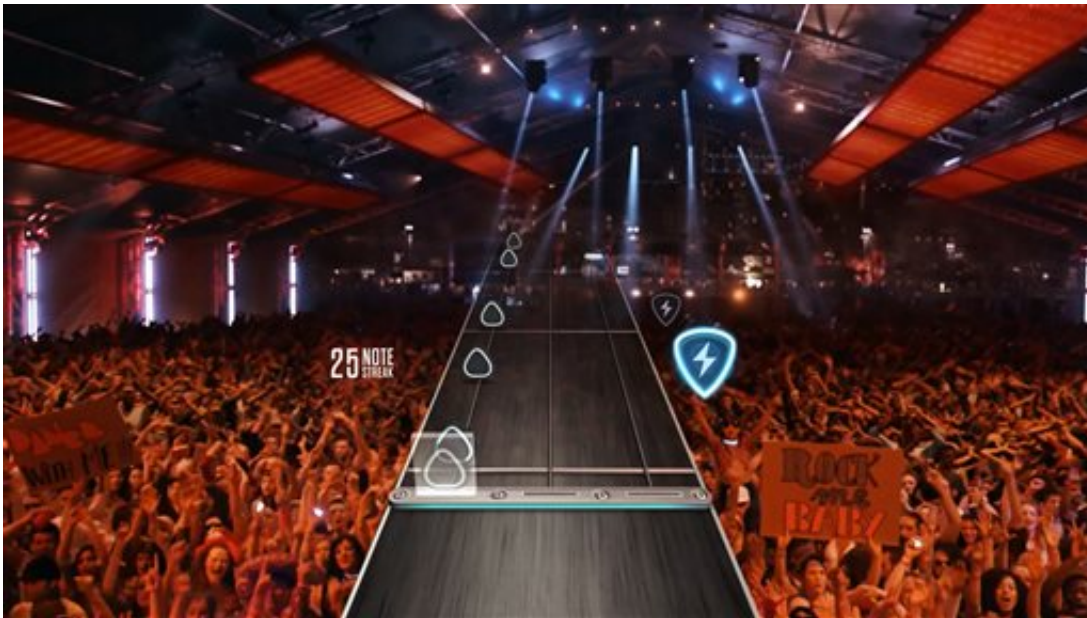


Review: Activision's 'Guitar Hero' reboot kicks out the jams

October 22 2015, by Lou Kesten



This video game image released by Activision shows a scene from "Guitar Hero Live." (Activision via AP)

I've been to dozens of rock concerts, and there are a few things I've always wondered: What's it like to perform in front of a stadium full of adoring fans? How much nerve does it take to stage-dive into a mosh pit? Why is there a guy wearing a panda costume backstage?

"Guitar Hero Live" (Activision, for the PlayStation 4, PS3, Xbox One, Xbox 360 and Wii U, \$99.99) tries to answer those questions by giving

you a first-person perspective of a big rock festival. You pace as roadies hand you your gear and groupies cheer you on. You bump fists with the drummer as you make your way to the stage. You bask in the glory as the audience chants your band's name.

Then the music starts and ... well, it's "Guitar Hero," and it's like it never went away. Notes slide down the screen, and your job is to press the matching buttons on a guitar-shaped controller.

The major change is in the controller itself. Instead of five colored buttons, the new ax has three buttons, each with three positions: black, white and both. On the "casual" level, only white notes show up, but the "expert" tracks mix up the button positions so aggressively that your fingers will get a strenuous workout. "Guitar Hero" veterans may find it challenging at first, but it starts to feel natural after just a few tunes.

There are two ways to play: "Live" and "TV." In the first, you join fake bands as they perform brief sets onstage. A grunge band covers Green Day, Pearl Jam and Soundgarden; a girl group recreates hits by Rihanna, Katy Perry and Avril Lavigne. It's all somewhat ridiculous—the neo-hippie Portland Cloud Orchestra is particularly cringe-inducing—but if you treat it like parody it's fitfully amusing.

"Guitar Hero TV" is more satisfying. Here, Activision and British developer FreeStyle Games have come up with something genuinely innovative: a 24-hour network of streaming music videos you can play along with at any time.

The list of 200-plus tracks leans heavily toward new bands, but there's impressive variety within. Metal bands like Mastodon and Killswitch Engage rub shoulders with critical darlings like The War on Drugs and TV on the Radio. Pop giants like One Direction and Pink hang out with up-and-comers like Courtney Barnett and The Orwells. And yes, a

handful of old-timers like Bob Dylan and ZZ Top show their grizzled faces.

You can also stream songs individually, spending tokens earned within the game for each play. "GH Live" is fairly generous with the gameplay tokens, though you can spend real money if you run out. But the micro-transactions aren't too intrusive, and you have access to a solid, diverse library of music with the promise of more to come. Major props to Activision and FreeStyle for coming up with a fresh approach to reviving the music game. Three stars out of four.

More information: www.guitarhero.com/

© 2015 The Associated Press. All rights reserved.

Citation: Review: Activision's 'Guitar Hero' reboot kicks out the jams (2015, October 22)
retrieved 2 June 2023 from <https://phys.org/news/2015-10-activision-guitar-hero-reboot.html>

This document is subject to copyright. Apart from any fair dealing for the purpose of private study or research, no part may be reproduced without the written permission. The content is provided for information purposes only.