

New Ontario Science Centre exhibit shows connection between science and rock music

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Alan Cross remembers what his first thought was when asked if he would put together an exhibit for the Ontario Science Centre focusing on the connection between science and rock music.

“They’re crazy,” said Cross, a Toronto radio personality and content developer for The Science of Rock’n’Roll, a new exhibit set to run through to Oct. 26 at the Don Mills Road and Eglinton Avenue science centre.

The exhibit, which opens to the public June 11, explores how advances in science and technology have revolutionized music, and how it’s made, listened to, experienced and shared starting from 1877 to the present.

Cross’ initial thought lasted all of 15 seconds, when he realized the history of rock music will be told in a way never done before.

“It made all the sense in the world,” he told Metroland Media Toronto during the June 5 media preview.

There was no such thing as portable music in the 1950s, as the 8-track player was first introduced in 1965, he said.

“There are so many cool stories that have been forgotten,” Cross said, adding he hasn’t got a clue where music will head in the future. “We are in a transition. We are moving from many decades of possessing music to being able to access music. We no longer need to have the physical product.”

The exhibit features seven areas made up of different interactive components, historical artifacts, informational walls and documentary videos.

- The Art of Rock sets the stage about the incalculable impact of rock’n’roll as an instigator and vehicle of social, political and cultural change. It’s about originality, self-expression and freedom of speech, but also about cars, groupies and having a good time on a Friday night. Rock would not exist in the form it does today without advances in science and technology.

- Decades of Rock showcases the history and evolution of rock from the 1950s to the present day using artifacts, photos and informational panels.

- Rock Composed features interactive displays that demonstrate how tone, pitch, key, rhythm, tempo, timbre, melody, hook, harmony and contour all come into play when composing rock music.

- The Tools of Rock lets visitors summon their inner rock star in five different interactive areas where they will learn about the history and the science behind how instruments work – guitars, keyboards, drums and amplifiers.

- Sound of Rock demonstrates how the sounds of rock are produced and how we perceive them. Visitors will learn how their brains are affected by rock music, and will discover the difference between mono versus all the various flavours of stereo and create their own riff on a reactable, an interactive music-making table.

- Recorded Music teaches visitors how recording studio technology affected the evolution of music. This area includes stories behind how music has been captured over the last 140 years, all told using video blog stations, slide shows, artifacts and a working recording booth.

- Careers in Rock highlights the numerous careers available in the music industry both on and off stage using informational panels and interactive displays.



Radio personality Alan Cross, left, Amir Salar Karami, Sohel Amiri and Xavier Melo belt out a tune at an interactive play-and-record stations during the Ontario Science Centre's new exhibition *The Science of Rock 'N' Roll* on Thursday.



Oak Ridges Public School student Henry Chemiavsky tries his hand at audio mixing David Bowie's 'Space Oddity' at the Ontario Science Centre's new exhibition *The Science of Rock 'N' Roll*. The exhibit runs June 11 to October 26.



Guests pull out their air guitars at the Ontario Science Centre's new exhibition *The Science of Rock 'N' Roll*, making its Canadian debut.

- Concert Experience immerses visitors into a virtual setting of a live concert using a 20-foot video wall, light show and crowd effects.

For an additional \$2 on top of admission price, visitors are able to capture video footage of their rock star moments to share using The Science of Rock'n'Roll backstage pass available online.

And of course, a rock'n'roll exhibit wouldn't be complete without some live rock'n'roll.

Juno-award winning band Arkells performed four songs during the media preview, two of which - 'Come To Light' and 'Never Thought That This Would Happen' - will be on their third studio album, titled High Noon, set for release Aug. 5.

"It's really a great exhibit," guitarist Michael DeAngelis told Metroland Media Toronto while checking out the exhibit with fellow band members. "It's a hands-on, real exhibit. The more you end up recording music, the more you understand science in sound in general."

In addition to the exhibit, the science centre will also host three ScienceROCKS! licensed events for those 19 years old and older.

The evenings will include live performances, presentations, a chance to explore the exhibit and watch Rolling Stones at the Max on the big screen.

The events will be held July 24, Aug. 21 and Sept. 18 from 7 p.m. to midnight.

Advance tickets are available for \$15 at www.ontariosciencecentre.ca/boxoffice/ or cost \$18 at the door.

For information on The Science of Rock'n'Roll, visit www.scienceofrock.com