This paper aims to interpret the transformations of the “guitar hero”, from the icon of popular culture to models of nostalgic self-design, meaning transformations from generally recognizable figure in the context of popular culture to mimetic patterns based in medium of contemporary technologies. The phrase “guitar hero”, in its basic meaning represents a specific phenomenon in popular culture and popular music of the second half of the twentieth century. Guitar hero is a performer with skills and appearance that transcends and transforms common patterns of guitar performances, thus creating a new and distinctive form of musical and performative statement. Seen in this way, a guitar hero is close to heroic models of antique and romanticism. On the other hand, contemporary products of cultural industries and the entertainment industry to some extent changed this basic meaning of the phrase “guitar hero”. Creation and popularization of video games like Guitar Hero or Rock Band, as well as the availability of high quality replicas of instruments of “original” guitar heroes, carried the meaning of this phrase more explicit in the field of consumerism, fetishism, and virtualization.

Guitar hero in its basic meaning undoubtedly belongs to the history of the twentieth century popular culture. However, his legacy is still very much present. Specific heritage of a guitar hero in contemporary popular culture lies primarily in the dissemination of the original model through the mechanisms of consumer society, and then in the mimetic patterns based in media of contemporary technology. Thanks to these characteristics, the phenomenon of guitar hero was transformed from icon of popular culture to nostalgic self-design over the original model. Whether it is a replica of instruments of guitar hero or empathy in virtual reality of video games as Guitar Hero or Rock Band, guitar hero heritage confirms its place in modern popular culture, despite the fact that the “sundown” of rock-guitar culture occurred in the last decades of the twentieth century. However, this transformation from icon of popular culture to model of nostalgic self-design is not without significance for understanding “heroic” component in the phenomenon of guitar hero. Described transformations of guitar hero put this phenomenon even closer to the ancient heroic model - its heroic character was confirmed after its death.