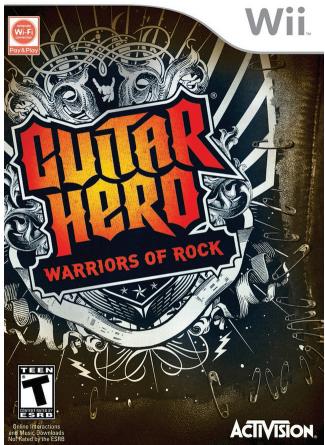


REVIEWS



Wii. GUITAR HERO: WARRIORS OF ROCK [Activision]

ROCK BAND 3 [Harmonix]

VIDEO GAMES

The music game genre has grown crowded quickly over the last few years, but the essential battle at its core remains that between the *Guitar Hero* and *Rock Band* franchises. The latest iteration of each demonstrates the very different ways in which the games have evolved. The *Guitar Hero* series is on its sixth major incarnation, not counting seemingly endless variants like *Guitar Hero: Aerosmith* and *DJ Hero*. *Warriors of Rock* is a significant departure from the franchise's traditional structure, couching its gameplay in a fantasy storyline that embraces cheesy heavy-metal mythology. The result is surprisingly enjoyable, adding some forward motion to the usual arc of the game while not reinventing the genre.

Rock Band 3, on the other hand, pointedly does aim to change the way these games are played, with the introduction of a "Pro" mode and new controllers intended to actually help users learn to play real instruments. For those who stick with the traditional gameplay, however, *Rock Band* remains *Rock Band*. The set list reflects the addition of a keyboard controller to the game's family of peripherals, which in itself offers a change of pace whether or not users actually spring for the new equipment. It remains to be seen whether *Guitar Hero: Warriors of Rock* or *Rock Band 3* can revive music gaming at a make-or-break moment when sales are in free-fall. But each at the very least does what it is supposed to do: allow us all vicarious rock stardom, at least for a little while. — CN

'Warriors of Rock' couches its gameplay in a fantasy storyline that embraces cheesy heavy-metal mythology. The result is surprisingly enjoyable.'

