



Vicious Demons. Mighty Axes. Flaming Skulls.

These things adorn the covers of hundreds of Heavy Metal albums every year.

Heavy Metal. The very name itself drips with power, testosterone and hairspray. Warriors on the stage of history, wielding their axes and mics as they do battle for glory! Trusts are forged and betrayed, mighty empires rise and fall. Ultimately, the only truth worth living for is Metal.

Long of hair and tight of pants, you join the ranks of Metal in your quest for babes, booze and glory. Try to Make It Big and hunt down an elusive record contract.

These are the heroes of an age.

This is their story.



GREDIT WHERE IT'S DUE :

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Rich Stokes wrote this bloody book.

Paul Bourne did the layout and made the art happen.

Jon Hodgson created the cover and the logo. You can see more of his artwork by going to: www.jonhodgson.com

Joe Prince created Contenders, undoubtedly the best boxing RPG I've ever played. Umläut is loosely based on the rules of that great game and I owe Joe for letting me use it.

Scott Dorward and Andrew Kenrick are the editing ninjas. Any errors still in this book are probably where I changed things after they'd finished their pass. Sorry.

Frank Tarcikowski ran the Setting Design Challenge which got the whole thing going.

Nick Lamb wrote some crazy, but very cool, Monte Carlo code which proved that the game wasn't horribly broken.

Affluenza appear courtesy of Cletus Van Damme. You can read more about them at: www.myspace.com/affluenzamusic

Claire Stansfield, Greg Neil and Dave Challis suffered through a series of playtests.

Malcolm Craig, Andrew Kenrick, Gregor Hutton, Iain McAllister, Matt Machel, Neil Gow and Joe Prince are the Collective Endeavour. I would definitely not be publishing this game without their help and input.

Graham Walmsley, James Mullen, Scott Dorward, Janos Bornemisza and everyone else at the Spodley Grange playtest camp.

Morgan Davie, Stephen Hickey and Pearce Duncan playtested the game and proved that the text needed some TLC.

And by no means least, Vincent Gideon Warrican, Chris Gutteridge, Noman, Leon and everyone else who proofread, playtested or generally just commented on the game at some point. This project would definitely be a lot poorer without your input and I can't thank you enough.

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OUT



Umläut is a game that affectionately parodies the world of Heavy Metal music. If you've ever seen Spinal Tap or played Guitar Hero, you'll feel right at home here. The objective of the game is to become rich and famous, to revel in the glory of Metal, while avoiding the creative differences and infighting that destroy many bands of lesser mortals.

While the game has rules that help shape the outcome of the many conflicts that dog these musicians, it is important to bear one thing in mind while playing: it's not about winning. It's about creating the most entertaining story possible. If you approach this game with the attitude of "eyes on the prize, winning is all!" you'll probably enjoy yourself, but you're not really embracing the spirit in which the game is meant to be played. It's more like "Mock the Week" or "Just a Minute" in that playing is fun, but if you worry too much about who wins, you're probably missing the point a bit.

Players each take on the role of a Metal Band, struggling to pull themselves out of obscurity and onto the stage of history. They'll play Gigs, seeking the praise of the Audience and the Glory which accompanies it.

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This game is written for 3 or more players. We've found that it's ideal to have 4 Bands in play, although the game seems to work fine with 3 or 5 too. If you have more than 5 players though, a really fun way to play is to have players team up and control a Band between them. So a game with 7 players might have 4 Bands, 3 of them controlled by teams of 2 players and one controlled by the last player on his own.

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A typical game takes about 3 to 4 hours to play through from start to finish, but this can be varied depending on how much time you have.

For people familiar with them, here are the ways in which Umläut is different from a lot of role-playing games (RPGs):

There is no Game Master (GM).

Players do not take on the role of an individual person; instead, each player charts the history of an entire Band of Metal Warriors as they do battle for glory. If fact, you can play the game perfectly well with nobody ever playing any roles at all.

The game mechanics use playing cards instead of dice.

It really does Rock! Many games claim to rock, but these claims are false.

2: GAME TERMS

Umläut isn't a very complicated game, but it'll be a lot easier to learn how to play if I explain a few fairly simple things first. Pay attention: this stuff's important!

BAND:

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Each player controls the fate of a Metal Band. You'll create them at the start of the game and chart their progress as you play.

STATISTICS:

Every player-controlled Band has 4 Statistics, sometimes called Stats for short. These are Hope, Ego, Cash and Fanbase. There's a better explanation of what these mean later in this book, but for now you'll get the right idea if you think of them as follows:

- Be Hope is how happy your Band is
- **(b)** Ego is how angry they are
- Fanbase is how popular they are
- Cash is how much money and free time they have

PERFORMANCE TRAITS:

Every Band in the game has three Performance Traits. These are like the Statistics, but they relate directly and only to the Band's music. Again, there's a full explanation of these later, but a good overview is:

- Technique is how skilled the musicians are
 - Power is how loud the Band can play
 - Stagecraft is how good they look on stage

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FICTION:

This game tells the story of Metal Bands as they fight for their place on the stage of history. It's not a pre-written story like watching a film, but one you'll create as you play the game. While there are rules to determine the gist of what happens to the Bands, it's up to the players to fill in the details. You tell the story of your Bands, guided by the rules of the game. These rules refer to that story as the Fiction.

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Exactly how you tell that story is up to you. Some people like to play things out as if they were the characters in the story. Others prefer to summarise the events with varying degrees of detail. There's more about this later, but basically play this however you feel comfortable.

NARRATION:

This term comes up a lot in these rules, and I think it's best if I explain exactly what it means up front. Narrating means describing what's going on in the game's Fiction. When the rules say "Narrate the outcome of the Scene" it means that you should describe exactly what happens at the end of that Scene. The rules will also sometimes refer to Narration Rights. That's the power to Narrate. When someone has Narration Rights, they're the one Narrating; they get to decide what happens. Other people can suggest stuff; they can throw ideas about for what they think ought to happen, but it's the player who holds Narration Rights at any given moment who gets final say in exactly what happens.

Some people are used to RPGs with a GM, and in games like that Narration Rights are usually the sole domain of that GM. Because Umläut doesn't have a GM as such, that control flits from player to player throughout the game. A good way of thinking about it is that the player with Narration Rights at any given time is essentially the GM for that time.

ROCKING OUT:

Players in Umläut take turns Rocking Out. When you're Rocking Out, you get to do stuff and make decisions about what will happen to your Band in the Fiction. You get to tell part of the story. Sometimes it'll be unclear exactly what should happen to your Band, and then the rules will help you out.

The player who's Rocking Out at any time is sometimes called the Rocking Player.

When your turn is over, it's the turn of the player to your left to Rock Out next.

SCENES:

There are a lot of references to Scenes in this book. A Scene is a single situation, with location, people and usually some form of conflict. Every time it's a player's turn to Rock Out, they set a scene that advances their Band's story. Exactly how is discussed later.

CONFLICT:

This is a term you'll read a lot in these rules too. Conflict is when the outcome of something is uncertain. For example, if your Band wants to raise their profile, you can set a Scene in which they pull some crazy publicity stunt to increase their Fanbase. But it's not automatic: there's a good chance they'll fail to impress anyone and if that's the case, their Fanbase isn't going to increase. That's the Conflict: do you impress anyone with your shenanigans, or not?

