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Reuniting the Fab Four - in your living room



Photo courtesy of http://www.wired.com/images_blogs/underwire/2009/09/beatles_rockband.jpg

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To this day, Beatles music is some of the most popular and iconic music ever created. With hits like "Come Together", "Twist and Shout", and "Hello Goodbye", the Beatles have been a definitive influence on music in general, and the pop genre more specifically. However, their impact is about to expand. Starting September 9, 2009 (9/9/09), you can "come together" with your friends and family and play Harmonix's newest game in one of their most popular series, *The Beatles: Rock Band*.

With a similar layout to previous

Band allows up to 6 players on one console (more than other *Rock Bands* and most other games) at any time. There are 3 different kinds of instruments: Guitar (lead and bass), Vocals (one lead and 2 back-up/harmony parts), and Drums. Each instrument can be played on four difficulties: Easy, Medium, Hard, and Expert. As before, the lower parts are simpler and better suited for those new to the game. A new feature to *Beatles: RB* is the addition of an automatic No-fail Mode to Easy difficulty; any person who selects the Easy difficulty will automatically not be allowed to fail out of a song by playing poorly. This feature (which

selecting the option on the difficulty select screen) will make it much easier for beginners to enjoy the game without worrying about doing well.

Not only does the game offer a variety of instruments and difficulties, but there are many different game modes to allow the players to have a different experience every time they play. There are 3 different modes to play, each with their own sub-modes: Story mode, Quick-play, and Tutorial. In Story mode, there are 2 different ways to play, either follow the Beatles history and play the songs in the venues and order they were played in, or take on the chapter challenges and play

time. In Quick-play, there are the usual options to play by yourself or with friends, whether it's online or local co-op. Lastly, the Tutorial section. In this section, there are a few modes: actual tutorial (where the game shows you how to play), practice (where you can go to practice any song and select parts or speeds to practice at), and the drum lessons. As a drummer, this is probably the hardest part of the game; the beats in the 2 different sections (drum lessons and Beatles beats) are harder than most of the actual rhythms in the actual Beatles songs.

In general, *The Beatles: Rock Band* plays a lot smoother and cleaner than *Rock Band* or *Rock Band 2*; the overall quality of the music, sharpness of the graphics, and menu navigation seems to have improved tremendously since previous installments of the game. Not to mention that the first thing the game prompts you to do is to calibrate the game to fit your gaming console, minimizing the amount of wrongly played notes by lowering the time difference between when the notes appear on screen and when you play them.

Even if you're not a Beatles fan, it's hard not to admire the amount of time and work that Harmonix has put into this game; the addition of vocal harmonies, new game modes (and a challenging drum trainer), an easier way to access "No-fail mode", and a cleaner, smoother game. That said, if you totally despise The Beatles, or just don't like them, this game is not for you. The only music you'll find in this game is Beatles songs (hence the title). But if you're a Beatles fan or just like some of their songs, this game is a perfect addition to your game library. And after playing, don't be surprised if you start