the World " , which was written by American musicians Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie , and was recorded by USA for Africa to benefit famine relief in Africa . Initially , in late 2009 , it had been suggested to Richie and Quincy Jones ? producer of the original " We Are the World " ? that a re @-@ cut version of the song be re @-@ released under the title " Live 25 " . Following the magnitude 7 @.@ 0 Mw earthquake in Haiti , which devastated the area and killed thousands of people , it was agreed that the song would be re @-@ recorded by new artists , in the hope that it would reach a new generation and help benefit the people of Haiti .

The song was recorded in fourteen and a half hours by over eighty artists on February 1 , 2010 . It was produced by Quincy Jones , and executively produced by Lionel Richie , and Haitian @-@ American musician Wyclef Jean . A music video directed by Paul Haggis was released to accompany and promote the song . The song was also recorded in Spanish by a Latin supergroup and was named Somos el Mundo . The song was directed by Emilio Estefan and his wife , Gloria Estefan .

" We Are the World 25 for Haiti " is musically structured similar to " We Are the World " , but includes a rap verse which was written by some of the song 's hip hop artists . Michael Jackson died months before the song 's release , but his material from the 1985 recording sessions was incorporated into the song and music video , as per the request of his mother , Katherine . His sister Janet duets with him on the song , and his nephews Taj , TJ , and Taryll ? collectively known as 3T ? feature on the track 's chorus .

" We Are the World 25 for Haiti " was released on February 12 , 2010 , during the opening ceremony of the 2010 Winter Olympics , as a CD single and a music download . Critically , " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " received generally negative reviews by contemporary music reviewers , with criticism focused on the song 's new musical additions , as well as the choice of artists who appear on the track . Some critics have even named it one of the worst songs of all time . However , the song was commercially successful worldwide , charting within the top 20 in multiple countries .

= = Background = =

In 1985 , " We Are the World " , a song and charity single originally recorded by USA for Africa was released . It was written by American musicians Michael Jackson and Lionel Richie , and produced by Quincy Jones and Michael Omartian for the album We Are the World . The song was well received by music critics and was the recipient of several awards . The song was a worldwide commercial success , as it topped music charts throughout the world and became the fastest @-@ selling American pop single in history , as well as the first single to be certified multi @-@ platinum by the Recording Industry Association of America . " We Are the World " was the best selling pop single of all time until it was eclipsed by Elton John 's 1997 version of " Candle in the Wind " .

On January 12 , 2010 , Haiti was struck by a magnitude 7 @.@ 0 Mw earthquake . It was the country 's most severe earthquake in over 200 years and caused widespread damage . The epicenter of the quake was just outside the Haitian capital Port @-@ au @-@ Prince . It has been estimated that the death toll could reach 200 @,@ 000 . Before the earthquake , Jones and Richie had planned to organize a re @-@ recording of " We Are the World " on January 28 , 2010 ? the 25th anniversary of the original recording of the song . Randy Phillips , who was a key figure in the song being re @-@ issued , said that " We Are The World " producer Ken Kragen had suggested to re @-@ cut " We Are the World " and title it " Live 25 " . However , Lionel Richie and Jones were " very lukewarm " about the idea . Phillips commented that ,

" [ They felt ] that what happened 25 years ago was iconic and they did everything they could for Africa at that time , and they didn 't feel re @-@ cutting the song really made any sense . Basically , Lionel didn 't really want to do it , and we kind of let it die by not issuing the publishing license , because Lionel owns the copyright along with Michael Jackson 's estate . That was in November /

December [ 2009 ] . They had gotten Visa on board as an underwriter of that effort , and I think they were going to try and premiere it at the World Cup . "

However , because of the devastation caused in Haiti , these plans were postponed . Phillips said that Jones had called Lionel and said , " this is what this song is written for , as a fundraising vehicle for causes , tragedies , catastrophes like this . Why don 't we take over the process , call our friends , and actually do this ? " Lionel understood the urgency of Haiti , and in January 2010 , it was agreed that " We Are the World " would be re @-@ recorded to help benefit Haiti , similar to how the original recording helped famine relief in Africa . Richie commented , " Unfortunately , sometimes it takes a hit record to make someone decide to save a life . I want this song to be the battle cry again . Every once in a while , you have to wake the world up . We slept right through Katrina . If we are not a socially aware culture , we 're going to fail . "

= = Recording = =

The new version of the song was recorded on February 1 , 2010 , in a session lasting 14 hours . Eighty @-@ five musicians were reportedly involved in the song 's recording , which was held in the same place as the original , at Henson Recording Studio on Beverly Boulevard in Los Angeles , California . Also similar to the 1985 process , some of the participating musicians were already in Los Angeles to attend an awards ceremony : the 52nd Grammy Awards . Jones said of the recording session , " It was a big challenge . It takes a serious army and serious emotional architecture . I 've never seen such a diverse group of people , and they came for the right reasons . " The recording process brought together diverse artists , with the oldest being 83 @-@ year @-@ old Tony Bennett and the youngest being 9 @-@ year @-@ old Ethan Bortnick .

