



HARD ROCK

Popular Music Teaching Resources Package

TaiShun TSE

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1/ Background

1.1. From The birth of Rock and Roll (1940s–1950s)

Hard Rock did not appear out of nowhere; it evolved from Rock and Roll, which was a high-energy synthesis of Rhythm and Blues (R&B), Blues, and Country (often called "cowboy music" at the time).

In the late 1940s, musicians began mixing the strong, danceable backbeat and soulful vocals of R&B with country music. Guitarists and bass players began experimenting with the sound by using amplified distortion for power and intensity. This new style was energetic, rebellious, and designed for dancing.

Bill Haley & His Comets: An American rock and roll band formed in 1947, their hit "*Rock Around the Clock*" (1955) was the first rock song to hit number one on the Billboard pop charts. Most historians mark this as the official start of the Rock and Roll era.

Elvis Presley: The most successful figure of this era, Elvis blended R&B styles with country sounds to create a global phenomenon.

Chuck Berry & Little Richard: Chuck Berry's rhythmic guitar riffs (heard in *Johnny B. Goode*) and Little Richard's wild, shouting vocals (featured in *Tutti Frutti* and *Long Tall Sally*) provided the "blueprint" for the heavy guitar and shouting vocal style used in Hard Rock later on.

1.2. The British Invasion & The London Scene (Mid-1960s)

Note: This was a "cultural invasion," not a military one!

In 1964, British bands—who had grown up idolising American R&B and Blues stars—suddenly dominated the American charts. However, their influence went far beyond just the music; it changed the way a whole generation looked and lived.

By 1964, London became the "coolest" city on earth. The British bands brought with them a distinct sense of:

Fashion: Long hair (which was shocking at the time), "Mod" suits, and Chelsea boots. This helped launch the global fashion movement.

The Counter-culture: These bands became the faces of a new anti-mass culture. They weren't just entertainers; they were seen as serious artists who critiqued society.

The Beatles: While they started as "clean" pop idols, they quickly evolved into experimental artists who used their platform to talk about peace, love (e.g. *All You Need is Love*), and self-discovery (e.g. *Across the Universe*, *Tomorrow Never Knows*).

The Rolling Stones: They represented the dangerous side of the invasion. With their gritty, riff-based blues (e.g. *(I Can't Get No) Satisfaction*), they gave youth a more rebellious and tough identity to follow.

1.3. The Birth of Rock and the Rise of Hard Rock (Late 1960s)

The British Invasion played an important role in the development of rock music. This movement was characterised by an intense mixing of influences and a constant exchange of ideas between British and American musicians. This cultural exchange influenced musicians in various ways, prompting them to seek entirely new sounds, styles, and techniques.

This period marked a major transition where Rock and Roll (the specific, dance-oriented genre of the 1950s) evolved into Rock (a broader umbrella genre viewed as a serious art form). As an umbrella genre, Rock expanded to include a wide variety of sub-genres—such as Garage Rock, Psychedelic Rock, and Blues-Rock.

Hard rock, as one of the subgenres under rock music, began in the mid-1960s. It emerged as musicians re-imagined Electric Blues as a "proto-hard rock" through British bands like the Rolling Stones and Cream. During this time, the sound became significantly heavier—not just in volume, but in the entire weight of the music:

The Sound of Power: amplified guitar distortion became a signifier of power. It was no longer a mistake or noise; it was an intentional tool to show emotional intensity.

Heavy Beats: Drumming changed from the light, swinging style of the 50s to heavy-handed, stadium-sized percussion. Drummers began using their whole arms to hit the drums, creating a thunderous sound that could fill massive arenas.

Technical Virtuosity: Musicians began focusing on extreme skill. Lead guitarists moved from simple melodies to complex, high-speed solos, moving the genre toward what we now call Hard Rock.

The following examples display the difference between Rock and Roll and Hard Rock:

- **Eddie Cochran, *Summertime Blues* (1958)**
- **The Who, *Summertime Blues* (1975) live performance**

	Representative Singers / bands	Musical Characteristics
R&B	Louis Jordan, Nat King Cole, Billie Holiday	The Backbeat and soulful energy
Early Rock / Rock and Roll	Elvis Presley, Bill Haley, Chuck Berry	The rebellious teen identity and electric riffs.
British Invasion (Rock)	Beatles, Rolling Stones	A tougher attitude and louder, distorted guitar
Hard Rock	AC/DC, Deep Purple	Technical skill, loud volume, power chords

2/ Musical Features of Hard Rock

Hard Rock is defined by its "wall of sound"—a thick, powerful texture created by high-volume amplification, technical skill, and an aggressive performance style.

2.1. The Band Lineup

Hard Rock is primarily ensemble music (played by a group). The standard lineup consists of:

- **Lead Vocalist:** Often a frontman with high-energy stage presence and powerful delivery.
- **Electric Guitar:** The soul of the genre, often divided into **Lead** (solos) and **Rhythm** (chords/riffs).
- **Second guitar:** Some hard rock bands will add a second guitar, for rhythm and counter-rhythm, providing rhythm and harmonic support during lead guitar solos. Second guitar also help to enhance the overall power and texture of the music.
- **Electric Bass & Drums:** The rhythm section providing the heavy foundation.
- **Backing Vocals:** Usually performed by the band members themselves.
- **Keyboards/Piano:** Used for texture. Many bands feature **either** a second guitar player **or** a keyboardist to fill out the sound.

2.2. The Guitar: Distortion and Power

The guitar is the most iconic element of Hard Rock, moving away from 1950s "clean" sounds toward a gritty, powerful tone.

- **Distortion:** A gritty tone created by "**overdriving**" the guitar/bass amp. It signifies **emotional intensity**.
- **Feedback:** A sustained, screaming sound caused by the guitar's signal looping between the amp and the guitar.
- **Power Chords:** Chords using only the **root and the fifth** note. They sound strong and clear even with heavy distortion.
- **Riffs:** A short, repetitive musical cell that anchors the song. Guitar and bass often play this in **unison** to create a massive sound.

2.3. Drum and Bass

While R&B used complex, swinging rhythms, Hard Rock simplified the beat to make it feel heavier and straightforward.

