

Van Halen, Patti Smith, R.E.M. Inducted to Hall of Fame

On March 12th, at the Waldorf Astoria in New York, the 22nd annual Rock and Roll Hall of Fame induction ceremony took place. Among the inductees were Van Halen, Patti Smith, and R.E.M..

Van Halen, quite possibly one of the most unique and immediately identifiable guitar-based bands of all time was honored. Eddie Van Halen's contribution to the guitar playing community can not be overstated – in addition to perfecting the two-handed tapping technique and giving us the “brown sound,” Eddie motivated more people to pick up the guitar than anyone in recent memory. Unfortunately, no one named Van Halen attended the ceremony.

From now until May 15, bands can sign up on the official website, where the voting of their fans will give them a shot at stardom.

Each stop of the tour will feature four different unsigned bands on the Ernie Ball stage, with the lucky four from each region being chosen by judges from a pool of the 50 most fan-nominated groups. These bands will all be performance judged by a group of Ernie Ball staff and sponsors, as well as by highly regarded musicians and entertainment industry professionals, with the top four nationwide earning the opportunity to play live before industry and record label executives.



In addition to the priceless exposure, the top four bands get a ton of rocking gear from Battle sponsors including Auralex, Krank Amps, DW Drums, Boss, Electro-Voice, Ernie Ball/Music Man, OLP Guitars, Taylor Guitars, Zildjian, M-Audio, and Remo.

**Get more info at
battleofthebands.com
and ernieball.com**

Patti Smith, the grand dame of New York's seminal '70s punk scene, always appreciated loud, striped-down rock 'n roll. Known as punk rock's poet laureate, Patti made it okay to be a literate rock 'n roller. She recalled her late husband, Fred "Sonic" Smith, as well as her late mother, during her acceptance speech, making it one of the evening's more touching moments.

Peter Buck, R.E.M.'s guitarist, broke new ground in 1981 with the band's first single, "Radio Free Europe." Floating over Mike Mill's driving bass, Buck's clean, chiming Rickenbacker sounded new, fresh and exciting, although it had more in common with The Byrds than anything new wave. The reunited band performed at the awards show with original drummer, Bill Berry, who left the band due to health issues in 1997.

Ernie Ball Gives Lucky Band Big Break

For nearly 200 unsigned bands, the chance of a lifetime is beginning now. Ernie Ball is hosting its 11th annual Battle of the Bands, to take place at the yearly summer festival tour, Vans Warped Tour.

Software Takes Learning on the Road

For busy business travelers/guitarists, learning guitar with software isn't always easy – hotel guests might not appreciate the presence of a Stratocaster in the business center. Fortunately for those busy folks, Rylee has come out with guitar learning software that is compatible with phones or PDAs equipped with Windows Mobile.

The Guitar Fretboard Addict v1.4 features learning games with graphics and flash cards. It works to train both fingers and ears with an ear-training mode that features real acoustic guitar sounds, rather than electronic pitches. The games allow the player to choose an appropriately challenging speed and users can choose to focus on specific strings or frets to conquer particularly troubling areas.

The program is also compatible with Windows XP, so it is just as useful at home as it is on the road. Rylee's Guitar Fretboard Addict v1.4 is \$14.99 and is available on their website, where you can also try it out for free.

You can load up your PDA at guitaraddict.net