Sometimes you'll be in a Conflict with another player and sometimes with the cruel world at large.

The rules determine the outcome of Conflicts, and how this works is explained later.

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RØADIE:

Each player has a Roadie. This will be the person sitting to your left. They'll help you out by playing the part of the opposition in any Scenes or Conflicts where you Band isn't directly up against another player's Band.

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Don't worry if that explanation isn't 100% clear right now; it'll make a lot more sense later on. For now though, all you need to know is that your Roadie is the player to your left.



3: A BRIMER ON METAL

For those of you not overly familiar with Heavy Metal (or Metal for short) it's a form of loud rock music played on guitars, drums, guitars, bass and guitars. Generally speaking, there will be a vocalist as well, and occasionally a keyboard player.

Metal is varied and takes many forms, but in the world of Umläut fits most clearly into these four categories:

CLASSIC METAL

The oldest of old school, Classic Metal uses clear vocals and varied themes backed up by heavy melodies, strong rhythms and tight axework. While Classic Metal originated in Great Britain in the 1970s, it's now played by bands from all over the world.

As the granddaddy of hard rock, Classic Metal gains the respect of all fans and is probably the most accessible to the 9-to-5ers.

Image: Jeans or leathers, T-shirts or shirts. Classic Metal bands probably have the most varied dress code, from biker leathers to faded denim jackets with the arms cut off.

Examples: Black Sabbath, Iron Maiden, Led Zeppelin.

THRASH METAL

Louder, faster and more aggressive than Classic Metal, Thrash tends to be a visceral experience. Lyrics tend to focus more on hate than love, war rather than peace and are often political or tragic in nature.

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Image: Jeans and T- or flannel shirts are popular.

Examples: Early Metallica, Megadeth, Anthrax.

GLAM METAL

An upbeat style characterised by anthemic choruses and lyrics almost exclusively focusing on girls, drinking and drug use.

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Image: Tight leather or spandex pants and skimpy vests or frilly shirts are the norm for Glam Metalers. While long hair is the norm for all Metal Warriors, for those who follow The Glam Path it is scripture, and outrageous dye-jobs, perms, highlights and lots of hairspray are a way of life. Many also wear make-up and in extreme cases men approach androgyny.

Examples: Bon Jovi, Poison, Mötley Crüe.

DEATH METAL

Originally popular in Finland and Norway, this recent addition to the World of Metal is characterised by a brutal aesthetic, raspy vocals and violent or dark lyrics focusing on death, Satan, darkness, death, mortality, devil worship, dying and death.

Image: Any clothes are fine for followers of The Path Of Death, as long as they're black. Black jeans, Black T-shirts and black leather pants are all de rigeur, as are long trenchcoats or hats. Many bands also make use of corpsepaint to intensify the band's image of foreboding evil.

Examples: Entombed, Cradle of Filth, Cannibal Corpse



4: BEFORE YOU START

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Before you start you'll need to bring the following together:

 A regular deck of playing cards (without jokers)
A copy of the Band Roster for each player, or some blank paper to keep track of things
A set of 4 Style Cards for each player
Some pencils
Counters for Cash and Glory (although you can just mark these down on the Band Roster if you prefer)
Some copies of the Cheat Sheet

To create Style Cards, you can photocopy the ones in the back of this book or download the PDF from umlautgame.com and print them out. Either print them onto card or onto paper and tuck them in the front of some of those deck protector sleeves.

You might also want:

- A loud stereo with a great many Metal tracks
- Beer
- Whisky

I'm not kidding about the beer, whisky and the stereo. The game's much more fun with those.

You'll also want to decide when and where the game is set. Unless you decide otherwise, the game is set in a timeless point in the history of the country or city you are playing in. You might also want to decide what types of Bands you want to allow in your game.

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Finally, you decide what will trigger the Endgame. By default, playing for 3 hours is a good length of game, but Chapter 11 presents some other interesting options.

Example: The players are sitting down for a game of Umläut. Everyone agrees that they don't really care when or where the game is set, so they leave that open at this point. As people narrate stuff into their Scenes, it will probably become apparent exactly where and when the game is set.

They decide that they're pretty comfortable with most types of Band. Dave says he has a weird Prog Rock Band in mind and Rich says he wants to play some wacky Japanese guys. Everyone thinks that's pretty cool, so they agree. Greg wants to play a Glam Band called "Pussy Whipped", which everyone thinks is funny. Andrew wants to play a hip-hop Band, but everyone thinks that's pushing things a bit too far for today. He settles on a Thrash Band and says he'll think of a name for them later.

It's decided that they will play for 3 hours and then play the endgame.



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5: ANATOMY OF METAL

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This section will give you an overview of how Bands are represented in the game.

A Band is defined by 4 Statistics and 3 Performance Traits. The 4 Statistics are as follow:

| ۲ | Норе |
|---|---------|
| 6 | Ego |
| ۵ | Fanbase |
| ۱ | Cash |

Hope is to be cherished. In the harsh world of Metal, confidence can be bruised and egos can be shredded in a second. Hope that the Band will Make It Big helps to focus a musician on the path to glory.

The Band relies on their collective *Ego* to drive them toward success, but it can also be a destructive force that can wreak havoc on the Band's members. Be careful with your Band's Ego: it's both a good thing and a bad one. The higher your Band's Ego, the more its members get on each other's nerves and the more likely they are to argue amongst themselves and split up.

Fanbase is a measure of the Band's popularity. It's an abstract indication of the number of fans and true believers who will turn up at gigs to see them and buy their records and merchandise.

Cash is a measure of the Band's material wealth and free time. Even Metal gods have to eat and pay rent, and time is limited once you take all the partying into account. Cash is spent to do various things during the game, and of all the Statistics and traits it's the one which will fluctuate most.

A Band also has the following Performance Traits:

| ۲ | Technique |
|---|------------|
| ۲ | Power |
| ۲ | Stagecraft |

Technique refers to the Band's ability to wield the axe, mic and drums that are the weapons of a true Metal Warrior. Essentially, it's how good the Band is at playing their instruments.

Power is what it's all about! It's a measure of the impact a Band makes on stage, their intensity and passion. Sometimes a high Power score is because of a driven, wild eyed frontman with an amazingly piercing voice, or it might just mean your Band owns a really loud PA system.

Stagecraft is the ability to focus the attention of the crowd on your performance. No matter how well you play that guitar, without good Stagecraft you're going to find yourself playing covers at birthday parties and Bar Mitzvahs. Trust me, nobody wants that. Good Stagecraft can make up for the odd dropped note because the audience will be too engrossed in the overall performance to notice.



5: CREATING BANDS

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Metal Bands usually have the following members: A lead guitar, a rhythm guitar, a bass guitar and a drummer. They also have a singer. Metal Bands do not generally have keyboard players, saxophonists or trumpeters. These are the instruments of the weak, and are rightly shunned by followers of the True Paths.

Hey, what do I know? Go ahead and create a Band with a banjo player and three flutists. See if I care.