- **Drums:** Focus on driving rhythms and a heavy backbeat on the snare, removes the swing found in early Rock and Roll and R&B.
 - (Hard Rock) **AC/DC, *Back in Black* (1980):** Rigid, stomping, and powerful beat
- Frequent use of **crash cymbals** is used to add energy and emphasis.
- **Drum Fills:** Short, fast sequences used to "bridge" sections (like verse to chorus) and build excitement.
 - **The Who, *Won't Get Full Again* (1971):** Drum fills are used extensively to connect different sections, e.g. bridging the famous music break back into the verse.
- **Bass Guitar:** Works closely with the drums to provide the low-end weight. The bass often reinforces the guitar riffs, providing a solid backing for the lead guitar to solo over.

2.4. Vocal Technique: Power and Grit

Unlike the smooth, melodic singing of early Rock and Roll, Hard Rock vocals are designed to compete with the loud volume of the instruments.

- The vocals are often **shouted or proclaimed with force.**
- Involve **guttural growls, screaming.**
- High-register to increase the power of the music and intensity.
 - **Led Zeppelin, *Immigrant Song* (1970):** Features a famous high-register vocal wail used in the intro, chorus, and verses
 - **AC/DC, *Back in Black* (1980):** Featuring high register, raspy vocal throughout the entire song

2.5. Dynamics

Hard Rock is not always loud. To make the heavy parts sound even bigger, bands use **dynamics** (changes in volume):

- **Slow Ballads:** Emotional songs that often start quiet and build to a powerful climax.
 - **Guns N' Roses, *November Rain* (1992)**
 - **Aerosmith, *Dream On* (1973)**
- Many ballads use **acoustic guitars** played in strummed or plucked patterns (like folk music). This creates a calm-before-the-storm effect.
- This mix of soft and hard appealed to listeners who craved both emotional depth and loud, danceable energy.

2.6. Song Structure

Hard Rock songs generally follow a standard popular music structure, verse-chorus form, which included a guitar solo after the chorus appears twice.

- **The Introduction (Intro):**
 - Hard Rock often uses an acoustic or clean electric guitar to play an arpeggio pattern or riff for an instrumental introduction.
 - This builds tension before the song kicks in with loud, distorted power chords.
- **Verse:** Sets the story or mood. In Hard Rock, the verse is often underpinned by a repetitive guitar riff.
- **Chorus:** The "hook" of the song. It is usually the loudest and most melodic part, designed for the audience to sing along. Lyrics in the chorus are usually identical, while the lyrics in verses are usually different from each other.
- **The Bridge:** A section that provides a break from the repetitive verse-chorus cycle. It often changes the key or the rhythm to keep the listener engaged before the final climax.
- **The Guitar Solo:** Usually placed after the second chorus. It is a fast, virtuosic "*Guitar Hero*" moment.

Visualising the typical Hard Rock song structure:

<i>Section</i>	<i>Description</i>
<i>Intro</i>	A quiet plucked melody or a standalone drum/riff start.
<i>Verse 1</i>	Driven by the main riff
<i>Chorus</i>	The catchy, high-energy focal point of the song.
<i>Verse 2</i>	Continues the riff; builds energy.
<i>Chorus</i>	Reinforces the main hook
<i>Solo / Music Break</i>	The "Guitar Hero" moment; often an extension of the main riff.
<i>Bridge</i>	A "departure" section that shifts the mood.
<i>Final Chorus</i>	The loudest, most intense repetition of the hook.
<i>Outro</i>	Often a "fade out" or a big rock ending, or climax to finish.

Iconic Examples:

- **The Kinks, *You Really Got Me* (1964):** One of the earliest uses of a distorted power-chord riff and a driving rock beat.
- **Deep Purple, *Smoke on the Water* (1972):** A definitive example of a distorted power-chord riff that builds the entire foundation of a song.
- **Bon Jovi, *Living on a Prayer* (1986):** A classic 1980s example that combines hard rock riffs with piano and synthesizers.
- **Judas Priest, *Hell Bent For Leather* (1978):** The English band also include a second guitar.
- **Led Zeppelin, *Stairway to Heaven* (1971):** A famous hard rock ballad. It begins with a quiet, folk-style **acoustic guitar melody**, gradually adding drums and electric guitar until it ends with a high-energy "heavy" rock section and a famous guitar solo.

3/ Difference between Hard Rock and Heavy Metal

There is some ambiguity between hard rock and heavy metal. In the late 1960s and early 1970s, these terms were often used interchangeably to describe loud rock music with distorted guitars. Over time, especially by the mid-to-late 1970s, clearer musical differences developed, making heavy metal sound heavier, darker, and more intense than hard rock.

Although they are both loud, powerful, and aggressive musical styles, there are specific elements which distinguish them from each other. While both genres utilise distortion, their application of musical theory and rhythm differs:

	<i>Hard Rock</i>	<i>Heavy Metal</i>
<i>Musical Focus</i>	Catchy Riffs and simple verse-chorus song structure.	Technical virtuosity and complexity, resulting longer or complex structure.
<i>The Guitar Sound</i>	Distorted but still blues-based and melodic.	Heavier distortion with a significantly darker and more aggressive tone.
<i>The Riff</i>	Drives the groove and makes the song memorable. It often has a swing or blues feel, repeating to support the vocals.	Becomes the core identity of the song. More repeated notes and rhythmic patterns
<i>Vocal Styles</i>	Soulful, raspy, or "shouted" melodies. The singer often sounds like they are straining for emotional effect (R&B roots).	Very intense singing, often involving more shouting or screaming (Operatic screams).
<i>Lyrics & Themes</i>	Focused on aggressive fun, rebellion, love, and self-confidence.	Explores power, darkness, conflict, and fantasy. It sometimes employs symbols of death and destruction to appeal to an aggressive attitude.

Examples of heavy metal and the listening focus

Metallica, *Master of Puppets* (1986): Highlighted for its complex structure and guitar distortion.

Judas Priest, *Painkiller* (1990): Notable for high-speed tempo and operatic vocal style.

Twisted Sister, *Under the Blade* (1982): Vocal singing style

Iron Maiden, *Powerslave* (1984): Complex song structure

4/ Musical Terms / Glossary

Counter-culture

A social movement that challenges dominant cultural values. Hard rock emerged partly from the counter-culture movements of the late 1960s.

