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Union Station exhibit allows visitors to rock out 'The Science of Rock 'n' Roll' runs through May 12

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SPECIAL TO THE CAPITAL-JOURNAL

KANSAS CITY, Mo. — Have you ever dreamed of being a rock star? Then it's time to get your all-access pass to "The Science of Rock 'n' Roll" exhibit at Union Station in Kansas City, Mo.

Don't worry about what generation of rock music you enjoy. This exhibit has you covered.

"The Science of Rock 'n' Roll," which made its world premiere at Union Station, was created to highlight how the evolution of the style of music goes hand in hand with the technological developments of each rock 'n' roll era — from the 1950s through today.

However, this isn't your typical museum exhibition. While there are plenty of displays and memorabilia to view, what makes it different are the extensive interactive, hands-on components placed throughout its seven galleries.

"This exhibit offers a very interactive music experience," said Joy Torchia, director of strategic marketing at Union Station. "Visitors not only learn about this history of rock 'n' roll, but also the science and technology behind how the music is made. When it's all put together, you see how the music has driven technology."

Ever dreamed of playing a screaming guitar riff or beating out a killer drum solo? Well, you can give it a try. Do you like to sing? Then step into one of the vocal booths and imagine you're recording your latest album. Perhaps you see yourself as the next Quincy Jones mixing music to create a No. 1 hit. You can try that out, too, and record it.

Visitors are given an All-Access Pass, which allows them to download their recorded creations to share with friends and family via the [Internet](#) or email.

Torchia said older visitors enjoy the memorabilia and reading about the music they remember, while younger visitors like the interactive stations.

"The kids just love it because of the hand-on activities available," she said.

The hallway that leads to the exhibit is lined with posters and album covers. When visitors enter the first gallery, they are met by flashing lights suspended from metal rigging meant to look like a rock concert and music coming from hidden speakers. Lining the walkway are displays with memorabilia from each rock 'n' roll decade.

The next gallery features lighted tables where visitors can compose their own music by adding different tiles. The tables light up with the addition of a tile, which demonstrates the different elements of rock music, such as tone, pitch, key, rhythm, tempo, timbre, melody, hook, harmony and contour.

Move on to the Tools of Rock gallery, where visitors learn about the history and science behind guitars, keyboards, drums and amplifiers. This area has five learn-and-play stations where visitors can try out the different instruments and record their music creations.

The following galleries highlight how rock music is created and recorded, including an interactive DJ station and vocal recording booths; careers in the rock 'n' roll industry; and a huge video wall

and lighting meant to mimic a live rock concert.

“People love the vocal booth and hearing themselves sing,” Torchia said. “They also like playing the guitars and drums.”

Levi Adams, an Alaskan fisherman who spends his off-season traveling around the world, enjoyed the vocal booth the most. He and his friends created a fun mix of “Feliz Navidad” that blended into “I Feel Good.”

“This is an awesome experience,” Adams said. “Music is the essence of life. But be sure to come here with plenty of time to stay and engross yourself in the experience.”



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