

ROCKBAND[™] 3

So You Want To Review *Rock Band 3*...

“Stop Me If You Think You’ve Heard This One Before” – An Introduction

Hello Music gaming enthusiast!

You hold in your hands an early copy of *Rock Band 3*, the revolutionary new music game from Harmonix Music Systems. Pop the disc in your console and you’ll find innovative gameplay for casual party players, a killer campaign for the most hardcore career gamers and even core advancements for the rhythm-faithful. To make sure you don’t miss any of the changes, big or small, we’ve put together this handy walk-through!

“Here I Go Again” - Getting Started in *Rock Band 3*

If you have one available, grab a legacy *Rock Band* guitar (*Rock Band 2* or *The Beatles: Rock Band*) and boot up the game.

As you’ll see, one of the major changes in *Rock Band 3* is that our campaign is now persistent throughout the game and tied to your profile. So, after you watch the awesome opening cinematic, make sure you’re signed in so you can get all your saved goodness. Now, head to the main menu and let’s get started!

When you sign in for the first time, the game will prompt you to calibrate. Use the auto-calibration feature built into your guitar to get the ideal AV settings for your setup. If you don’t have a legacy *Rock Band* guitar with calibration sensor, follow the instructions for manual calibration instead. Now, head back to the main menu!

Now that you’re in the main menu of *Rock Band 3*, you’ll notice our new arcade-style matchmaking interface along the bottom of the screen, which we call the “Overshell”. If you press your start button, you can see that anyone signed in can adjust their instrument options, game modifiers (like No Fail and difficulty selection) and drop in or out from anywhere in the game, independent of the other bandmates!

“The Beautiful People” – Build Your Band!

Next, let's get your profile's band going. Hit the start button to call up your instrument's tab and select "Choose Character". Check out some of the awesome prefabs (including some favorites from previous *Rock Band* titles)! Then scroll up and select "Create a Character".

You're headed into our new *Rock Band 3* Character Creator, which has been completely overhauled!

Things to note:

- As you create your character's face, you'll now be able to fully customize their visage! For features like chin and cheekbones, you can now stretch and move the bone structure, allowing you to get the exact look you want for your rocker!
- Body type now allows you to add some pounds to your rocker without broadening them into a hulking linebacker!
- We've unlocked tons of clothing assets from the get go and done away with currency in the game. You'll now get more outfits and items by earning them in the goals system (more on that coming up).
- Don't forget to give your character an awesome instrument in addition to their outfit, hairstyle and ... you know ... face and stuff.

Now that we've got your rocker ready, let's assemble the rest of your band. Head to the main menu and select "Customize" and "Customize Your Band". From this menu, you should:

- Pick your "stand-in" characters. These bandmates will round out your band in your performances. You can also build more characters at this point if you're so inclined!
- Design your band logo! You can make the icon that will follow you through your career with any of our in-game art assets. Just pick one image or layer a custom image with our art creator.
- Last but not least, choose a band name. This is an important moment in your band's life (which you'll see next), so consider it carefully or use a name from our ridiculous "Band Name Generator"!

You've Got "The Look" – Art Style and Vignettes

As you picked your band's name, you triggered your first vignettes. These mini-movies, featuring your customized characters, pop up at crucial moments in your band's career and track your band members on their rise from street-rough punks to international superstars.

You can also see your band in the background of most *Rock Band 3* menus, whether you're selecting a trainer lesson, picking a song or just hanging in the main menu. As you adjust your characters' outfits, they'll change dynamically in all of these menus. Beyond that, as your band "levels up" to different tiers, these background loops will also change to different rock tropes. When you begin, the main menu features your crew walking down the street like badasses. As you play on, you'll notice them wandering on train tracks, loitering on a stoop, meandering through the desert and more. It's a small detail, but it connects you to the characters and their story in an insanely deep way.

Throughout the character customization process, you've probably noticed the leap forward for the *Rock Band* art style. The Art Team at Harmonix has overhauled the look and feel of *Rock Band 3*, keeping the epic "Arena Rock" feel, but adding a new lighting and shading system and a ton of spit and polish. You'll see these changes reflected in everything through the game, including menus, characters, venues and even gameplay.

