



She's Always A Woman

Billy Joel

♪ Niveau 55/100 (Ambitieux)

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SHE'S ALWAYS A WOMAN

Words and Music by Billy Joel

In one of his most tender songs, Joel alternately praises and denounces the woman he loves. By using the ubiquitous “she” instead of a name, Joel writes allegorically of all women, and their effects on the men who love them. In the end he delivers the title sentiment, “but she’s always a woman to me.” The song sounds romantic, though a quick glance through the lyrics reveals the same disillusionment that other Joel songs like “Stiletto” deliver. “She’s Always a Woman” is the polar opposite of the classic ballad “She’s Got a Way” in Joel’s canon. Ultimately, he takes the blame for all the things he lets her do to him.

Figure 28—Intro, Verse 1, and Verse 2

Don’t let the changing time signatures of 12/8, 9/8, and 6/8 bother you—it’s all to accommodate the melody, which has a very natural feel to it. The overall feel is always in three.

The combination of delicate chording, a smooth, flowing melody, and lyrical imagery makes the verses powerfully effective. Beginning in measure 9, note the gentle waves of arpeggios Joel lays down below the vocal as he builds into verse 2—a clear indication of his classical training—plus the addition of jazz master/Joel session-man Steve Khan’s acoustic guitar in the second verse.

Fig. 28

Flowing ♩ = 58

40 Full Band
41 Slow Demo meas. 9-16

1 Eb Eb^{sus} Eb Bb Eb Ab/Eb Eb Bb

She can kill with a smile. ...

mp f mp

Verse

3 Eb Bb Eb Ab Eb6

She can wound with her eyes and she can ru - in your faith with her cas - u - al lies—