

= Schoolin ' Life =

" Schoolin ' Life " is a song recorded by American recording artist Beyoncé for the deluxe edition of her fourth studio album , 4 ( 2011 ) . It was written by Knowles , Terius Nash , Shea Taylor as well as Carlos McKinney while production was handled by Knowles , The @-@ Dream , and Los Da Mystro . Jordan Young , also known by his stage name DJ Swivel , mixed the song at New York 's Jungle City Studios . Containing elements of disco and dance @-@ pop music , " Schoolin ' Life " is an uptempo R & B and funk song , in which Knowles employs guttural vocals and uses her whistle register . Having a retro nature , the song is built on a 1980s @-@ inspired dance beat , and is instrumentally complete with old school synthesizers , drum kits , electric guitars , and horns .

Lyrically , the song features Knowles schooling everyone from their 20s to their 50s . She gets feisty as she reflects on lessons she learned in her own life and affirms that she hasn 't certified as a teacher , a preacher or a doctor , but is willing to perform their various duties regardless . " Schoolin ' Life " was well received by contemporary music critics , who noted its aural resemblance to Prince 's prime work , praised its production , and coined it as one of the catchiest upbeat songs Knowles has ever recorded . It appeared on several critics ' lists of the best songs of 2011 . Following the release of 4 , " Schoolin ' Life " charted at number 155 on the South Korean International Singles Chart . The song was used in the eighth season of the American television reality program and dance competition So You Think You Can Dance . It was part of Knowles ' set list during her residency show Revel Presents : Beyoncé Live .

= = Production and mixing = =

" Schoolin ' Life " was written by Beyoncé Knowles , Terius Nash , Shea Taylor , and Carlos McKinney . Production was handled by Knowles , The @-@ Dream , and Los Da Mystro . It was made available on the deluxe edition of 4 , which was sold exclusively at Target until that edition was released to iTunes Stores on January 2 , 2012 . The deluxe edition consists of an additional two deluxe only tracks , " Dance for You " and " Lay Up Under Me " and three remixes of " Run the World ( Girls ) " ( 2011 ) . Jordan Young aka DJ Swivel mixed the song at New York 's Jungle City Studios . Describing " Schoolin ' Life " as his favorite track on the album , Swivel told Sound on Sound that he was adamant about mixing the song :

I spent a lot of time after [ Knowles ] left the studio tightening up the rough . In fact , I 'm sure she let me mix it just because I loved the track so much ! I mixed this in the fantastic penthouse room in Jungle City . This record was , of course , about the vocals ? but a lot of it was about the production elements too . Everything had to be audible ; there 's some interesting percussion , and the hook had to feel nice and big .

Around 100 tracks were used on " Schoolin ' Life " ; they were roughly split with 50 for the music and 50 for the vocals . As stated by Swivel , musically the aim of the mix was to take a large number of tracks and create a perfect balance . So , he used Waves ? Metaflanger on the percussion and some of the snares , and spent some time EQ ? ing . Swivel explained that there was much parallel processing on the lead vocal . The lead @-@ vocal bus was multed to a second bus , and one of them was entirely crushed on a 50 : 1 compression ratio which was totally limited and with a very low threshold . He elaborated , " It creates a very gritty distorted sound in there , really low to taste , and it fills in the lead vocal very nicely . The crushed vocal runs quietly underneath . "

After completing the lead vocals , Swivel decided to rework the 1980s sound on the snares as they were originally very tight . He therefore added a gated reverb for the snap sound which was long and drawn ? out snap sound . He also subbed in an additional kick underneath to add some real oomph to the bottom . Owing to the work Swivel had accomplished during production , the final mix took only a few hours . He said : " There were a lot of tracks , but I just enjoyed it , to be honest . I knew how I wanted it to sound , and it was pretty much the last song we cut ; a lot of the mixing was nailed in the production as well , which helped . Dream did a great job producing this track . " The bar one guitar track of " Schoolin ' Life " was entirely programmed . Similarly , the live drum section in the hook was actually done with programmed drums . Once the mixing was over , Swivel 's

impression were as follows :

[ ' Schoolin ' Life ] absolutely had to have its own space . There are percussion elements and a few random sounds in there too , plus the nice guitar track , but certainly the main challenge was for all of these tracks to be well balanced and individually audible . It really is very easy to overlook something like that , which can potentially completely change the sound of a record .

= = Composition and lyrical interpretation = =

" Schoolin ' Life " is an uptempo R & B and funk song , which contains elements of disco and dance @-@ pop . Built on a 1980s @-@ inspired beat , the song 's instrumentation includes old school synthesizers , 1980s @-@ sounding drum kits wailing electric guitars , and horns . Music critics , including Jamie Peck of MTV noted that " Schoolin ' Life " was inspired by the prime work of Prince , particularly because of its lyrical content , the instruments used , and Knowles ' style of singing on it . Lyrically , the song finds Knowles detailing her experiences as she was growing up . In the first verse , she employs guttural vocals to address many life lessons to " 20 @-@ somethings " , " 30 @-@ somethings " , " 40 @-@ somethings " , and " 50 @-@ somethings " . Knowles warns them against some consequences , affirming " time really moves fast " and that growing up fast will leave them wanting more . Knowles also talks about still excelling in a world where parents try to shield everything , " Mom and dad tried to hide the world / Said the world 's just too big for a little girl / Eyes wide open can 't you see / I had my first heels by the age of 13 " .