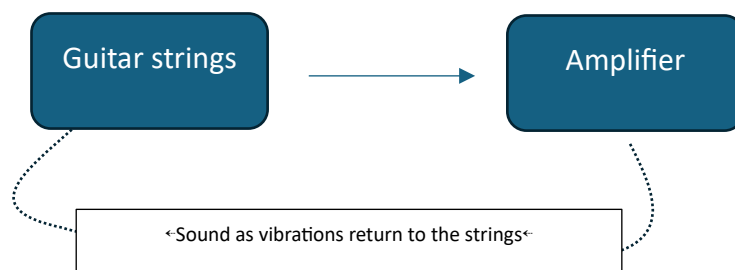
Distortion

An audio effect that alters the natural sound of an electric guitar by increasing gain, producing a rough, powerful, and sustained tone.

Feedback

The amplifier produces sound waves so powerful that they physically vibrate the guitar strings. This sends a new signal back to the amplifier, creating a continuous, self-sustaining loop of sound.

**** Amplifier (Amp):** An electronic device that increases the volume and shapes the tone of an electric instrument.



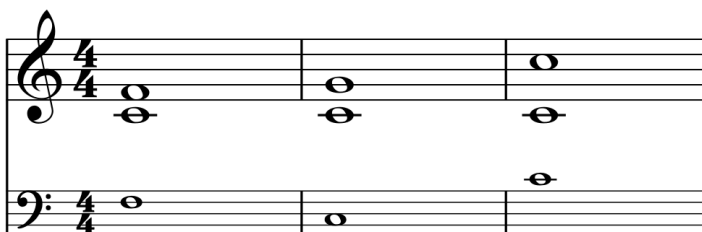
1. **Signal:** The strings send a signal to the amp.
 2. **Output:** The amp amplifies the sound waves.
 3. **Loop:** Those sound waves vibrate the strings, creating a continuous “screaming” loop.
-

Power chords

The **root and fifth** of a chord sounded **without the third**. When those notes are played together, in a loud and distorted level, a **resultant tone** or **combination tone** will be created, which the tone is much lower than the guitar can normally produce. Power chords can be rhythmically pounded or sustained. They add much to the heavy depth and weight of the hard rock sound.

Notes played

Combination tone



The image shows two musical staves in 4/4 time. The top staff, labeled 'Notes played', shows three power chords: a G2-G3 chord (two whole notes), a B2-B3 chord (two whole notes), and a D2-D3 chord (two whole notes). The bottom staff, labeled 'Combination tone', shows the resulting tones: a C1 whole note for the first chord, an E1 whole note for the second, and a G1 whole note for the third.

Riff

A **riff** is a short, catchy, and repetitive musical pattern. It is usually played by the electric guitar and bass in hard rock.

- **Repetition:** A riff is meant to be repeated. In music theory, this is called an *ostinato*.
- **Building Block:** A riff often serves as the main foundation for a song.
- **Rhythmic Energy:** In Hard Rock, they are often played in **unison** (guitar and bass playing the same notes) to create a thick, powerful sound.
- **Variation:** While a riff is repetitive, it can change slightly to match the chords of the song or to build excitement.

Example: In **Deep Purple's *Smoke on the Water***, the four notes the guitar plays are the riff.

$\text{♩} = 114$



The image shows a musical staff in 4/4 time with a tempo marking of 114 beats per minute. The riff consists of four measures: 1) G2 (quarter), A2 (quarter), B2 (quarter), G2 (quarter); 2) G2 (quarter), F#2 (quarter), E2 (quarter), D2 (quarter); 3) C2 (quarter), B1 (quarter), A1 (quarter), G1 (quarter); 4) F#1 (quarter), E1 (quarter), D1 (quarter), C1 (quarter). The notes are represented by whole notes on a grand staff.

Riff vs. Groove: What's the difference?

<i>The Riff</i>	<i>The Groove</i>
<i>What is it?</i>	
A specific melody or pattern of notes.	The overall "feel" or flow of the rhythm.
<i>Who plays it?</i>	
Usually a specific instrument (like the guitar).	The whole band (drums, bass, and guitar) working together.
<i>The "Vibe"</i>	
<i>"I can hum those exact notes."</i>	<i>"I can feel the drive of the beat."</i>

Rock 'n' Roll vs. Rock

While these terms are used interchangeably today, they represent two different eras and musical philosophies. In music history, the distinction is based on the shift from "dance music" to "art music."

1. Rock 'n' Roll (The 1950s Era)

Rock 'n' Roll refers specifically to the genre that emerged in the mid-1950s (peaking around 1956). It is the ancestor of all modern rock.

- **Musical roots:** A grassroots blend of African-American **Rhythm and Blues (R&B)**, **Gospel**, and white **Country** music.
- High-energy, rebellious, and designed for **dancing**.
- **Structure:** Heavily based on the **12-bar blues** and a strong **backbeat**.
- **Key artists:** Elvis Presley, Chuck Berry, Little Richard, and Bill Haley.

2. Rock (The Big Umbrella: Mid-1960s to Present)

The term **"Rock"** began to be used around 1965. It is no longer just one style; it is an **umbrella term** that includes many different "streams" or sub-genres.

- Rock moved from being music for the **body** (dancing) to music for the **mind** (listening).
- **Structure:** Songs became longer, more technical, and more serious.
- **The streams of Rock:** "Rock" branched out into many different directions such as Hard Rock, Soft Rock, Pop Rock, Progressive Rock, and so on.

5/ AC/DC, *Rock or Bust* (2014)

5.1. Background

Rock or Bust was released in 2014 as the title track of AC/DC's studio album. The album marked an important moment in the band's history. Rather than experimenting with new musical trends, AC/DC chose to focus on the elements that had defined their music for decades: strong guitar riffs, simple chord structures, and powerful rhythms.

Rock or Bust reflects this philosophy. The song celebrates the spirit of rock music and the band's commitment to their musical identity. Even after many decades in the music industry, AC/DC continued to emphasise straightforward songwriting and energetic performance.

The song therefore represents both a continuation of AC/DC's classic style and a significant moment of transition in the band's history.

5.2. Instrumentation

The instrumentation follows a traditional five-piece rock band format: two electric guitars, electric bass, drum kit, and lead vocals. This track focuses on a strong central riff, steady rhythm, and a high-energy sound.

5.2.1. Vocal

The vocal performance features raw energy, vocal grit, and a shouting delivery.