The new version features updated lyrics and music , such as a rap segment including LL Cool J , will.i.am , Snoop Dogg & 7 others pertaining to Haiti , described as a " Greek chorus extension " , which was written by will.i.am. Other writers included Kanye West , Jones and LL Cool J. Lionel Richie and Jones revealed that Michael Jackson 's sister Janet duets with her late brother , as per a request from their mother , Katherine . In the official video , there is archive footage of Michael Jackson from the original 1985 recording . Richie said that he agreed with Katherine 's request , commenting , " It made me feel more secure about this . We definitely felt a void . He 's the other parent [ to the song ] . " The production team for the song included Humberto Gatica , RedOne , Mervyn Warren , Patti Austin and Rickey Minor . RedOne said that it took a week to create the new arrangement for " We Are The World 25 For Haiti " . He commented that he wanted to keep the " class of the original one " and did not want to " mess it up , because it 's too good . " He noted that he wanted to make the song " sound more now and current " while keeping the originals " whole chord progressions , the feeling and the vibe , but brought fresher sounds that are more now . "

Haitian @-@ American musician Wyclef Jean also serves as a producer . In addition , Wyclef Jean sings the first line of the second chorus in Haitian Creole . Richie said new artists were selected for the song so the song could be aimed at a new audience , commenting , " We have a familiar song that kids learn in school . Why not bring in Miley Cyrus and the Jonas Brothers and let them address the issues ? " adding that " It was designed so that we wouldn 't have any of the originals there , so that we could pass on the baton to the next generation " . Phillips said that the producers received 80 percent of the people they wanted as recording artists for the song . In addition to Jean , Haitian actor Jimmy Jean @-@ Louis , most famous for playing The Haitian on Heroes , appears in the chorus .

At the time of the recording , numerous artists commented on the process , the 1985 version of the song and co @-@ writer Michael Jackson . R & B singer Jordin Sparks revealed that , despite having been born after the release of the original , the song had a " huge impact " on her . Celine Dion said that the release of the song would not only benefit the Haitian people , but also serve as a remembrance of " the passion [ Michael ] Jackson had for helping those in need " . Lionel Richie and Quincy Jones echoed Dion 's sentiments and further stated that if the singer were alive , he would have wanted to be just as involved as he had been a quarter of a century ago . According to Phillips , there was a " handful " of musicians who either declined or could not rearrange their schedules for

the song 's recording , including country singer Taylor Swift , who was going to be touring in Australia .

= = Artists for Haiti = =

Conductors

Quincy Jones

Lionel Richie

Mervyn Warren

Soloists ( in order of appearance )

Chorus

= = Release , promotion , proceeds = =

The 2010 version of " We Are the World " , released under the name Artists for Haiti , debuted on the NBC television network on February 12 during their coverage of the 2010 Winter Olympics opening ceremony . When the song premiered in its paid time spot , the video was edited in length , due in part to the time spent introducing the song . However , the full @-@ length music video was shown on NBC the following day during daytime Olympic coverage .

Similar to marketing of " We Are the World " , a music video of the song was filmed and released . The music video was directed by Academy Award @-@ winning film director Paul Haggis . Haggis said that he finished the video 12 hours early . Haitian film students were involved in the video as part of the production crew . The official video for the song was formatted similar to the original ; the video opens with the song 's title with the recording artists ' signatures surrounding it , as well as clips of the artists performing their parts in the recording studio and included archive footage of Michael Jackson performing his part of the song . The video was intercut with clips showing people in Haiti following the earthquake .