In the chorus , Knowles gives listeners a flashback to her friskier days and admits that she is certified neither as a teacher , a preacher nor a doctor , but is willing to perform their various duties regardless . She also sings , " I 'm great at writing physical love letters " , and " I 'm a freak , all day all night " . After asking , " Who needs a degree when you 're schoolin ' life ? " , Knowles echoes , " Oh oh oh oh oh oh woah oh oh " . In the second verse , she continues to sing about the ins and outs of life to the " pretty somethings " , " sexy somethings " , " bitter somethings " , and " little somethings " : " Living in a fastlane , see you when you crash babe " , " That body ain ? t always gonna get you out of everything " , and " Stop living in regret , it ? s not over yet " . In the bridge , she commands , " Make your life what you decide / Baby , party till the fire marshal shuts this sucker down " . The song ends with Knowles giving one her final lessons , " Don ? t stop running until it ? s finished ? it ? s up to you , the rest is unwritten " .

= = Critical reception = =

Jamie Peck of MTV described " Schoolin ' Life " as " [ a ] feisty lesson in fun ... It 's the perfect soundtrack for dancing on a fire escape or ... playing in a busted open fire hydrant ... Whatever , it 's hot ! " . He concluded that Prince would be proud of the song 's musical style and lyrical content . John Mitchell of the same publication found the song to be single @-@ worthy . Choosing " Schoolin ' Life " as one of the three best tracks on 4 , Tyrone S. Reid of Blogcritics commented that the song offers a proper lesson in how " to make the old and new schools boogie together " . He also noted that it is reminiscent of Prince 's work . Ryan Dombal of Pitchfork Media viewed the song as an irresistible Prince tribute , which he considered to be much more motivational than " I Was Here " . He called " Schoolin ' Life " as one " among the proper album 's finest moments " . Daniel Koren of PMA noted that the song recalls some of The @-@ Dream 's most Prince @-@ esque tracks , " Fast Car " and " Yamaha " . Ian Walker of AbsolutePunk wrote :

'I Miss You ' and bonus track ' Schoolin ' Life ' both showcase opposite sides of that magnificent decade 's musical spectrum . The former is a stripped down track carried mostly by a hollow beat and dismal synthesizers , allowing Knowles and her morosely beautiful voice center stage ... The latter picks up the pace , peppered liberally with old @-@ school horns and crashes . Knowles details her experiences growing up , but parallels can be drawn to the maturation she 's going through on this very album . More than any song , ' Schoolin ' Life ' literally oozes confidence , providing an endearing edge to an already catchy track .

Becky Bain of Idolator wrote that " Schoolin ' Life " is one of the catchier upbeat songs Knowles has

ever recorded and felt that it deserves to be a future single . Casey Hamilton of the Boston website Gather wrote that credit for the song 's " retro @-@ radical nature " goes to producer The @-@ Dream , but it is Knowles herself who " truly delivers the shock value , managing to make a lightly introspective , loosely insightful , and largely entertaining tune " , before adding that it contains the sexiest lyrical content she has ever attempted . Hamilton concluded that Knowles ' vocals effectively match the funky and fun vibe of " Schoolin ' Life " , and concluded that the latter showcases " a side of the singer that is nice to see and even nicer to hear " . Duncan Cooper of The Fader magazine wrote that the song is " lyrically inspired , tough as hell and easily the best thing " on 4 . Danielle Cheesman of MSN Music commented that " ' Schoolin ' Life ' steals the whole entire spotlight " , further noting that it channels the " trademark friskiness " of Prince . He commended how Knowles " unleashes her inner ( and innate ) freak singing " . Cheesman concluded " how this isn 't on the original is beyond me " , before adding that there " maybe one extra single [ on the deluxe edition of 4 ] " .

= = = Recognition = = =

The Guardian 's critic Tom Ewing ranked " Schoolin ' Life " at number nine on his list of The 10 Best Tracks of 2011 . Priya Elan of NME placed the song at number five on her list of the 10 Best Pop Songs Of The Year , writing that it is the " most excellent , time @-@ defying look at Beyonce 's life so far " . He added that if viewed from a stylistic perspective , " Schoolin ' Life " may not have fit with 4 mature tone , but as a stand @-@ alone track " it was one of the most fun of the year " . The staff members of the website Popdust ranked " Schoolin ' Life " as the 87th best song of 2011 , commending Knowles for having pastiched it together " from decades @-@ musty synths and rip @-@ roar over it until it sounds completely current with a wink and a smirk . " On The Village Voice 's 2011 year @-@ end Pazz & Jop singles list , " Schoolin ' Life " was ranked at number 343 .

= = Live performances = =

In May 2012 , Knowles performed " Schoolin Life " during her revue show Revel Presents : Beyoncé Live in Atlantic City , New Jersey , United States ' entertainment resort , hotel , casino and spa , Revel . The performance of the song was placed on the album Live in Atlantic City ( 2013 ) chronicling the concerts . It was previewed on Knowles ' official YouTube page on November 25 , 2013 . A writer of Vibe magazine felt that the laser light show from the performance " brighten [ ed ] up Atlantic City " . E ! News ' Natalie Finn praised Knowles for " tearing it up " onstage during the performance of the song with her backup dancers adding that her fans " are in for quite the education " .

= = Usage in media = =

On August 3 , 2011 , contestants Ricky Jaime and Sasha Mallory danced to " Schoolin Life " in Top 6 Perform round of the eighth season of the American television reality program and dance competition So You Think You Can Dance . Their dance performance was choreographed by Kumari Suraj . Gwen Orel of The Wall Street Journal further described their performance during a review of that episode of the show : " He 's in a fedora , and she 's got a cute short swingy sheer skirt , with thigh high stockings and a garter belt , and a sheer purple blouse . I don ? t get what this style really is , it seems to have a lot of arm movements , and some crouching jumps . He doesn ? t look quite sharp enough next to her . His split leap is phenomenal . "

= = Chart performance = =

For the week ending July 30 , 2011 , " Schoolin ' Life " debuted at number 155 on the South Korean International Singles Chart , selling 4 @,@ 006 digital downloads .