"The Hardest Button to Button" – Goals in *Rock Band 3*

You may have noticed as you calibrated your system, named your band and created a character that you received fans via pop-up updates above your instrument. These updates are actually accomplishments from within our "Goals"-based career system! This system follows your profile through the game, even in areas like trainers, calibration and while playing in Quickplay!

Head to "Career", then pick "Goals Progress" to browse the goals in *Rock Band 3*!

Welcome to the *Rock Band 3* Goals Tracker! The Goals Tracker allows you to see the hundreds of goals available, including band- and instrument-specific paths that allow you to play through *Rock Band 3* however you choose! Play an instrument all the way through to perfection or focus on band-related goals until your groups are superstars!

As you browse through the different goals in the game, be sure to note that they range from simple (Name Your Band, 90 Percent a Song on Easy) to crazy ("Obsessive Compulsive" asks that you "hit every note in *Rock Band 3*")!

Beyond being a fun way to track progress through *Rock Band 3*, Goals are how you unlock character assets like instruments and clothing. Pan-game goals like "Get Five Stars on Every Song on Expert" are tracked as you play, so revisit the goals menu to check your progress as you rock!

And lastly, if you're a completionist, you can jump into any of these browseable goals. Just click on any goal and it will automatically jump you into a playlist of songs that will allow you to accomplish the goal in question!

"I Love Rock and Roll" - Sort Your Songs

Now, navigate back to the main menu and let's check out your music library. Select "Play Now" and "Choose Songs" to check out the new music library!

In addition to the unbelievable 83 songs on the disc, *Rock Band 3* also supports all downloadable content, as well as exported tracks from discs including *Rock Band*, *Rock Band 2*, *Green Day: Rock Band*, *LEGO: Rock Band* and track packs! With the addition of the *Rock Band Network*, *Rock Band 3* will support more than 2,000 songs on launch day!

But, before you spend way too much time scrolling through 2,000 songs just to get to a track by The Who, check out the new filtering system. Hit the back button on your controller to see all

your filtering options. You can toggle Options, including genre, song length and decade to cut your huge library down to just the type of songs you feel like playing!

Before you rock, head to the top of your song list to check out the new “Set List” features, which allow you to customize, name, save and share setlists and battles. Queue up your ultimate track list for a party, or challenge your friends to beat your score! And now, you can share these setlists and battles on RockBand.com, through email or through social networking sites like Facebook and Twitter!

“I Feel Good” - Time to Jump In and Play!

Alright, enough talk. Time to jump in and play. As you play along with any of the *Rock Band* content you have, tear your eyes away from the track to check out the amazing visuals on stage as your characters rock out!

When you finish your song, take a second to explore the new results screen. Tab down with the d-pad. Now, beneath the overall band score and player percentage, each player gets individual stars along with a ton of other stats! You can see your performance broken down by song section, review goals that you achieved and more. Now you can really know who stood out in your band’s five-star performance!

Head back to the song select screen. Now that you’ve finished a track, press the yellow button to see information about the track! See your best score to date, see what instruments you’ve tackled so far and more!

Before you move on to more music, hit the blue button to rate that track. You can use song ratings as a weighting system for your favorite songs! Song ratings also play into how frequently songs show up in random setlists and work with our new recommendation engine that will suggest other songs from the *Rock Band* catalog you might enjoy.

“In A Big Country” – Hit the Road for Road Challenges!

In between the nearly endless career of the Goals System and the immediate fun of Quickplay, *Rock Band 3* introduces a new way to play: Road Challenges. Road Challenges provide a one-night experience for a band, sending them out on the road with the chance to “beat *Rock Band*” for the first time. On the surface, Road Challenges are a great way to gather your regular *Rock Band* band together and have a night of fun.

Road Challenges track two gameplay mechanics – stars (the usual score-based stars out of five) and a second “challenge mechanic”. That challenge mechanic could be maintaining a certain streak or deploying overdrive a certain number of times, for example.