There are four steps to Band creation:

- 1. Concept
- 2. Band Members
- 3. Beginning Stats
- 4. Beginning Performance Traits

CONCEPT

Which of the Paths of Metal does the Band follow? Are they a gruff Classic band, or a pretty-boy Glam outfit? Do they play grim Death Metal, or hard-nosed Thrash? There are rare Bands who straddle the lines and blend the Paths, but they are few.

Or, y'know, you could just make some crazy shit up and have your Band be like that. Like The Crimson Balls Of Eladriel, who are a Prog Rock band who base all their material on a series of fantasy novels about a bored elf king who used to throw grand banquets. Or Guitar: AWESOME!, a Japanese metal band who speak very little English, trying to make it big in the US. The standard Paths of Metal are great, but feel free to ignore them and do your own thing if you feel inspired.

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Your Band also needs a name which suits its image. This ought to be something powerful and appropriate, Pusikat VixXxen is probably a great name for a Glam band, and Graveyard Shift is probably a better suited to a Death Metal outfit.

If you are having difficulty coming up with a name, you might like to refer to the Random Band creation chart in Chapter 11 for inspiration.

Example: Chris decides to create a Death Metal Band. He's stuck for a name, so he scans the random band name chart. He spots "Doom" and decides that he'll call his Band "Doom Cow".

BAND MEMBERS

At the start of the game, only one member of the Band (usually the lead singer) needs to be named; you can always come up with names for the other members later. Feel free to name the whole Band right now if you feel like it, though.

Some Metal Warriors adopt stage names, especially those who follow the Path of Glam and the Path of Death. Feel free to have your Glam Metal singer called something like Jimmy Bullet or Roxxy Riff.

If you have difficulty coming up with names for your Metal Warriors, a good rule of thumb is this: Steal a name from a weapon. Dave Snubnose, Mike Rapier and Lars Zweihänder are all excellent names. Karl Saturdaynightspecial is probably pushing it though.

Example: Chris decides that the vocalist of Doom Cow is called Jürgen Behemoth and that the lead guitarist is called Jacen Kloak. He's feeling lazy, so he doesn't name the other members at this stage.

BEGINNING STATISTICS

Each player writes their Band's starting Ego, Hope, Cash and Fanbase on their Band Roster. Set each to 1, except Cash, which starts at zero.

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Example: Chris writes Doom Cow's Stats:

| Hope: 🕲 | Ego: 🕲 |
|---------|------------|
| Cash: | Fanbase: 🕲 |

PERFORMANCE TRAITS

Next, you can assign 7 points between your band's 3 Performance Traits. None of them can be less than 1 though, so set them all to one and then spend another 4 points between them.

Example: Chris assigns Doom Cow's performance Traits:

Technique: Image: Ima

Chris notes these on the Band Roster and carries on to the next step.

Your Metal Warriors are ready and the stage is set. Grab your axe and prepare to do battle, for the victors shall inherit the Throne of Steel!

READY TO ROCK!

Once everyone has finished creating their Bands, you're ready to start playing.



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7: STRUCTURE OF BLAY

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The overall structure of the game is simple: players take turns Rocking Out. When one player finishes Rocking Out, it's the turn of the player sitting to their left to Rock Out. Keep going, with each player taking numerous turns until you reach whatever condition you've chosen for the Endgame.

When it's your turn to Rock Out you'll do a number of things. Each of these will be covered in more detail later, but they come down to:

- 1. Choose a Scene type
- 2. Set a Scene
- **3. Resolve any Conflicts**
- 4. Determine Narration Rights
- 5. Narrate the outcome of the Scene
- 6. Make any required adjustments to your Band's Statistics

When you first start the game, choose which player will Rock Out first. It makes sense if this is the person who's most familiar with the game's rules. Normally, that's the person who owns the book or who's played the most times. If you can't decide, either the person who last went to a Metal concert starts, or you can cut cards.

CHOOSING A SCENE TYPE

When you Rock Out, the first thing you'll usually do is choose a Scene Type. There are 9 types of Scenes to choose from, and each type of scene offers different rewards and holds different risks. There's an explanation of exactly what you do in each scene in a moment, but here's a list of the different types of scenes:

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- Work Scenes
- Publicity Stunt Scenes
- Rehearsal Scenes
- Band Member Scenes
- Split Scenes
- Clash Scenes
- Promotion Scenes
- Open Scenes
- Gig Scenes

Sometimes it'll be obvious what type of scene you want to have for your Band and sometimes not so much. As a good rule of thumb, if it's not obvious what type of Scene you should have, a Rehearsal Scene is usually your best bet. If you can't afford a Rehearsal Scene because you don't have enough Cash, you probably ought to have a Work Scene or schedule a Gig with a Promotion Scene.

SETTING SCENES

Once you've chosen the type of Scene you want to play, you should start describing it. In doing this, you can use as much or as little detail as you like. Some people like to narrate scenes in detail and others prefer to be more abstract, summarising their scenes.

For example, one player might describe a scene like this: *I want a Rehearsal Scene to raise my Band's Technique. My Band hides away in someone's apartment and practise with their instruments.*

Another might say:

It's the inside of Jürgen's apartment and there are empty beer bottles everywhere. Jacen and Jürgen are slouched in chairs, Jacen with a guitar and Jürgen, with a harmonica in his mouth, frantically scribbling notes in a spiral bound pad. Jürgen pauses to lift his beer and takes a gulp, not realising he still has his harmonica clamped between his lips.



He releases a startled cough, burp and gasp followed by an unpleasant blast of gurgling harmonica notes and desperate wheezing until Jacen performs the Heimlich manoeuvre on him to dislodge the drowned instrument. Jacen decides that this makes an intriguing sound and samples it. Thus, Doom Cow's Technique score goes up from two to three, and they lose two Cash.

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Both of these approaches are fine. Different players and different groups feel more comfortable with different levels of detail in their scenes and descriptions. Some groups will want to "get into character" with the members of their Bands and role-play through scenes. Your group and the players in it should find a method they are comfortable with and be safe in the knowledge that as long as you're having fun, you're are "doing it right".

Another thing to remember is that even when it's not your Band's scene, you should be contributing whenever and however you feel like it. Suggest ideas for the current player's scene: venue ideas, names for other characters present, song titles, ways other Bands could be earning money, that kind of thing. Don't just sit on your hands waiting for your "turn": chip in your ideas!

RESOLVING CONFLICTS

Not all Scenes lead to a Conflict, but most of them do. This is where most of the meat of the rules comes in: they will tell you how to determine the outcome of these scenes.

Conflicts in Umläut are resolved by drawing cards from a regular deck of playing cards. You and your opponent each draw a hand of cards. You compare hands to see who has the most black cards (that is, Clubs or Spades). If you have more than your opponent, you have won the Scene and achieved whatever you set out to do. If they have more, you have lost and have failed. If you have the same number, whoever has the highest value single card wins. How many cards each of you draws in any given conflict depends on the type of Scene it occurs in, but it also depends on your Band's Statistics. For example, in a Clash scene, where two Bands argue and fight, each player draws a number of cards equal to their Band's current Ego statistic. If you're involved in a Clash Scene, and your Band has an Ego of 4, you'll be drawing 4 cards.