- **High-Register Delivery:** The singer performs in a high register with a rough, raspy tone. This allows the voice to cut through the dense sound of distorted guitars.
- **Rhythmic Emphasis:** The vocal lines are rhythmically direct and chant-like, focus is on repetition and clear articulation of the lyrics.

Verse 1 ♩ = 98

We be a gui-tar band. we play a-cross the land. Shoot-in'out to-night gon-na keep you up all right.

Ya hear a gui-tar sound play-in' nice and loud. Rock ya to your knees, gon-na make ya des-ti-ny. In

Chorus

rock we trust... it's rock or bust... In rock we trust... it's rock or bust... In

rock we trust... it's rock or bust... In rock and roll we trust, it's rock or bust...

5.2.2. Guitar

The song features two electric guitars—lead and rhythm—both using distortion.

Unison Riff Playing: This creates a thick and powerful sound. By doubling the same riff, the band increases volume, clarity, and impact. The song is built on two riffs.

♩ = 98

5.2.3. Bass

The bass plays steady eighth notes, while sometimes doubling the guitar riffs and mirroring their rhythmic pattern. This adds weight to the riff and the result is a tight, unified sound in which the guitars and bass function as one rhythmic unit.

♩ = 98

5.2.4. Drums

The drum kit provides a steady and powerful rhythmic foundation.

Straight pattern: The drums follow a consistent and repetitive pattern. The emphasis is placed on beats 2 and 4 (backbeat), using snare drum accents. This repetition helps maintain momentum and keeps the listener's attention on the riff.

5.3. Structure and Harmony

5.3.1. Overview

The song follows a typical verse–chorus rock structure. It begins with a short riff-based introduction that immediately establishes the main musical idea. This is followed by verses and choruses, where the guitar riff remains the driving force of the music.

The guitar solo serves as the musical climax, bringing the music to its highest level of intensity. The track concludes with a final guitar solo and outro that sustain the same intensity established at the beginning.

Sections	Intro	Verse 1	Chorus	Break	Verse 2	Chorus	Solo	Chorus	Outro
Bars	12	8	8	4	8	8	8	8	8

The harmony of "Rock or Bust" is simple and follows common practices found in hard rock — simple harmonic progression. The song centers around **B** as the tonal center and relies mainly on a small group of power-chord shapes.

Blues-Based Harmonic Influence

The harmonic language of the song is rooted in **blues-based rock harmony**. Many hard rock riffs derive from the minor pentatonic and blues scales, which emphasise the tonic, flattened third, fourth, fifth, and flattened seventh scale degrees. Even when full chords are not stated, the riff outlines these scale tones, giving the music a blues-oriented character that is typical of AC/DC's style.

Blues scale



Alternative tuning

In the recording, the guitars and bass are tuned down by a semitone (E $\flat$ tuning). Although the riff is played using chord shapes centered on B, the actual sounding pitch of the song is **B $\flat$** . Tuning down the strings effectively creates a heavier tone.

Simple Chord Materials

The harmonic movement is largely built from a set of chords. Instead of using complex chord progressions, the song focuses on repeating riff that outline the harmonic progression.

5.3.4. Power Chord Harmony

Most of the chords are played as **power chords** (root and fifth). The omission of the third results in harmonic ambiguity between major and minor qualities. This contributes to the strong, weighty sonic character commonly associated with hard rock.

5.3.2. Intro

The song opens with a four-bar guitar riff, played in unison by two distorted electric guitars. The drums then enter, followed by the bass guitar, gradually building the full band sound.

Bar	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
	Guitar Riffs											
			Drums									
					Bass							

The guitar riff, drum patterns, and bass work as a whole, the overall energy are clearly established as the foundation for the rest of the track. The vocals enter with short, energetic phrases such as '*Hey yeah*' and '*Are you ready?*' addressing the audience and listeners directly and build excitement before the first verse begins.

The song uses blues-based harmony, centered on the notes B, D, E, and A, i.e. the tonic, flat-third, fourth, and flat-seventh. This harmony is highlighted by the riff.

♩ = 98

Intro B⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵ B⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵

Guitars

Drum Set

5 B⁵ B⁵ B⁵ B⁵

E. Gtr.

Dr.

Bass

9

Lead Vocal

Hey yeah are you rea- dy?

E. Gtr.

Dr.

Bass

5.3.3. Verses 1 & 2

The verse maintains the main riff with steady rhythmic support from the drums and bass, Verse 1 and Verse 2 are nearly identical.

♩ = 98

Verse 1 B⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵ B⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵

We be a gui- tar band. we play a- cross the land. Shoot- in' out to - night gon- na keep you up all right.

Verse 2 B⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵ B⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵

We hear the si-rens scream. it sounds so lean and mean. We like to shake you down, know what we're talk- in 'bout?

Chorus B⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵

Ya hear a gui- tar sound play - in' nice and loud. rock ya to your knees, gon- namake ya des- ti - ny. In

We turn the amps up high. the crowd's gon- na hit the sky. We play it fast and loose be- cause this night we're gon- na burn that fuse In

5.3.4. Chorus

A call-and-response pattern can be found in the chorus, where vocal phrases are answered by the repeated lines "It's Rock or Bust" and "In Rock we trust". This gives the chorus a strong, energetic feel.

A subdominant chord is added on the fourth beat each time the pattern repeats.

♩ = 98

Chorus

Call Respond Call Respond Call

Vocal

rock we trust. it's rock or bust. In rock we trust, it's rock or bust. In

Guitars

B⁵ E B⁵ E B⁵ E B⁵ E

Drum Set

Bass Guitar

5

Lead Vocal

rock we trust, it's rock or bust... In rock and roll we trust, it's rock or bust...

E. Gtr.

D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵ D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵

Dr.

Bass

5.3.5. Music Break / Solo

The music break is a four-measure instrumental break, driven by the guitar riffs, with emphasis on the downbeat of the third measure.

♩ = 98

Guitars

B⁵ E B⁵ E B⁵ E D⁵/A A⁵ E⁵

Drum Set

Bass Guitar

Guitar Solos: The guitar solo is the core section of the song. The lead guitar shifts to a more melodic and dominant role. The solo is based on blues scale and with expressive pitch bends.

Although the harmony shifts to E, the subdominant key, no new chord material is introduced.

Blues scale

The rhythm guitar maintains harmonic stability and rhythmic drive while allowing the solo to stand out. It continues to play power chords on a dotted rhythm. The rhythm remains consistent in the first half, while the second half features a slight rhythmic variation.

