

## Music-related memorabilia rocks

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March 4, 2007

On March 12, the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame will induct its 2007 class featuring a wide range of musical artists, including Van Halen, the Ronettes, R.E.M., Patti Smith, and the first rap inductee, Grandmaster Flash and the Furious Five.

To be eligible for selection, the artists must have issued their first single or album at least 25 years before they were nominated. That's a lot of road trips, reason enough to check for mementos of today's legends in those old concert tickets, posters, programs and autographs signed years ago at the stage door.

While no San Diego groups are in this year's class, San Diego has had its share of pop musicians who've made the charts. The Cascades' "Rhythm of the Rain" was the third largest selling record in the world in 1963. The group started out as the Thundernotes, writing and performing in a backyard studio in San Diego.

Gary Puckett was a psychology major at San Diego City College before he and his band changed their name to the Union Gap. Their "Young Girl" and "Lady Willpower" both went to No. 1 in 1968, the year the group outsold the Beatles.

And then there's Rosie Hamlin of National City. Rosie and the Originals, a group that sang on San Diego beaches, took "Angel Baby" to No. 5 in 1961.

### Musical Mecca

The Rock and Roll Hall of Fame and Museum is located on the shore of Lake Erie in downtown Cleveland. It opened in September 1995. A six-floor pyramid-shaped structure, it has audio and video kiosks, a myriad of costumes, instruments, posters, and rare recordings, and rock history exhibits.

There are other museums devoted to popular music, although not as well known: The Experience Music Project in Seattle; the Motown Historical Museum in Detroit; and the American Jazz Museum in Kansas City.

Despite efforts of music museum curators, there is plenty of rock and roll memorabilia available to collectors. Whether your musical preference is Tony Bennett, Harry James, Jimi Hendrix, James Brown or even the Teddy Bears ("To Know Him Is To Love Him"), there's an ample supply of material, usually obtained through auctions, if you are willing to pay the price.



Getty Images  
Prince rocked the Super Bowl last month at halftime. One of his outfits may fetch \$25,000 among collectors.

After Christina Aguilera sang “It’s a Man’s Man’s Man’s World” in tribute to the late James Brown at the Grammy Awards last month, Brown’s glittering red robe was brought out and left hanging as a silent sentinel on the microphone stand. The robe became a trademark of the singing legend, worn as he was escorted offstage after his powerful performances.

Many entertainers are associated with items of clothing, like John Lennon’s granny glasses, Michael Jackson’s sequined glove, Elton John’s spectacles, and Elvis Presley’s cape.

If you have an opportunity to collect rock and roll memorabilia clothing, be aware of a few general collecting principles. First, try to obtain a letter of authenticity, or LOA. Also, try to find out the origin and source of the item, commonly called the provenance.

And finally, be aware that the condition is very important. If the piece is stained or damaged, the item’s value will be dramatically affected. Don’t handle it too often.

However, I have to admit that when I acquired a Nehru jacket owned and worn by George Harrison I let everyone in the office try it on. The following will give you an idea of the approximate value of some rock and roll performers’ items. Keep in mind that most will increase in value, especially if there are new releases, or re-releases, by the entertainer, or if they are still touring.

Remember that value is determined by how much money people are willing to spend. Signed clothing will cost even more.

- James Brown: Stage outfit, \$12,000.
- Cher: Brown leather bomber jacket, \$1,000.
- Eric Clapton: Turquoise leather stage shoes, \$3,000.
- Marvin Gaye: Brown velvet stage jacket, \$2,100.
- Mick Jagger: Silk tie, \$1,500.
- John Lennon: Granny glasses, \$30,000-\$40,000.
- Stevie Nicks: Stage boots, \$2,000.
- Little Richard: Silk stage jacket with matching cape, \$5,000.
- Elvis Presley: Stage cape, \$18,000.
- Prince: Complete stage outfit, including coat, trousers, handkerchief and boots, \$25,000.
- Roy Orbison: Western-style cream suit, \$2,500.

Some collectors focus on autographs, musical instruments, posters, and records and albums rather than clothing. The most common way to acquire a rare autograph is through a dealer or an auction. Autographs can sometimes be acquired by an in-person request, or through mail correspondence with the performer. By acquiring an autograph in person you will have no doubt of its authenticity. With luck, you will be able to read the signature.

For more information:

- American Jazz Museum, [www.americanjazzmuseum.com](http://www.americanjazzmuseum.com)
- Delta Blues Museum, [www.deltabluesmuseum.org](http://www.deltabluesmuseum.org)
- The Experience Music Project [www.emplive.com](http://www.emplive.com)
- Motown Historical Museum [www.motownmuseum.com/](http://www.motownmuseum.com/)