Some Scenes will put your Band into conflict with another player's Band, and other Scenes will see them in conflict against the world at large. When you conflict with another player's Band, that player is your opponent and any consequences which apply to your opponent are visited upon their Band. If your opponent is not another player's Band, your Roadie (that is, the player sitting to your left) is your opponent for this Scene.

Example: Chris is Rocking Out. He sets a Work Scene for his Band, and the player to his left will act as his opponent. In this case that's Andrew, because he chose to sit in the chair to the left of Chris. Andrew likes that chair; it's near the fridge. Whether Chris wins or loses the Work Scene makes no direct difference to Andrew. His Band will neither gain or lose anything in this conflict because they are not involved.

If Chris instead sets a Clash Scene with Andrew's Band, Andrew would still be Chris' opponent for the Conflict. This time though, because Andrew's Band are directly involved, they'll lose and gain points just like Chris' Band. In this case, Andrew's Band will gain a point of Fanbase if they win, or Ego if they lose.

So, in summary:

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- Both players draw a hand of cards
- The number of cards will depend on the type of Scene being played and the Stats of the Bands involved
- Players compare hands
 - The player with the most black cards is the winner, with the highest card breaking ties

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Some of you might have played other role-playing or storytelling games in which stakes are set for the outcome of a conflict. Things like "If I win, I win the fight but if I lose, the other guy does". In this game, there is no need to set stakes at all. The stakes are implicit in the mechanics of the game: win the conflict and you get some points of Hope/Cash/Fanbase, lose the conflict and you get something different. The outcome, exactly what happens, is decided by the player who wins the right to describe it.

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If that means nothing to you, then Rock On! It's like me saying "You can't go fly fishing in my lake" and you saying "That's cool, I was just here for the waterskiing!"

DETERMINING NARRATION RIGHTS

This is very important: whoever gets Narration Rights gets to Narrate the details of the outcome of the Conflict and describe the end of the Scene!

Finding out who has Narration Rights is really easy: it's the person with the highest card in their hand. Because this is Metal, it's Aces High. In the event of a tie, cards count in the same order they do in some versions of Poker: Spades, Hearts, Diamonds then Clubs. If you want to remember the order of the suits easily, it's reverse alphabetical order. That means the Ace of Spades is the highest card in the game. Well, duh, of course it is!

The thing is that in any scene the Narration Rights start in the hands of the player who's Rocking Out. They set the scene and have complete control up until the point of the Conflict. Then you draw the cards and that determines who has Narration Rights over the end of the Scene. It's very possible that the highest card is in the hand of the player who lost the Conflict. This means that even though they lost, they get to decide the details of exactly what happened.

NARRATING THE OUTCOME.

The player with the highest card Narrates the outcome of the scene. They get to describe exactly what happens. While the rules determine who gains what points, the exact outcome of the conflict is determined by whoever Narrates it.

For example, if you lose a Clash scene where another player's Band has got into a fight with your Band, your Band gains a point of Ego and their Band gains a point of Fanbase. The rules have determined this, and so it must be. But if you win Narration Rights over that scene, you get to decide and describe how those points are earned. You don't necessarily have to Narrate your Band losing the fight, but you do have to Narrate something that causes them to gain a point of Ego. You could Narrate that your Band wins the fight, but gets arrested for assault afterwards and a night brooding in the cells causes them to gain that point of Ego, while being splashed all over the news causes your rival to gain Fanbase. You've still lost the conflict even though you won the fight.

It's worth taking another second to explain this a bit further, because the idea that you can both win and lose at the same time is a tricky one to get your head around. Basically, the person with the most black cards gets what the "win" of the Conflict in rule terms, but exactly what happens in the Fiction is up to the player with the highest card. A lot of the time that might be the same person, but sometimes you'll win the scene's conflict and your opponent gets to decide how.

MAKING CHANGES TO STATISTICS

Any players whose Bands are involved in the Scene make any required changes to their Band's Statistics or Performance Traits. So a Band that has just had a Rehearsal Scene will record the loss of Cash and improvement to one of their Performance Traits, and Bands who've been in Clash Scenes will be adding to their Ego and/or Fanbase depending on how things went.

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Once all these changes are recorded, it's time to pass that mantle of Metal to the next player. It's their turn to Rock Out!



Here's a brief summary of the Scene Types, followed by a more indepth description of exactly how they work.

Work Scenes

Musicians need money to fund both Metal and partying. You can't always earn enough from just playing gigs, so members of your Band will often need to work in other fields to make ends meet.

Publicity Stunt Scenes

Want to drum up support for your Band? Pull some crazy publicity stunt and make people take notice of you.

Rehearsal Scenes

Every Band gets better with practise. Rehearsal Scenes can be used to improve your Band's Performance Traits.

Band Member Scenes

In these scenes you will spend time with the members of your Band. You can use these scenes to explore their off stage activities and generate Hope.

Split Scenes

Sometimes members of a Band decide they don't like the direction the Band is taking and threaten to leave unless changes are made. By framing a scene of this type, you may cause another player to lose a member of his Band.

Clash Scenes

Metal Warriors from different Bands often argue, fight and get into slagging matches with each other. To the victor, glory! The loser? A bruised ego or a black eye!

Promotion Scenes

Gigs need to be arranged in advance. If you select a Promotion Scene this turn, you arrange the details of a Gig to be played on your next turn.

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Open Scenes

If you are undecided as to what type of scene you want to set for your Band, you can start an open role-playing scene. This may evolve naturally into one of the other types of scenes.

Gig Scenes

This is where Bands actually play gigs and please the crowds. Gig Scenes take longer than the others, and have their own section and rules.

WORK SCENES

Everyone needs money. People need to eat, they need to pay rent and Metal Warriors also need to party and buy musical equipment. Anything your Band does off stage to generate income is a work scene. This can be whatever you can think of as long as it makes sense for your Band to be making money doing it.

You need to decide how much Cash you want your Band to earn for this work scene. The more Cash you try to earn, the more likely you are to have a bad time earning it. Bear in mind that the work your Band is doing needs to be comparable with the amount of Cash they will earn. You can narrate as many members of the Band working as you like; all of them or just one.

The maximum amount you can earn from a Work Scene is your current Ego score, plus one.

So if your Ego is 4, you can earn up to 5 Cash in a Work Scene.

Also make sure that what you're doing to earn Cash matches up with the amount you're trying to earn. You're not going to earn more than two or three Cash for a work scene if you're flipping burgers, but you might if you were promoted to restaurant manager. Be creative with your Work Scenes!

Conflict:

Rocking player draws: Ego.

Their Roadie draws: Cash the Rocking Player wants to earn.

Outcomes:

Win: Rocking player gains the Cash they wanted to earn.

Lose: Rocking player gains the Cash, and also gains a point of Ego.

Likely day jobs for Metal Warriors

Teaching guitar to kids Flipping burgers Construction Buying and selling used stuff Playing at private parties and birthdays Outright stealing Working in a music shop Warehouse operations Record store clerk Washing cars Selling blood

Pretty much anything else you can think of, as long as it's vaguely demeaning.