Rhythm Guitar

5.3.6. Outro

The song concludes with a guitar solo based on the blues scale, while the rhythm guitar maintains the same pattern and keeping the energy level consistent with the earlier solo. The harmony of the outro also follows the earlier guitar solo.

6/ Linkin Park, *In The End* (2000)

6.1. Background

In the End is a song by the American rock band Linkin Park, featured on their debut album *Hybrid Theory*, released in 2000. The album played an important role in the rise of nu metal and rap rock, styles that blend elements of hard rock, hip-hop and electronic music. Linkin Park gained international attention for their distinctive sound, combining rap vocals, melodic singing, heavy guitar textures, and modern studio production.

The song was written collectively by the band and produced by Don Gilmore, and it prominently features rapper Mike Shinoda. *In the End* became one of Linkin Park's best-known songs and achieved major chart success worldwide.

Musically, the song demonstrates the band's hybrid approach to popular music. A simple piano line forms the central musical idea and recurs throughout the track. The arrangement alternates between hip-hop-influenced rap verses and powerful rock choruses. This contrast between rhythmic rap delivery and expressive melodic singing became a defining characteristic of the band's style.

The lyrics explore themes of struggle, frustration, and the feeling that effort does not always lead to success. Combined with its memorable piano line and contrasting vocal styles, *In the End* remains a landmark song that helped establish Linkin Park's early musical identity.

6.2. Instrumentation

The instrumentation of *In the End* blends elements of hard rock and hip-hop, a hybrid approach commonly classified as nu metal or rap rock. In this genre, traditional rock instruments are integrated with programmed beats¹, samples, and DJ techniques.

6.2.1. Vocal

The vocal arrangement features two contrasting styles: rapped verses and melodic singing in the chorus. This duality mirrors the instrumental contrast between the hip-hop-influenced verses and the rock-oriented choruses.

- **Rap verses:** The verses are performed by rapper Mike Shinoda, whose rap lines follow the beat closely, emphasising the groove established by the drums and piano riff.
- **Melody singing:** The choruses are sung by lead vocalist Chester Bennington, whose strong melodic lines create a clear contrast with Shinoda's rap verses. Brief melodic phrases also appear within the verse sections, adding variety and easing the transition into the chorus.

¹ Programmed beat are drum patterns created using electronic instruments such as drum machine, MIDI sequencers, and DAWs (Digital Audio Workstations).

♩ = 106

Verse 1

One thing, I don't know why. It does - n't e - ven wat - ter how abrd you try. Keep

___ that in mind; I de-signed this rhyme to ex - plain___ in due time all I know. Time is a val - u - ble thing; watch

All I know.

Chorus

___ I tried so hard___ and got so___ far but in the end___ it does-n't e - ven mat - ter. I had to

6.2.2. Guitar

Distorted guitars are used primarily in the chorus. Rather than performing complex riffs, the guitars sustain long, distorted **power chords**, creating a denser, more sonically saturated texture that contrasts with the verse, where the guitar plays single, clean notes without distortion.

This change in texture is essential to the song's dynamic design: the guitars expand the sonic space and transform the track from a hip-hop-influenced verse into a more conventional rock chorus.

6.2.3. Bass

The bass guitar in this song stays mostly in its lower register. Unlike a standard electric bass, which has four strings with the lowest open string tuned to E, the bass here reaches down to C — below the range of a standard four-string instrument. This indicates that a five-string electric bass was used, a low B string extension, which allows the performer to access pitches below E.

It should be noted that while the five-string bass provides access to the low B string, the lowest pitch used in this song is C, which is played as a fretted note (i.e. pressed against the fingerboard) rather than an open string. This is a common performance practice, as open strings produce a less controlled, harder-to-dampen resonance that can be inconsistent with the surrounding texture. By fretting the C on the B string, the performer maintains greater control over tone and articulation.

A contrast between verse and chorus is also found in the bass part. In the verses, the bass plays a repeated sixteenth-note pattern that mirrors the drums. In the chorus, it shifts to longer, sustained notes, supporting the distorted guitar chords and reinforcing the heavier rock texture.

♩ = 106



6.2.4. Drums

The drums and bass play an important role in this song, providing a strong rhythmic support for both the rap verses and the chorus. A clear difference in rhythmic patterns can be found between the verse and the chorus; although the patterns change, they work together rather than strongly contrasting.

During the chorus, the drum part becomes more open and energetic, reinforcing the shift from the restrained verse to the more powerful rock texture.



6.2.5. Percussion Loops

Percussion loops are another notable feature of this song. In modern popular music — particularly in rap — loops are commonly used. Loops are a **pre-recorded rhythmic pattern**, typically up to four measures in length. It is usually simple and designed to repeat, maintaining a steady pulse, and supporting the rap verses with a consistent beat. This gives the track a slightly mechanical character, reflecting the influence of hip-hop production techniques.

The loops are clearly heard in the intro, verses, and outro. In this track, it is heavily processed: the pattern remains recognisable, but it is distorted and the low end is filtered out.

6.2.6. Piano and strings

The piano outlines a simple, repeated single-line phrase that becomes the most recognisable musical element in the track. A string layer subsequently joins the piano, and the two parts function together as a unified texture. In combination, they not only provide harmonic support but also introduce a classical timbre to the rap and rock sonority.

6.3. Structure and Harmony

6.3.1. Overview

As a hard rock song featuring rap verses, 'contrast' is one of its defining characteristics. Each musical element is developed within its own section, highlighting its individual role, while connecting smoothly with the others to form a unified whole.

In terms of dynamic contrast, the verse is relatively soft, allowing the rap to remain prominent, while the chorus is significantly louder, reflecting the power and intensity typical of hard rock.

Sections	Intro	Verse 1 Pre Chorus	Chorus	Verse 2 Pre Chorus	Chorus	Bridge	Chorus	Outro
Main style	Hip hop	Hip hop	Hard rock	Hip Hop	Hard rock	Hip-hop	Hard Rock	Hip hop

Omission of Guitar Solo

This song contains no instrumental solo section. As the band features a rapper, the arrangement prioritises the interplay between rap and melodic singing. By omitting a traditional guitar solo, the song sustains focus on this distinctive vocal contrast, particularly the rap sections.

