

## Video Games Rock Tenn. State Campus Residences

Contributed by Courtney J. Whitaker and Gregory Brand Jr. - Black College Wire  
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Players can team up and form bands

Red Octane's latest offerings of the interactive music simulating video games, Guitar Hero III and Rock Band are rocking in dorms around TSU.

Guitar Hero and Guitar Hero II are games for the PlayStation II and Xbox 360 gaming consoles that use a guitar-shaped controller to play a variety of music from as early as the 1960s to the present as color-coded notes scroll towards the player.

Until the emergence of the Rock Band game, fans of the guitar were the only fiends set to benefit. With the newer of the two games, that fact has changed. Featuring a microphone and a set of computerized drums, up to four players can team up and form their own band.

"I was already a fan of (Guitar Hero III) but Rock Band is on a whole (new) level," said Ontario Beasley, a freshman undecided major from Chicago. "I plan on buying my own so me and my friends can all play."

The guitar has a trigger for strumming the notes and five colored buttons to act as frets for the scrolling notes. Players have to use both hands to achieve successful results in playing classic guitar songs and solos. The games also feature different settings, which include easy to expert in difficulty and modes of play that go from practicing to career.

The Guitar Hero series became a cultural phenomenon with the release of its first game in 2005. Its release marked a landmark for videogamers and music lovers alike. It had combined two seemingly unrelated pastimes and yielded a hugely popular result. To date it has spawned the "expansion" title Guitar Hero Encore: Rocks the 80s along with Guitar Hero II, Guitar Hero III: Legends of Rock and Rock Band.

"I believe Guitar Hero is an excellent game," said Cordaire Green, a sophomore business major from Memphis. "This game enables me to listen and play along with the popular rock songs. I love it, it helps me pass time in a very exciting way."

Band students are also fans of the game. The music and rhythms have to match up at the right moment. Some band students feel that since the game ties into music that the game could be beneficial.

"This game can make you a better musician," said Calvin Burkes, a sophomore music major from Memphis. "You can start off as nothing on the game, but with time and practice you can become a successful rock star."

"I advise all musicians to at least play this game once and decide whether it will help you with your music career," Burkes continued.

Despite the potential effects the game may have on an actual musician, the game has become one of the gaming world's most popular entities winning numerous honors with gaming critics.

"I had never been a rock music fan before playing the game," said Kristina King, a senior mass communications major from Houston. "I actually respect some of the musicians now because the game does a good job with the music. I like playing and not all of (the music) is screaming rock music either."

Featuring a collection of classic and current music and varying levels of difficulty, Red Octane's musical gaming choices are still gaining fans.

One potential downside is the cost connected with games themselves.

Guitar Hero requires the purchase of a guitar controller. The game itself averages around \$40 and the controller can set you back nearly \$40 as well. Players can cut this price down by purchasing them together for around \$60.

Rock Band is a little different. The game presents new equipment for the voice (the mic) and drums. Included with the game and one guitar controller, the game will drop \$145. The additional guitar needed for the full four-piece-band experience is separate. (Most players have one from Guitar Hero.)

"My boyfriend bought the (Guitar Hero III) we play." King said. I liked it so much I got him Rock Band so that we could play. It was worth the investment."

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Courtney J. Whitaker and Gregory Brand, Jr. wrote this article for The Meter, Tennessee State University's student newspaper.

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