Example: Chris decides that Doom Cow need more Cash. He decides that 2 is a decent number to try for, since his Ego just went up to 3 last time he had a scene. He could try to earn up to 4 Cash, but he's trying to avoid gaining any more Ego right now.

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He narrates the scene:

"Jacen and Jürgen are working in the local Burger Lord. They're wearing hairnets and aprons and are standing near a bunch of kids with party hats on. Jacen has an electric guitar and a small amp. Jürgen is singing Happy Birthday in his usual Death Metal grunt."

Chris draws 3 cards because Doom Cow have 3 points of Ego. Greg, Chris' Roadie, draws 2 cards because Doom Cow are trying to earn 2 points of Cash.

Chris gets the King of Diamonds, the Four of Hearts and the Ten of Spades.

Greg gets the Six of Hearts and the King of Clubs.

That means the players have one black card each.

Both players have a King as their highest card. Fortunately for Chris, Diamonds beats Clubs, so Chris has the highest card. That breaks the tie in his favour, meaning that Chris earns 2 Cash for his Band without gaining any Ego.

Since he has the highest card, he also gets to narrate the outcome of the scene.

"The kids think this is the most awesome birthday entertainment ever!"

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PUBLICITY STUNT SCENES

Many Bands wish to increase their Fanbase with blatant grabs for media attention. This can make for great scenes as the Band tries allkinds of crazy stuff to get press coverage.

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These scenes are played out like most other scenes: describe the scene, and decide how much Cash to spend.

Remember though, that the more famous your band is, the more media attention they're going to need to increase their Fanbase. Putting a few fliers up on telephone poles isn't going to make much difference if you're already playing stadiums, but appearing on national TV might.

Conflict:

Rocking player draws: Cash spent.

Their Roadie draws: Rocking player's Fanbase.

Outcomes:

Win: Rocking player gains 1 Fanbase.

Lose: Rocking player gains 1 Fanbase, and gains 1 Ego.

Example Publicity Stunts:

Posting flyers Charity concerts Getting fans to get tattoos of the Band's logo Making a scene at a public event

REHEARSAL SCENES

Rehearsal Scenes involve the Band practising, jamming, buying new equipment or writing new songs.

Pay Cash equal to your Band's current rating in the Performance Trait you want to improve. You can narrate the scene however you wish and add one to that Trait. There's no conflict or chance at failure here, you automatically gain the point once you pay for it.

When narrating Rehearsal Scenes, players improving their Band's Power might be doing something as simple as acquiring more or bigger speakers. Improving Technique and Stagecraft might mean a jam session, practise or just buying better pickups or outfits.

Example: Doom Cow decides to spend their fat Burger Lord cash and Chris thinks it would be a good idea if they get better at playing. He narrates Jürgen and Jacen locking themselves in Jacen's apartment with a crate of beer each.

He crosses off 2 Cash and raises Doom Cow's Technique score from 2 to 3.

BAND MEMBER SCENES

These are scenes where members of your Band pursue Hope off the stage. Anything except improving Performance Traits that makes your Band happier, more comfortable or more likely to succeed is probably a Band Member Scene.

During these scenes you narrate one or more members of your Band doing something that improves their lot in life. It could be partying, dumping an annoying boyfriend, visiting a rehab clinic, meeting someone they idolise or pretty much anything which might increase the Band member's faith that everything's OK and they are going to Make It Big.


But everything has a price, and Hope's price is Cash. You need to spend Cash to have any chance of succeeding at what you're trying to do.

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Reasons Band members might need money:

Money spent in these scenes is spent to make that member's life easier and freeing them up to spend more time on Metal. Paying for a babysitter, helping them to move to a better apartment, booze, drugs, and publicity photographs all cost money.

First, you decide how much Cash you are going to spend on this scene. The more Cash you spend, the more likely you are to succeed. Again, bear in mind the magnitude of what your Band is doing versus the amount of Cash you are spending. Obviously it doesn't make sense that buying a bunch of flowers for someone's girlfriend would cost 9 Cash, but filling her house with them might do!

Conflict:

Rocking player draws: Cash Spent.

Their Roadie draws: Rocking Player's Band's current Ego.

Outcomes:

Win: Rocking player's Band gains 1 Hope.

Lose: Rocking player's Band gains 1 Ego.

Example: Chris decides to run a Band Member Scene in which Jacen Kloak, his Band's lead guitarist, goes partying. He then narrates the scene and spends 2 Cash on booze and drugs. This gives him 2 cards in the scene.

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Andrew is sitting to his left and therefore gets to draw Doom Cow's Ego in cards against Chris. In this case that's two cards.

Andrew gets more blacks than Chris. Chris does not gain any Hope instead gains a point of Ego!

Andrew has the highest card and wins narration.

He narrates Jacen throwing up and depressed about how the Band is going. Chris adds a point of Ego to Doom Cow's sheet.

SPLIT SCENES

Sometimes members of a Band don't get along and threaten to leave. Split Scenes are unique because they are the only time you can set a scene purely for members of another player's Band. By setting a scene of this type you will force another player to scramble to keep from losing a member of his Band! Obviously this only applies to bands with huge Egos:

Only a band with an Ego of 4 or more points higher than their Hope can be targeted for a Split Scene.

Pick a member of the target Band. This has to be someone who's been named, so you can't target a Band's un-named drummer for example. You can set the scene however you like, but you should discuss exactly what's going on with the target player. Work together to make sure it fits in with the way they've established their Band Members behaving.

What if your opponent hasn't bothered to name enough band members for you to target someone? Simple; either target the one band member they have named, or make up a name for another member of their Band! This is the one time you can directly name a member of another player's Band, which ought to act as a decent incentive to players to pull their finger out and name their Band Members!



Draw cards equal to the target Band's Ego. The target player then draws cards equal to his Band's Hope, plus one card for every point of Cash he spends. He can spend a maximum of his Band's Hope, effectively doubling the number of cards he draws. He must decide how much Cash to spend before drawing any cards.

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The loss of a member is a traumatic experience for a Band. They lose cohesion and need to either replace the missing member or alter their style to make up for it. This is reflected by them losing 2 points of Performance Traits immediately. They lose them one at a time, from their highest Trait. If two or more traits are tied for highest, the target player may choose which trait to lower a point from.

There is an up-side to this loss though: with the troublesome Band Member out of the picture things calm down, meaning the target band also loses 2 points of Ego if they lose a member.

And remember, it's up the player with the highest card exactly what happens when the Band Member leaves.

Conflict:

Rocking player draws: Target player's Band's Ego.

Target player draws: Target player's Band's Hope + Cash spent by the Target player.

Outcomes:

Rocking Player Wins: Target Member leaves Band. Target Band loses 2 points of Performance Traits and 2 points of Ego.

Target Player Wins: Target Member stays with Band.

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Example: It's Dave's turn to set a scene and he decides that Chris is pulling too far into the lead. He initiates a Split Scene targeting Chris' Band, Doom Cow.