Simple chord materials

Like many hard rock songs, the harmony is relatively simple. Each section is built around a repeating four-bar chord progression in E minor.

Semitone down tuning

Although the recording sounds in E^b minor, this is achieved by tuning all instruments down by a semitone. This allows the performers to use familiar E minor fingerings while lowering the overall pitch. There are several practical reasons for this approach:

1. E minor is more idiomatic for guitarists than E^b minor.
2. Tuning down allows the bass and guitars to use open strings more effectively within the riff patterns.
3. Semitone-down tuning is common practice in hard rock and metal, to achieve a heavier and darker overall sound.

6.3.2. Intro

The introduction is led by a piano part, supported by processed drum loops and strings. The piano line establishes one of the song's most recognisable musical ideas. This opening section also outlines the chord progression that will be used throughout the verse.

♩ = 106

Intro Em D Cmaj7 D

Piano

Processed Drum Loops

4

Em D Cmaj7 D

Pno.

Loops

6.3.3. Verse 1 & 2

The verses and pre-chorus feature rap vocals. Although verse 1, verse 2, and the pre-chorus carry different lyrics, the musical arrangement remains largely unchanged.

Short melodic respond: During the rap passages, the lead vocalist adds short melodic responses at the end of each four-bar phrase. These brief lines align rhythmically with the rap. In the pre-chorus, this melodic idea subtly anticipates the first three notes of the upcoming chorus, helping to prepare the transition.

♩ = 106

Em⁹ G/D

Verse 1

Rap One thing, I don't know why. It does - n't e - ven wat - ter how abrd you try. Keep

Lead

Cmaj7(#11) D⁹(SUS4) Em⁹

Rap ___ that in mind; I de-signed this rhyme to ex - plain___ in due time all I know. Time is a val - u - ble thing; watch

Lead All I know.

G/D Cmaj7(#11) D⁹(SUS4)

Rap ___ it fly by as the pen du lum swings, Watch___ it count down to the end of the day; the clock ticks life a-way It's so un -

Lead It's so un -

Em D Cmaj7

Rap real Did-n't look out be-low; watch___ the time go right out___ the win-dow. Try'n'___ to hold on, d-did-n't e-ven know. I wast

Lead real

D Em **Pre-chorus** D

Rap - ed it all just to watch you go. I kept ev-'ry-thing in side_ and e-venthough I tried, it all fell a-part.

Lead To watch you go.

Cmaj7 D **Chorus** E⁵

Rap What it meant to me will e-ven-tual-ly be a mem-o - ry of a time when I tried so hard_

Lead I tried so hard_ and got so_ far

The above learning and teaching resources were prepared by field experts invited by the Education Bureau. Schools should make appropriate adjustments and apply them flexibly based on learning and teaching objectives and the actual needs of their students.

Guitar: In these sections, the guitar employs a clean tone, sustaining single high notes rather than full chords. It plays a four-bar figure which echoes the melodic material from the introduction, reusing several of the same pitches. This occasionally produces mild harmonic tension; for example, the note F[#] sounding over an E minor harmony creates an E minor ninth (Em⁹) color.

♩ = 106

E. Guitar Em D Cmaj7 D

new chords Em⁹ G/D Cmaj7(♯11) D⁹(sus4)

Guitar and bass work as a group, creating a solid pattern that is different from the chorus afterwards.

♩ = 106

Verse Em D Cmaj7 D

Electric Bass (5-strings)

Drum Set

Piano & Strings: The verse also incorporates strings and piano as harmonic layers. In the second half of the verse, the piano re-enters by restating the introductory line.

6.3.4. Chorus

After the hip-hop-influenced verse, the music shifts back to a hard rock style. The lead vocalist takes the dominant role, singing the chorus over a four-bar chord progression. All three chorus sections share the same musical material, including lyrics.

Chorus

E⁵ G⁵ D

I tried so hard_ and_ got so far_ but in the end_ it does-n't e-ven mat

C D⁵ E⁵ G⁵ D C

- ter. I had to fall_ to lose it_ all_ but in the end_ it does-n't e-ven mat - ter_

The guitar shifts to a distorted tone, playing sustained power chords. An **additional lead guitar line is overdubbed**, recalling the melodic figure first introduced in the verse.

The drums and bass also adopt a different rhythmic pattern, and the overall dynamic level increases significantly, emphasising the energetic character of the chorus.

♩ = 106

Chorus

Electric Bass (5-strings)

Drum Set

open hi-hat

E⁵ G⁵ D C D

6.3.5. Bridge

The bridge appears after the second chorus and typically functions as a contrasting section that builds tension before leading into the final chorus. In this song, the contrast occurs within the bridge itself.

The bridge is the same length as the chorus, and although the lyrics are repeated, they are set to a different melody and harmony.

	First half	Second Half
Dynamic	• Softer	• Stronger
Melody	• Lower register	• Higher register
Harmony	• Same as Verse	• Same as Chorus
Arrangement	• The piano restates the introductory motif with harmonic support • Bass mainly sustains longer notes with minimal embellishment • Ends with a brief moment of silence	• Dominated by distorted guitar, bass, and drums • Vocal delivery becomes more intense and adopts a raspy, high-energy rock vocal style • Functions as a transition into the final chorus

Bridge

1.

Em D Cmaj7 D

I've put my trust in you, pushed us far as I can go For all this,

Em D Cmaj7

there's on - ly one thing you should know.

2.

D Em G D C D

I've put my trust in you, pushed as far as I can go For all this,

Em G D C

there's on - ly one thing you should know. I tried so

Chorus

Both the first and second halves use the harmony and rhythmic patterns from the verse and chorus respectively:

♩ = 106

Bridge (1st half)

Em D Cmaj7 D

Electric Bass (5-strings)

Drum Set

♩ = 106

Bridge (2nd half)

Em G D C D

Electric Bass (5-strings)

Drum Set

open hi-hat

6.3.6. Outro

The chorus concludes with a sustained E minor chord, leading into the outro. The piano's signature line returns, transposed one octave lower and at a stronger dynamic level, accompanied by the loops from the intro. Alongside with the sustained band sound gradually fade out, bringing the song to an end.

7/ Muse, *New Born* (2001)

7.1. Background

New Born is a song by the British rock band Muse, released in 2001 as the opening track of their second studio album, *Origin of Symmetry*. The band consists of Matt Bellamy (vocals, guitar, and piano), Chris Wolstenholme (bass), and Dominic Howard (drums).