In each challenge, you’re trying to earn “spades” out of 10 – five for the number of stars you earn and five for your success in completing the challenge aspect. Depending on the length of the challenge, you’ll need a different number of spades to be rewarded with bronze, silver or gold upon completion!

Challenges range in length of time to play, but give one a shot, either solo or with friends!

“Break On Through” – Rock Band Pro

Beyond all of the redesigned flow, the new game mechanics and support for the existing legacy *Rock Band* gameplay outlined above, the amazing icing on the *Rock Band 3* cake comes in the form of *Rock Band Pro*. Harmonix has designed gameplay that allows you to develop real-world instrumental skills through the fun of gameplay – a first in any music video game. *Rock Band Pro* is a revolutionary step forward in gaming, arming an audience of millions with musical knowledge!

Vocals

Rock Band 3 brings the three-part harmonies pioneered in *The Beatles: Rock Band* to the core franchise for the first time. Whether you’re adding a shout-along vocal in “I Love Rock and Roll” or perfecting the intricate lines in “Good Vibrations (Live)”, singing along with others is the easiest way to get a *Rock Band* party going! Additionally, all songs exported from *Green Day: Rock Band* with multiple vocal parts will have functional harmonies in *Rock Band 3*! *Rock Band 3* is compatible with all *Rock Band* and *Guitar Hero* microphones released to date, as well as *Lips* and *Sing Star* mics (on their respective platforms).

Drums

Rock Band introduced drums in 2007, and a legion of gamers with real rhythm skills was born! In *Rock Band 3*, Harmonix takes the realism of *Rock Band* drums to new heights, featuring differentiated cymbal and tom gems. Drummers can add cymbals to their *Rock Band 2* or *The Beatles: Rock Band* drum set, play with an ION Drum Rocker, or use a compatible MIDI Drum Kit with the Mad Catz MIDI Pro Adapter. *Rock Band* (although not *Rock Band Pro* Drums) is also compatible with drum controllers from other music games.

Rock Band 3 also introduces the option for double-kick or hi-hat pedal functionality in freestyle sections of the game.

Because of the way *Rock Band* drum content is authored, *Rock Band 3* will update all existing songs to be compatible with Pro Drums automatically! So grab your sticks and get playing with more than 2,000 songs featuring Pro Drums!

Keyboards

The newest edition to the *Rock Band* family is an instrument for which fans have been clamoring since the launch of the first *Rock Band*: keyboards. The advent of keyboard gameplay opens the door to a new spectrum of music that Harmonix has previously left untouched, including classics like Queen’s “Bohemian Rhapsody”.

One thing that’s key to note: gamers with the new *Rock Band 3* Wireless Keyboard controller will be able to play in a variety of ways. In addition to the pitch-accurate “Pro Mode”, users can play any of the keyboard parts in legacy style five-lane “Keys” mode, denoted on the controller

from C-G with smaller color dots. Similarly, keyboardists can play any five-lane guitar or bass part on those 5 keys, opening gameplay from the back catalog of *Rock Band* without having to switch their controller.

But the keyboard in your hands isn't just five buttons; it's a fully-functional 25-key MIDI instrument tailored especially for gameplay with "Pro Keys". And better yet – Harmonix has worked with MadCatz to create a MIDI box that will allow most MIDI keyboards to play within the game.

Pro Keys gives you a fully scalable keyboard experience that begins with accessible and fun gameplay on Easy and ramps up to a note-accurate chart on Expert! You can jump right in and try Pro Keys in the context of gameplay – it's designed to be fun for anyone, regardless of experience. To get to higher difficulties, check out the tutorials. These lessons provide you with hours of gameplay and training, allowing you to get familiar with the new track, the different note shapes and the feel of the instrument.

Once you've gotten your feet wet, you can jump directly into songs. If you hit a snag, head back to the trainers and check out the "Learn A Song" trainers, which will allow you to slow down and practice sections of any keyboard song in *Rock Band 3*! And while "trainers" may sound like a cross between education and repetition, Harmonix designers have gone out of their way to make sure the experience is dripping with gameplay mechanics. Aspire to get 100 percent on a track, earn goals and generally rock out with amazing original backing tracks created by the Harmonix Audio team. You're not practicing scales in your bedroom; you're playing keyboards in a full band, even as you're getting familiar with the instrument!