Dave looks at Chris' Band Roster. He sees that Jacen Kloak is the Band's guitarist. Last time Dave's Band, Hideous Meatgrinder, played against Doom Cow, their 6 Technique made beating them nearly impossible. Reducing that will make them easier to beat in future Gigs.

Dave sets the scene: "Jacen and Jürgen are in the studio after the band have recorded a demo tape. Jürgen's just cut most of Jacen's 3 minute guitar solo from the middle of My Sundered Terrier and Jacen is NOT happy about it! He threatens to leave the Band if Jürgen doesn't put it back exactly as it was recorded. But Jürgen's been told by the guy at KDETH Radio that the demo track has to come in under 5 minutes or it won't get played on the Weekend Widdly Widdly Wah Wah Show"

Doom Cow currently have 8 Ego and 4 Hope, so Dave draws 8 cards and Chris draws 4.

With a Hope of 4, Chris can only spend a maximum of 4 Cash on extra cards. Chris knows he can't really afford to lose Jacen, so he throws in the maximum of 4 Cash. This lets him draw another 4 cards, for a total of 8.

Dave gets 5 Black cards, and Chris gets 4. Jacen leaves the band!

Chris looks at his Performance Traits: Doom Cow's Technique of 6 is the highest, so he reduces that by one point first. Now both his Technique and Power are tied at 5 points each. This means Chris can choose which one to lose a point from. He decides to lose a point from Power, reducing that to 4.

Finally, with Jacen gone, things are more harmonious for the remaining Doom Cow members. Their Ego is reduced by 2 points, going from 8 to 6.



When a member leaves your Band, you have the choice of exactly how you deal with it in terms of the game's Fiction. Sometimes, your band will re-arrange and take up the slack. For example, if your Rhythm Guitarist leaves, you could have your Singer pick up that duty along with singing. Usually though, you'll get a new musician to fill in the gap and replace the person who's left.

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There's no mechanics for this. Just decide who the new person is and add them to your Band Roster whenever you feel like it. If you like, this can make a great Band Member or Rehearsal scene though, as they find the perfect person through an audition process.

Nothing outside of the Fiction prevents the member from returning to the Band later. Just narrate them returning. You don't gain the Performance Traits back, but neither do you regain those two points of Ego.



CLASH SCENES

Bands don't always get along with their rivals. Some Bands outright hate each other. A Clash Scene is one in which members of one Band get into a confrontation, argue or just plain fight with members of another Band. The player Rocking Out decides who their Band are clashing with. This means you can Clash with any other player's Band at any time and there's nothing they can do to prevent it.

Conflict:

Rocking player draws: Rocking player's Band's Ego.

Target player draws: Target player's Band's Ego.

Outcomes:

Rocking player wins: Target Band gains 1 Ego and Band Rocking Out gains 1 Fanbase.

Target player wins: Band Rocking Out gains 1 Ego and Target Band gains 1 Fanbase.

Example: Things have been brewing a bit between the Bands, and Chris sets a Clash Scene in which he has Doom Cow start talking smack about DethMerchant on their Myspace page.

Chris draws 6 cards since Doom Cow's Ego is 6. Rich draws 4 cards because DethMerchant only have 4 Ego at the moment. Unfortunately for Chris, Rich gets more black cards than him. On the plus side though, Chris has the highest card and gets to describe the outcome of the scene. He describes a number of Doom Cow's fans logging on to DethMerchant's website to see what all the fuss is about, downloading a couple of MP3s and deciding that, actually, DethMerchant are pretty good.

+1 Fanbase for DethMerchant and +1 Ego for Doom Cow.



Clash scenes always involve other player's Bands. Clashing with anyone else (your family, the cops, David Hasslehoff) would be another type of scene altogether. Wailing on The Hoff might make your Band happy and could make for a pretty good Band Member Scene.

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PROMOTION SCENES

Gigs need arranging, promoting and advertising. A Promotion Scene is where players schedule a Gig for their Band.

Every Gig is played between two Bands, and the Band that impresses the crowd the most and gets the most Glory gains the most fans. When you arrange a Gig for your Band, you need to decide which other player's Band you'll be playing against.

You can't schedule a Gig against a Band that already has a Gig booked. Bands can never have more than one date booked at a time! The hordes of Metal are fickle like that.

Bands get paid for playing Gigs, but it's really not all that much. More on that in the Gigs section later.

Example: Chris is Rocking Out and he sets a Promotion Scene for Doom Cow where he arranges a Gig. He decides that Flaming Sin look like a weak target, and arranges to have a Gig Scene with them.

Your next Scene will be at the Gig. This means the Band you're playing with will be able to prepare for the challenge with their Scene!

PLACES TO HAVE GIGS

While there are an infinite number of possible clubs, pubs and venues. You can just make them up as you need them, but here are a few to get you started.

Necronominightclub

Originally opened by an English aristocrat back in the 1930s, the Necronominightclub is a popular venue for Death Metal bands and their fans.

The Dungeon

Badly-painted club catering for Classic Metal fans. Decorated in the theme of a medieval dungeon. Cheap beer makes the crowds rowdy, so they can either be very forgiving or very ugly...

S'tan's

Originally called "Stan's", the quake of '78 cracked the club's sign and left it looking like it was called SAtan's. That attracted the Death Metal crowd and the owner had the foresight to cash in on that, regularly booking Death Metal acts.

The Oily Chain

Ratty-looking dive popular with bikers and other Classic Metal fans. The food here is surprisingly good, although the staff are often surly and aggressive.

The Enormodome

Originally built as a stadium for some kind of sport, the Enormodome was used so often for rock concerts during the 70s that the maintenance crew lost the goals, baskets and stumps. It's the biggest venue in town, so only the most popular bands get to play there.

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The Meat Market

This is the city's premier spot for Glam acts to play. Nothing quite beats the decor and neon here to get the hairspray and spandex crowd gyrating. me of meter

The Forge

Thrash is the order of the day here. The whole place has a hardcore chrome-and-charcoal appearance and recently lost its liquor license. That means people bring their own booze, and that means they drink WAY more than they ever did before...

Machine's Playground

A top quality venue. The expensive cover charge gives the owners plenty of budget for expensive pyro shows and a really awesome light rig. Shows here are the stuff of legend and most Metal Warriors would kill (or at least give someone a really nasty wedgie) to play a Gig here.

Desolation Pier

Built into an old pier on the coast, this club boasts some of the most popular Thrash Gigs in the city.

PEOPLE WHO ORGANISE GIGS

Again, make up the characters who promote these Gigs as you need them. Here are a few to give you some ideas.

Weasel's Records

Weasel's has been a fixture in the city since as long ago as anyone can remember. Weasel has graduated from selling old records and tapes to promoting Gigs and publicising new Bands.

"Flash" Jenkins

This guy is new in town and seems to be organising lots of Glam Gigs. Most people think he's using them as a front for exclusive drug-fuelled parties, but really Flash's just in it for the girls.

"Hardcore" Jim Bullman

British metal legend, Hardcore Bullman set up Gigs all over the city. He's particularly fond of Classic Metal, but there's money to be made with all kinds of metal. He'll just as often set up a Death, Thrash or Glam Gig.