The song is notable for its striking contrast between the piano introduction and the powerful distorted guitar section that follows. This contrast reflects Muse's signature approach to rock music, where classical harmonic ideas and virtuosic instrumental performance are combined with heavy rock textures.

Lyrically, *New Born* explores themes of technological control and the loss of human individuality in modern society. The lyrics suggest a concern with how rapid technological development and consumer culture may shape human behavior and thinking.

Because of its dramatic structure, complex instrumental writing, and powerful performance style, *New Born* is widely considered one of Muse's defining early works and an important example of early 2000s rock music.

7.2. Instrumentation

Muse is a band consisting of three members, their music therefore generally follows this core band instrumentation. However, under the modern studio production, additional layers such as keyboards, effects, and overdubbed² textures can also be heard.

Instrumentation of *New Born* follows a typical rock band setting. The main instruments include:

7.2.1. Vocal

Matt Bellamy's vocal style moves between controlled melodic singing and a more intense, high-energy delivery. In the verse, the vocal line is relatively gentle and stays mostly in a lower register. As the music approaches the pre-chorus, the melody gradually rises in pitch and Bellamy begins to sing in falsetto. In the chorus, the vocal is delivered with a stronger tone and greater intensity, matching the increased energy of the band. Layers of backing vocals are also used to reinforce the texture, and the vocal phrase often ends on a high note.

² **Overdubbing** is a studio technique where additional performances are recorded over existing tracks to thicken the sonic texture.

♩ = 147

Verse 1

Link it to the world link it to you-self. Stretch it like a birth squeeze.

Pre-Chorus

When you've seen, seen, too much

Chorus

Des-try the spine - less show me it's real. Wast - ing our last chance

Ah
backing vocal

7.2.2. Piano

In many hard rock songs, piano is often used in the introduction or quieter passages, where its lighter timbre plays a contrast with distorted guitars.

In *New Born*, the piano is presented with a clear and articulate tone. Initially appearing in a high register, this clean texture stands in strong contrast to the heavy, distorted guitar riff that enters later in the song, creating a dramatic shift in timbre and intensity when the full band joins.

7.2.3. Guitar

Like most of the hard rock songs, distorted electric guitar is one of the dominant timbral elements. In this song, it reinforces the harmonic progression and performs different riffs across various sections. Although Muse has only one guitarist, multiple guitar layers are created in the studio through overdubbing, producing a thicker and more aggressive sound. For example, during the guitar solo, an additional repeating guitar pattern can be heard beneath the lead line.

♩ = 147
SOLO

Electric Guitar

Electric Guitar 2

Guitar riff also played in unison with the bass guitar — a common feature in hard rock, where both instruments work together to reinforce the main riff. For example, in the intro (around 1'24") guitar and bass play the same riff in octave apart.

♩ = 147
Intro

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

7.2.4. Bass

As well as doubling the guitar riff, the bass guitar supports the harmonic structure while locking closely with the drum patterns to form the rhythmic foundation of the band. Its tone is relatively heavy, reinforcing the overall intensity of the sound.

7.2.5. Drums

The drums provide a strong rhythmic drive throughout the song. As well as reinforcing the main riff, the drum kit makes prominent use of cymbal crashes to build intensity, contributing to the powerful and energetic character of the music. Different drumming patterns are also used across various sections of the song, reflecting the changes in the guitar riff.

♩ = 147
Intro

Bass Guitar

Drum Set

7.3. Structure and Harmony

7.3.1. Overview

The song contains typical sections of a hard rock song — an intro, verse, chorus, guitar solo, and outro. But, there are also some unconventional arrangements in this song.

An unconventional structure

The song opens with a piano introduction, followed by a verse and pre-chorus. However, the expected chorus does not arrive — instead, it is replaced by an extended instrumental break.

Throughout the introduction to the pre-chorus, there is no guitars; the piano is the primary instrument. The vocal carries a narrative feel, and cymbal crashes provide subtle punctuation. This section closes on a sustained dominant chord, resulting in an imperfect cadence.

The first instrumental break is launched by a distorted guitar riff, joined by the drums and bass guitar. From this point, the song follows a more conventional hard rock arrangement— verse, pre-chorus, chorus, and guitar solo.

After the solo, however, the song takes an unexpected turn — the first verse comes back. This is an unusual structural choice for a hard rock song. The song is then followed by the pre-chorus and chorus before the song moves into the outro.

Rather than drawing on material from the introduction, the outro revisits elements from the first instrumental break, maintaining the energy established in the final chorus through to the end of the song.

Intro	Verse1 Pre-Chorus	Music Break	Verse 2 Pre-Chorus	Chorus	Solo	Verse 1 Pre-Chorus	Chorus	Outro
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7.3.2. Intro

The song is in E minor and opens with a piano introduction. The piano performs a broken chord (arpeggiated) pattern in contrary motion between the left and right hands. The bass then joins, also outlining broken chords. Together, the piano and bass establish a steady, repeating pattern that supports and leads into the verse.

Harmonically, it is a repeated eight-bar chord progression, featuring an ostinato in the first four bars. The intro concludes on the dominant chord, creating a sense of anticipation before the next section.

♩ = 147
Intro

Em B/E Em B/E Em C

7 G/D B/D# 8va Em B/E Em

12 B/E Em C G/D B/D#

7.3.3. Verses 1 and Pre-chorus

The piano and bass continue the momentum from the introduction, providing both harmonic and rhythmic support throughout this section. Matt Bellamy sings in a soft tone; as the melody gradually moves into a higher register to the pre-chorus, he employs falsetto to reach the upper notes. The full drum kit has not yet entered — only the hi-hat is present, which subtly increases tension and suggests that the heavier rock texture is about to emerge.

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Towards the end of the pre-chorus, the music briefly slows down and pauses with a fermata, heightening anticipation and preparing the listener for the powerful entry of the full band in the following section.

♩ = 147
Verse 1

Em B/E Em B/E Em C G/D B/D#

Link it to the world link it to you-self. Stretch it like a birth squeeze. The

Em B/E Em B/E Em C G/D B/D#

love for what you hide, the bit-ter-ness in-side is grow-ing like the new-born When you've

Pre-Chorus

Em B/E Em B/E Em C G/D B/D#

seen, seen, too much, too

Em B/E Em B/E Em C rit. G/D B/D#

young, young, Soul-less is ev-'ry-where.

