Rock-It Science

Research rockers, real rock royalty and some scantily clad women assembled for a night of love and music

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Mar 5, 2009

If ever there was to be a slightly nerdy answer to Woodstock, then this past Tuesday night's linkurl:Rock-It Science;http://www.sensationandemotion.com/html/Rock-It_Science.html concert in New York City's Highline Ballroom was as close as we're going to get. The show featured four scientist-bands, and more than ten professional musicians whose performances were interspersed with a gaggle of frisky burlesque dancers. The concert was organized in part by New York University neuroscientist linkurl:Joseph LeDoux,;http://www.cns.nyu.edu/ledoux/ledoux_bio.htm whose band linkurl:The Amygdaloids;http://www.cns.nyu.edu/ledoux/amygdaloids/ warmed up the audience as the first science-band of the night. (Read more about LeDoux's work on memory and emotion linkurl:in our March issue.);http://www.the-scientist.com/2009/03/1/40/1/ The Amygdaloids were followed by linkurl:Pardis Sabeti,;http://sysbio.harvard.edu/csb/research/sabeti.html a Harvard University evolutionary biologist who fronts the band linkurl:Thousand Days.;http://thousanddays.com/ linkurl:Daniel Levitin,;http://ego.psych.mcgill.ca/levitin/academic.html McGill University neuroscientist and author of the bestselling book __This is Your Brain on Music__. also performed, and Columbia University neuroscientist and experimental musician linkurl:David Sulzer;http://www.sulzerlab.org/ led his band, linkurl:The Spinozas.;http://davesoldier.com/spinozas.html in the guise of his musical alter ego Dave Soldier.

"There are way more girls in bikinis than I thought there'd be at this event," said one audience member, as Anna Copa Cabanna played her xylophone and sang in a fringed two-piece costume. One security guard ducked in front of me to get a better view of Melissa Anne, a.k.a. the Hula-Hoop Harlot, gyrating with at least four hoops at once -- all in the name of science. The scientists were joined by well known musicians such as Dee Snider, of 80s hair band Twisted Sister, and Rufus Wainwright, who sent a ripple of laughter through the crowd when he announced before his first song, "I failed every science class I ever took." The proceeds from Rock-It Science went to linkurl:The Sensation and Emotion Network.;http://www.sensationandemotion.com/html/About_SENetwork.html a charity promoting research in sensory processing and emotion regulation that held its annual conference on Monday and Tuesday. "I'd wanted to do something like this for years," said LeDoux, whose lyrics incorporate aspects of his research -- what he calls his "day job." __Editor's Note (03/06/09): This article has been updated from a previous version.__