= = Critical reviews and responses = =

" We Are the World 25 for Haiti " received extremely negative reviews from contemporary music critics . The song was criticized for its use of Auto @-@ Tune , the choice of recording artists , and for the song 's rap . Chris Richards , a writer for The Washington Post , described the song as being " horribly oversung " . Richards commented that the most " disappointing " thing about the song was that " there were too few voices from the country , rock and Latin music communities . " He also noted that " nobody can argue with its worthy cause " because of the song 's proceeds to relief in Haiti , but remarked that the song did not have " We Are the World " ' s " original thrill " due to the song 's " panoply of voices " . Jon Pareles , a writer for The New York Times , remarked that while the song 's " Hollywood gloss " was " durable " , the song has " all the pitfalls of a Hollywood remake " . Pareles commented that the quality of the song and performance " rises or falls on its talent pool " and criticized the choice of male musicians compared to " We Are the World " ' s original male artists .

US Magazine mentioned that " this version features second @-@ by @-@ second unexplainable absurdities , including Justin Bieber being given the opening verse , Nicole Scherzinger and other Z @-@ listers assigned more than one prime slot , and Wyclef Jean 's incomprehensible yodeling " . Maura Johnston , a writer for MTV , wrote more positively about the song , commenting favorably on the contemporary artists ' performances in living up to their predecessors . " Despite the different faces , the overall feel is similar to the original 's , " Johnston wrote . Simon Vozick @-@ Levinson , a writer for Entertainment Weekly , gave the song a mixed review , noting that We Are the World 25 for Haiti was not as good as the original : " All in all , I can ? t say this new ' We Are the World ' measured up to the 1985 version . "

Eight days after the Artists for Haiti 2010 celebrity remake was released , a " video response " to the song 's official YouTube video was posted by Internet personality and singer @-@ songwriter

Lisa Lavie , and was " favorited " on the YouTube channel of the We Are The World Foundation . Lavie 's " We Are the World 25 for Haiti ( YouTube Edition ) " excluded the rap segment and minimized the Auto @-@ tune that were the subject of critical reviews of the celebrity version . Lavie 's video , an Internet collaboration of 57 unsigned or independent YouTube musicians geographically distributed around the world , received positive reception from media , including CNN ( " certainly is a sign of the times " ) and ABC World News with Diane Sawyer ( " Persons of the Week " ... " in effect saying , We are the world , too ... who proved that anthem is not just for glittering names . " ) Both videos link to the We Are the World Foundation for donations .

Rolling Stone said its readers " mostly agreed " with the assessment of a February 27 , 2010 Saturday Night Live parody : " Recently , the music world came together to record ' We Are the World 2 , ' a song to raise awareness of the Haiti earthquake disaster ; sadly , the song itself was a disaster , " with several impersonators dubbing the parody " We Are the World 3 : Raising Awareness of the ' We Are the World 2 ' Disaster . "

= = Chart performance = =

" We Are the World 25 for Haiti " debuted within the top 30 in multiple territories . " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " charted at number 27 on the Spanish Singles Chart on the charts issue date February 14 , 2010 . The song debuted at number 17 in New Zealand on the charts issue date of February 15 , 2010 . " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " peaked within the top five , charting at number three in Norway on the charts issue date of February 16 , 2010 ; the chart 's position is currently the song 's highest charting international territory since its release . The song debuted at number 25 in France on the issue date of February 13 .

" We Are the World 25 for Haiti " charted at number two on the Billboard Hot 100 , behind Kesha 's " Tik Tok " . " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " charted higher in its debut week than the original version , which entered the Billboard Hot 100 at number 21 . According to Billboard , the song 's charting position stemmed mainly from download sales , with a reported 96 % of the song 's charting being from such sales . Following the song 's debut during the Olympics , 246 radio stations sampled the song in the United States . Radio stations in New York expressed that they would play the song frequently to raise awareness of Haitian citizens in need . Other radio stations throughout the United States echoed similar responses on the song getting airplay .

The song also sold over 267 @, @ 000 downloads in three days . " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " debuted at number eight on the Canadian Hot 100 dated for February 27 . The song also debuted at number six in Belgium Wallonia and Flanders , as well at debuting at number 17 in Sweden . The song also charted at number 28 in Denmark . The song entered Irish charts at number nine . In the song 's second week of release in Norway , " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " moved up two spaces , topping the chart . Unlike the song 's chart performance in territories like Norway , the song dropped four places on the Billboard Hot 100 to sixth place and stayed in the charts for only five weeks more .

= = Charts = =

= = = Weekly = = =

= = = Year @-@ end = = =

= = Track listings = =

Short version " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " - 3 : 25

Long version " We Are the World 25 for Haiti " - 6 : 57