7.3.4. Music Break

A loud distorted guitar riff launches this section, with the bass and drums joining to reinforce it.

Music Break
♩ = 147

Guitar riff.

Guitar

Drum Set

C Bbdim B(sus4) B

With Distortion Chord

The full band enters, repeating the riff and creating a dense and powerful hard rock texture. A four-bar transitional passage then follows, introducing a new riff that leads smoothly into Verse 2. The drum pattern in this section places the snare drum on every beat, while the kick drum follows a syncopated pattern.

Guitar

Drum Set

Guitar riff.

7.3.5. Verse 2, Pre-Chorus and Chorus

The drum kit maintains its pattern as the music returns to the verse. This time, the verse is supported by the full band. The bass continues the broken chord pattern from Verse 1 and is octave-doubled by guitar 2, while the lead guitar introduces a new riff. The overall energy and intensity of the texture are lifted.

Verse 2 & Pre-Chorus

Lead Guitar

Guitar 2

Bass Guitar

Drum Set

open hi-hat

Em B/E Em B/E

Em C G/D B/D#

This is followed by the first appearance of the chorus in the song.

When the music reaches the chorus, the full band shifts into a half-time feel, driven primarily by the drums. In a half-time feel, the strong beat falls only on beat 1 and the weak beat falls on beat 3, giving the music a broader and more spacious quality. The guitar and bass articulate long and sustained chords, creating a heavier texture while directing the listener's attention to the lead vocals.

Chorus

Electric Guitar

Bass Guitar

Drum Set

Chords: Em, A⁵, D, G⁵, C, B^bdim, B(sus4), B

Backing vocals are also introduced in this section, adding an additional layer to the texture and contribute to the grand, epic quality of the chorus. The vocal melody moves into a higher register towards the end of the section, reaching the highest notes in the song and emphasising the emotional intensity of the chorus.

Chorus

Lead Vocal

Backing

Chords: Em, A⁵, D, G⁵, C, B^bdim, B(sus4), B, Em, A⁵, D, G⁵, C, B^bdim, B(sus4), B

Lyrics: Des-try the spine - less show me_ it's real. Wast - ing_ our last chance to come a-way just break the si - lence, 'cos I'm drift - ing_ a - way a - way from you, Ooh yeah.

Vocalizations: Ah, Ah, Ah

7.3.6. Solo

The long-awaited guitar solo begins after a four-bar transition characterised by feedback and noise effects. This is a common technique in rock guitar performance used to build anticipation and tension. Following this brief build-up, the solo begins in full.

The solo draws on sonic material from the introduction, developing the melodic contour first heard in the piano motif. While the original melody remains recognisable, it is expanded and rhythmically augmented, giving the solo a sense of both familiarity and development.

Intro

Piano

Guitar

Guitar Solo

A comparison on the intro and the solo:

Intro

Piano

Guitar

Guitar Solo

Beneath the lead guitar, a second guitar sustains the riff from the instrumental break, while the bass doubles this material. The drum kit maintains the same pattern established in the chorus, preserving the overall intensity and power of the texture.

Lead Guitar: Em =147, B/E , Em , B/E

Guitar 2

Bass Guitar

Drum Set: open hi-hat

7.3.7. Verse 1, Pre-Chorus and Chorus

After the guitar solo, the music does not return to the chorus. Instead, it moves back to the verse. This section uses the same musical material as Verse 2, with the drums, bass, and guitar 2 maintaining the overall energy, while the original guitar riff is absent. The riff returns in the pre-chorus, which then leads into the chorus, the chorus remaining identical to its previous appearance.

Verse 1: Em , B/E

Pre-Chorus: Em , B/E

Chorus: Em , B/E

Voice: Link it to the world, seen, way_, a - way_, from you, Ooh, yeah_

Lead Guitar

Guitar 2

Bass Guitar

Drum Set: open hi-hat

The vocals reach their highest level of intensity in this chorus, closing on the highest note of the song and leading directly into the outro.

Outro: C , Bdim , B(sus4) , B

Lead Vocal: way_, a - way_, from you, Ooh, yeah_

7.3.8. Outro

The outro revisits the riff and arrangement from the first instrumental break, repeated twice, reinforcing the main musical idea of the song. It concludes on the tonic chord with a long, sustained final note, providing a strong and harmonically stable ending.

Song Repertoires

1	<i>Long Tall Sally</i>	1956	Little Richard
2	<i>Johnny B. Goode</i>	1958	Chuck Berry
3	<i>You Really Got Me</i>	1964	The Kniks
4	<i>Sunshine of Your Love</i>	1967	Cream
5	<i>Across the Universe</i>	1969	Beatles
6	<i>Immigrant Song</i>	1970	Led Zeppelin
7	<i>Stairway to Heaven</i>	1971	Led Zeppelin
8	<i>Smoke on the Water</i>	1972	Deep Purple
9	<i>Dream On</i>	1973	Aerosmith
10	<i>Summertime Blues (Who live)</i>	1975	The Who
11	<i>Highway to Hell</i>	1979	AC/DC
12	<i>Back in Black</i>	1980	AC/DC
13	<i>Livin' on a Prayer</i>	1986	Bon Jovi
14	<i>You Give Love a Bad Name</i>	1986	Bon Jovi
15	<i>Sweet Child O' Mine</i>	1987	Gun N' Roses
16	<i>Every Rose Has Its Thorn</i>	1988	Poison
17	<i>November Rain</i>	1991	Gun N' Roses
18	<i>Remedy</i>	1992	The Black Browes
19	<i>Are You Gonna Go My Way</i>	1993	Lenny Kravitz
20	<i>Livin' on the Edge</i>	1993	Aerosmith
21	<i>My Hero</i>	1997	Foo Fighters
22	<i>It's My Life</i>	2000	Bon Jovi
23	<i>In the End</i>	2000	Linkin Park
24	<i>New Born</i>	2001	Muse
25	<i>Bring Me to Life</i>	2003	Evanescence
26	<i>Numb</i>	2003	Linkin Park
27	<i>Best of You</i>	2005	Foo Fighters
28	<i>Rock 'n' Roll Train</i>	2008	AC/DC
29	<i>Uprising</i>	2009	Muse
30	<i>Rock or Bust</i>	2014	AC/DC

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