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U2

Beautiful Day

SONG FACTS

Album: *All That You Can't Leave Behind*

Writers: Bono, Adam Clayton, The Edge, Larry Mullen, Jr.

Producers: Daniel Lanois, Brian Eno, Steve Lillywhite

Studio: HQ Studio (Dublin, Ireland)

Release Date: October 9, 2000

Length: 4:06

Sales: 500,000+ (single), 12+ million (album) worldwide

Highest Chart Position: #21 U.S. *Billboard* Hot 100, #1 U.K. Singles Chart

“Beautiful Day,” the lead single from U2’s 2000 album *All That You Can’t Leave Behind*, was a huge commercial success and one of the group’s biggest hits ever. The song won three Grammy awards for Song of the Year, Record of the Year, and Best Performance by a Duo or Group with Vocal. It hit #1 in many parts of the world, despite only making it to #21 on the U.S. *Billboard* Hot 100 chart. *Rolling Stone* magazine has rated the song #345 of its 500 Greatest Songs of All Time, while VH1 rates it at #15 on its list of the 100 Greatest Songs of the '00s.

“Beautiful Day” originated as a standard rock tune called “Always,” but after Bono wrote the lyrics, the track took a different direction. The song had a long period of development as the band argued over The Edge’s guitar tone—some within the group wanted the vintage U2 sound of their earlier albums and others did not. The mixing also took longer than usual as the arrangement was tweaked; Bono added a



THE SONG

“Rolling in the Deep” is pop music at its most basic in that it relies on a bare bones form no different to countless hit records. The form is:

verse | B section | chorus/verse | B section | chorus/bridge |
verse | chorus | chorus | chorus

What makes this song so bare is that there are no intros, interludes, or outros. In fact, the song ends pretty abruptly.

The lyrics to “Rolling in the Deep” are interesting in that they don’t read well without the music. The rhymes seem forced, like they were settled for instead of the result of taking more time to work on them. Yet they’ve obviously touched a lot of people with their tale of heartache. Sometimes authenticity beats cleverness.

The BPM of the song is 104.

THE ARRANGEMENT

Once again, this is about as formulaic as you can get. That said, take special note because it works! It’s a lesson on how to arrange a song without anything extra getting in the way.

The song begins with just an eighth-note guitar part and a lead vocal, which is joined by the kick drum in the second half of the verse. In the B section, simple piano triads, bass, and the rest of the drums enter. See the development?

In the chorus, a strumming acoustic guitar and piano eighth notes push the song along, as well as the entry of background vocal answers.

The last verse and first outchorus breaks down to kick and fills (which seems to be happening in all the hits these days).