



“Mr. Brightside” Production Analysis

As I mentioned in a recent video, any part of a song that repeats (a chord progression, a verse, a pre-chorus, a chorus, etc.) should never be repeated in EXACTLY the same way as the previous iteration of that part. “Mr. Brightside” by The Killers is the perfect example of this because, even though all of the lyrics repeat (the first verse, pre-chorus, and chorus are the exact same lyrics as the second verse, pre-chorus, and chorus), there is not a single part of this song that repeats itself in exactly the same way. Here is a list of the subtle changes throughout the song that keep this song interesting despite the repetitive lyrics. I recommend reading through this list while listening to the song to get the full picture.

1. Song starts
2. First time through the chord progression is just the guitar on the left
3. Then drums and vocals come in (with drums panned to the right)
4. Third time through bass comes in
5. Fourth time through drums are panned up the middle and the steady beat kicks in
6. Fifth time through the bass goes high for the third chord instead of down
7. First pre-chorus kicks in, straightforward, nothing crazy, but it's the first time we hear it
8. Then the chorus starts and they add a guitar countermelody
9. Second half of the chorus the countermelody goes up higher
10. Instrumental break that they add a synth
11. Second half of instrumental break the synth melody changes
12. Second verse starts and they do a couple things
 1. The synth pad from the instrumental break sustains and fades over the beginning of the verse
 2. The vocal melody switches up a bit on “just fine”
 3. They add a vocal double over “gotta gotta be down”

4. They add a telephone filter on the vocals for “it was only a kiss” and pan them to the left
 5. at the same time, the drums and bass cutting out and the guitar gets panned to the right
 6. New drum fill going into the pre-chorus
13. Second pre-chorus they add some more grit to the bass
14. There’s also a new synth in the background doing string stabs
15. Also another synth panned hard left that’s louder than it was in the first pre-chorus
16. Second half of the pre-chorus there’s a new drum and bass fill going into the chorus
17. Second chorus they make the vocal double more prominent than in the first chorus as well as turning the synth up louder
18. Bridge
 1. First time through the riff is normal
 2. Second time through they add a string pad in the background and a drum fill and a distorted chorus/flanger on the guitar for a second
 3. When the vocals come back in, the second time he says “I never” the synth in the background does a short melody instead of just a pad
 4. Then the vocals go higher
 5. Second time through the higher vocals the drum beat changes
19. Song ends