OPEN SCENES

Sometimes it's not obvious exactly what type of scene you want to have for your Band when you're Rocking Out. At these times, just start describing and playing out a scene. Let the scene run its course and you'll probably find that it develops quite naturally into one of the other types of scenes.

If it doesn't, try to end the scene after a short while, especially if it's not leading to something interesting.

This is a prime example of when other players should contribute. Suggest ways in which the Open Scene could go which might lead to it evolving into one of the other scene types. Remember though that it's whoever's Rocking Out who has ultimate control over the scene. Try to suggest and not command.

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A Gig is an extended conflict between two Bands, where they throw down on the stage and Metal Mayhem ensues.

Any players whose Bands are not involved in the Gig take the part of the audience. While they don't actually have any rules to follow while the Gig is happening, they should feel free to toss ideas into the mix for the players playing the Gig to use.

At the start of a Gig, make sure both players have a set of Style Cards. The player whose band has the lowest Ego score at the start of the Gig removes the Showboating style card from his hand: the Showboating style won't be available to him for this Gig. If both Bands have the same Ego score, both players keep their Showboating cards.

Example: Doom Cow are playing a Gig with Flaming Sin at The Forge.

Chris will be controlling Doom Cow, because they're his Band. Andrew will be controlling Flaming Sin since they're his. Rich and Greg will be the Audience for this Gig, because they aren't controlling either of the Band involved.

Comparing Ego scores, Flaming Sin have 3 and Doom Cow have 5. Therefore, only Doom Cow include the Showboating card in their hand.



Summary of How Gigs Are Played:

Gigs are broken down into three rounds, representing the intro, middleand finale of the Gig. Each round is resolved in the following steps:

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- 1. Choose Styles in secret
- 2. Check to see who impresses the audience
- 3. Check to see how much the audience are impressed
- 4. Narrate the outcome

After the third (finale) round the Gig is over and the Band who earned the most Glory is victorious.

1) Choosing Styles

At the start of each round, both players secretly select which of the available musical styles they are going to adopt for that part of the Gig.

Face Melter! (aggressive) Poetry 1 - Shred 5

Solid Performance (balanced)

Poetry 3 - Shred 3

Ballad (lyrical) Poetry 4 - Shred 1

Showboating (shock tactics) Poetry 4 - Shred 4

Place the chosen card face down in front of you when you're ready.

Example: Chris and Andrew both choose Style Cards from their hand in secret.

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They reveal them - Chris has chosen a Solid Performance and Andrew has chosen a Ballad.

Chris describes Doom Cow laying down some chugging guitar licks as they kick the gig off in loud style.

Andrew describes the touching ballad, "Love My Meaty Goodness", which Flaming Sin open with.

These two Bands do not actually both play at the same time. The support act actually plays first and is off stage before the headliner appears, but the rounds are resolved simultaneously to increase the tension.

Think of it this way: You're actually deciding which Band leaves the audience with the best impression of them. So the conflict really takes place in the hearts and minds of the audience in the bar afterwards, on their way home and chatting to friends at work the next day. They compare one Band to another side-by-side, and decide who they liked best.

2) Attention check

The Attention check is made to see who has captured the audience's imagination during this round. The winner of this check is the Band the audience pays attention to this time around.

Each Band draws a number of cards equal to the Poetry score of the style they chose for the Song, plus their Band's current Technique score. As usual, black cards score successes and ties go to the highest single card. The winner dominates the audience and will make an Impression Check for this round. They've played better during this part of the Gig, and impress the audience.



Example: The Attention Check is made. Doom Cow are drawing 5 cards (3 Poetry for Solid Performance + 2 Technique) and Flaming Sin draw 6 (4 Poetry for a Ballad + 2 Technique).

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Doom Cow gets 4 successes and Flaming Sin gets only 3. So Doom Cow makes an impression on the crowd and Flaming Sin do not.

Keep all the cards face up on the table! Don't re-shuffle until the end of the Song! This is because the player with the highest card gets to narrate the outcome of the Song, and that's the highest card they play throughout all the phases of the Song. So keep them where they are!

3) Impression Check

The player who won the Attention Check now makes an Impression Check by drawing a number of cards equal to their chosen Style's Shred value, plus their Band's Power trait. The number of black cards they have in how much of an impression they've made on the crowd.

Their opponent draws a number of cards equal to their own Band's Stagecraft.

The player who won the Attention Check earns a number of points of Glory equal to the the number of black cards they got in their Shred + Power hand, minus the number their opponent got from their Stagecraft hand.

If you earn 5 or more Glory for one round, you impress the audience so much that the opposing Band is booed off immediately. You automatically win the Gig!

Example: To determine how impressed the crowd are by this performance, Doom Cow now make their Impression Check. They draw 6 cards (3 for the Shred value of a Solid Performance and + 3 for their Power Trait) and get 4 successes. Flaming Sin draw 3 cards for their Stagecraft, getting a mere 1 success.

That leaves Doom Cow with 3 Glory for this round! A pretty good opening number...

| Things that might happen to | Bands who impress | the audience |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|
|-----------------------------|-------------------|--------------|

Headbanging Mosh Pits Stagedivers Attractive girls take their tops off Technician makes the light show really cool

Things that might happen to Bands who don't impress the audience

Bored crowdPeople throw bottles at the stageBooingFat guys take their tops offTechnician turns up the dry ice machine so the Band is hidden

4) Narrating the outcome

As usual, the player with the highest card describes the outcome of the round. This is the highest card drawn at any point during the entire round; either during the Attention Check or during the Impression Check.

Next round

This round is now over and it's time for the next one. Put your Style Card back in your hand (unless it was the Showboating card, see below) and get ready to choose again!

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OTHER RULES FOR GIGS

Showboating

Using the Showboating style can pay off big, but it's risky. Showboating is doing something shocking or flashy and ostentatious on stage. Bite the head off a bat or put on an amazing laser show and the crowd will love it. Drop a tiny replica of Stonehenge from the rafters and things might not go so well.

Examples of Showboating

Excessive swearing on stage Throwing blood about Crazy-big pyrotechnics Blinding the crowd with lights pointed right at them Laser shows Dancing girls with skimpy outfits Waving swords about Riding a motorbike onto the stage

If you use this style for a Song, things will Go Badly for you if you don't win Narration Rights (that is, if you don't get the highest card). If this happens, because the other player is describing the outcome of the Song, they get to choose exactly what goes wrong.

If Showboating Goes Badly the crowd are not entirely impressed by this blatant grab for attention. The Showboating player gains no Glory for this round. Since you've gained no Glory, you cannot boo your opponent off if your Showboating Goes Badly. The other downside to this is that once you play the Showboating card, you remove it from your hand for the rest of the Gig. Yeah, you can only try this kind of crazy stunt once per Gig: after they've seen you bite the head off a bat once, nothing else you try is quite going to have quite the same effect, right?

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Example: The Gig is not going well for Doom Cow, so Chris decides that desperate measures are called for. He chooses the Showboating card when he chooses a style.

He describes Jürgen riding a Harley Davidson onto the stage while singing the lyrics to their latest track, Dethlocus.