One last note - players who have *Rock Band 3* but haven't yet bought the keyboard controller can play any of the five-lane "keys" parts on existing five-lane legacy *Rock Band* guitars or basses!

Pro Guitar

Grab your *Rock Band 3* Wireless Fender Mustang PRO-Guitar Controller and plunge into the world of real guitar and bass! In the most advanced innovation in *Rock Band 3*, Harmonix opens the door to real guitar and bass gameplay through the fun of a video game. For years, music games have drawn complaints about five-button "plastic guitar" gameplay being a waste of time when users could be "learning a real instrument". *Rock Band 3* sets out to provide all those gamers who have been inspired by guitar gameplay in Harmonix titles to cross the bridge into a real musical experience.

We urge you to start your Pro Guitar experience with the tutorials first. *Rock Band 3*'s Pro Guitar tutorials are quite possibly the most important and carefully crafted tutorials you'll play in any video game. Harmonix consulted with guitar educators and experienced guitarists to figure out the best way to introduce new players to the world of real guitar. *Rock Band 3*'s tutorials are always fun first, but they serve an essential purpose in understanding the massive

leap forward necessary to communicate chord and guitar notation on screen inside of *Rock Band 3*.

One of the most amazing features in the *Rock Band 3* Pro Guitar Trainers is “Note/Chord Help”. This toggleable option from within gameplay enables the game to intelligently pause playback and give you advice regarding finger placement, correct frets and strings, and more in an easy to understand interface. In the event that the stopping and starting is in the way of your advancement, simply hit the back button to disable this feature.

Rock Band 3 is the only video game on the market offering fully charted, real guitar parts on our expert difficulty, made by the most experienced and preeminent music game developer in the world, Harmonix. Welcome to the world of real rock.

“Killing Loneliness” - Have some friends over and PARTY!

With all the new gameplay modes, mechanics, instruments and options, it can be easy to forget that *Rock Band* is the most fun you can have with a group of friends. Needless to say, no review is complete without a full-on rock session with some of your friends, family or colleagues.

Harmonix has crafted game modes specifically for this scenario. Building off the drop-in/drop-out functionality found in the Overshell, Harmonix has pioneered the ability for up to seven players to jump in and play cooperatively in *Rock Band 3*, named “All Instruments Mode”. In this mode, a band can have three singers, one drummer, one guitarist, one bassist and one keyboardist. As always, they can play in any combination of Pro/non-Pro instruments on any difficulty, and No Fail Mode can definitely be up and rocking! To enable “All Instruments Mode”, simply disconnect the vocal controller, hit the start button on any other controller, and select “Options”. All Instruments Mode is the top available menu item.

Lastly, along with No Fail, drop-in/drop-out and All Instruments, Harmonix has added an all new “Party Shuffle” to keep you rocking! Select Party Shuffle from the top of the song select menu, and *Rock Band 3* will spit songs at your band configuration without any need to create a setlist or bounce back and forth between playing and navigating. Simply keep rocking and press skip to move past any song your band doesn’t want to play!

So before you write your review, strap instruments to your friends, double check no-fail is on, order a pizza and pick your favorites from the setlist! And don’t forget that, even as you play for fun with your friends in a karaoke way, your profile is accomplishing goals, gaining achievements and earning unlockables in the *Rock Band 3* persistent career!

“Free Bird” – Keep Playing and Exploring!

And with that, we leave you to bang around in the humongous world of *Rock Band 3*. This title has been in development for over two years, and is truly a game changer with respect to the music games genre. With the evergreen presence of *Rock Band* DLC and *Rock Band Network* content, support for existing instrument hardware (both *Rock Band* and third-party) and

revolutionary new innovations, *Rock Band 3* is an amazing value and a hell of a lot of fun. Get rocking, and we'll see you on stage!

Yours,
Harmonix Music Systems
"Musicians who make music games"