

Rock music

What is a rock gig? It's a seething, swaying, sweating mass all bouncing as one.

It's getting a bit carried away at the merch stand. It's knowing the words by heart and screaming them at the top of your voice. But most of all it's a band, up on that stage. Drums, bass, a singer, and electric guitars.

The sound of rock is the sound of an electric guitar. But not a lovely, well-dressed, clean-cut sound that you can take home to meet your mum. No, the rock sound is loud, brash and in your face. The key is distortion, and the way the sound is amplified.

Take the track *Anifail* by Candelas. *Anifail* means animal in Welsh. Already in the intro we've got a meaty riff to get our teeth into.

The chord progressions are actually quite straightforward. In the intro, verse and chorus it's the same few chords from the main key of E minor repeated.

We're well into the song now. The drummer is hitting hard and the guitarists are playing power chords, which are chords with the third note of the scale removed, leaving only the first and fifth notes. Power chords sound much more open and give a really strong presence.

If the electric guitar is the star of the rock story, then the chorus is the all-action sidekick. The chorus is the bit we sing along to, so it needs to be big.

Candelas have made their chorus stand out. They lead into it with a pre-chorus, which is a short section designed to create contrast. In the pre-chorus they're in a major key, and they've added stress notes and chromatic movement. When the chorus comes they're back in E minor with that huge *Anifail* riff driving us along.

There's that riff again. The repeated, almost shouted vocals make you want to join in.

Rock is supposed to provoke a response and you can hear that in the lyrics. Songs can be about anything. Love, sex, rebellion, emotion, society, politics.

Great rock songs tell a story. Is *Anifail* actually about animals, or is it a metaphor for people going out and behaving like animals? Very poetic.

Bitesize

Rock is at its best live. It's an experience - raw and powerful, real and authentic.

The vocals at a live gig are less polished than on a record produced in a studio, everything is louder, more chaotic.

And I love it.