He wins the Attention Check and gains 2 Glory with the Impression Check, which noses him into the lead. But his opponent has the highest card, meaning that Doom Cow's Showboating has Gone Badly.

Instead of the 2 Glory, Doom Cow earn none and Chris' opponent describes how the fumes from the bike's exhaust cause both the audience and band to start coughing violently.

Encore!

After the third and final round of the Gig, the player whose Band has the highest Ego may choose to play an Encore if they are behind in Glory. If both bands have the same Ego both players have this option.

An Encore is an extra, fourth round played immediately after the third. Any Glory earned during this round is added to the final scores. Obviously, it makes no sense for a band who's in the lead after the last round to call for an Encore and risk losing! It's just a final chance to catch up.

Be warned though, that this doesn't come without a price! If you call for an Encore and still lose, your band gains a point of Ego.

END OF THE GIG

Assuming nobody got booed off stage, whoever has the most Glory at the end of the last round has impressed the audience the most and is declared the winner of the Gig. If the Bands are tied for Glory, the Gig is a draw.

For winning, a Band also receives: 1 Hope, 2 Fanbase and Cash equal to half (round down) of their Fanbase. This is their new Fanbase, after the 2 points have been added.

For losing, a Band also receives: 1 Ego, 1 Fanbase and 1 Cash.

If the Gig was a draw, then both Bands receive: 1 Fanbase and 1 Cash. If it was a draw and both Bands finished with no Glory, that's all they get. If it was a draw and both Bands finished with one or more Glory, they also get a point of Hope each.

All Glory is reset. Alas, Glory does not last...



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10: ENDING THE GAME

Once you've been playing for 3 hours, the Endgame is triggered.

Each Band gets a final scene of their choice, including the band who were Rocking Out when the timer ran out. Then everybody pairs off for The Battle of The Bands. Bands pair off in order of Fanbase, with the highest Fanbase playing against the second highest, etc. If two Bands are tied for Fanbase, compare the total number of Performance Traits each Band has to break the tie. If they're *still* tied, compare their current Ego, then Cash. If they're still tied, draw cards to break the tie.

If there is an odd number of players Bands, the Band with the lowest Fanbase plays a Gig with a "dummy" band with the same Performance Traits and Ego as the Band with the next highest Fanbase. This dummy Band can be controlled by any other player.

These final Gigs are played out like any other except that all Hope rewards are doubled.

Example: In a three-player game, Viking Rockers The Four Norsemen are in the middle of Rocking Out when the timer goes off telling everyone that 3 hours are up. The Four Norsemen finish their turn normally. Everyone now gets one more turn to Rock Out, including The Four Norsemen.

Bands then pair up in order of their Fanbase. The Four Norsemen have 11 Fanbase, Steel Eagle have 9 points of Fanbase and The Gore Prophets have 6. The Four Norsemen will play against Steel Eagle, leaving The Gore Prophets to play their final Gig against a dummy band with the same Performance Traits as Steel Eagle. Steel Eagle will have already played their endgame Gig with The Four Norsemen though, and their Stats will not change as a result of the Gig with The Gore Prophets.



In other words, The Gore Prophets are not playing against Steel Eagle, they're playing against another band with all the same Traits and Stats.

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After this, all players narrate their Bands' epilogues.

EPILOGUES

Now that the game is mostly over, the only thing left to do is to describe the rest of your Band's career.

Just like describing Scenes, you can do this in any way you like. Some players like to imagine they're reading from the Band's entry in some future edition of the Metal Who's Who (complete with Tommy Vance style). Others just describe it like they were telling you what happened to them last time they went out drinking.

Here are some rules to help you figure out what happens to your Band:

How famous the Band gets will depend on their Fanbase.

Bands with a Fanbase of 11 or more will get to the status of Monsters of Rock: Record contracts with major labels, gold disks, world tours playing stadiums, Letterman, the cover of Variety or GQ, that sort of thing. Metallica, Motorhead, and Iron Maiden all finished the game with 11 or more Fanbase.

9 or 10 Fanbase means the Band makes it fairly big: They'll get a record contract but they'll never be massive. They'll tour, but will play smaller venues. Thier videos will get played on MTV and they'll be on the cover of Metal Hammer. Think of groups like Soundgarden, Ministry and Machine Head.

At 6 to 8 your Band's future begins to looks less rosy. Some Bands will have record contracts, but their records will never sell well, and they'll never quite get that big breakthrough that puts them into the public eye.

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But they have fans, their records do sell and they'll be able to make a living from Metal as long as their Band holds together. It's difficult to name groups that fit this category, because you probably haven't heard of the same ones I have, but Bolt Thrower, Life Of Agony and Exodus probably fit in here.

Any Band that ends the game with a Fanbase of 5 or below is doomed to utter obscurity. Their fans might be very loyal and dedicated, but they're going to be few and far between. For whatever the reason, the Band will never make it big, they'll never release an album and they'll never be more than a footnote in Metal History.

How happy the Band will be depends on their Hope and Ego scores.

The main rule is this:

If Hope is higher than Ego at the end of the game, the Band's future will be reasonably bright. They will probably get on well and may stay together for some years to come. Arguments will be few and will get resolved reasonably.

If Ego is higher than Hope at the end of the game, the Band's future will be turbulent. That is, they will argue, members will leave and ultimately they will likely split up.

The degree of happiness or unhappiness is dictated by the difference between Hope and Ego. A Band with a really high Ego and really low Hope is doomed to self destruct in an acrimonious cloud of cocaine and Jack Daniels pretty soon. A Band with one more point of Ego than Hope will probably last for years, but there will be arguments, disagreements and creative differences that will lead to members leaving and an eventual split.

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Example: The game has ended and Chris looks at Doom Cow's stats:

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| Hope: | 4 |
|----------|---|
| Ego: | 6 |
| Fanbase: | 9 |

A Fanbase of 9 means the Band are pretty popular; not headlining stadiums worldwide or anything, but pretty famous. Their Ego is two higher than their Hope, so their story will not be a happy one, although Chris decides that since it's only 2 more Ego than Hope they're going to stay together for a while.

"Doom Cow's story is a turbulent one" he starts. "Their first album, 'Mutants on the Bounty', gets really good reviews and they have a world tour on the back of that. During the tour, though, the guys start to argue and Phil Mace leaves the Band after the tour. They hire a new drummer and record a second album, which is reasonably successful, but shortly after Jacen and Jürgen fall out and the Band splits up. Jürgen releases a couple of solo albums, which are pretty successful. Jacen releases a series of Guitar Masterclass DVDs."

Rich looks at DethMerchant's stats:

| Hope: | 5 |
|----------|---|
| Ego: | 3 |
| Fanbase: | 5 |

That Fanbase of 5 means the Band is basically nobody. Their Hope of 5 and Ego of 3 means that there must be a happy ending for the Band though.

He describes the Band's future: "While they never achieved any degree of fame, DethMerchant are still regulars on the stages of Metal. They've never released an album, but their fans don't seem to mind that. Shotgun Dave teaches guitar lessons during the week and Arnold Mash now owns a music shop. They're not well known, but everyone in the band is happy."



WINNERS

So the game's over, but who won? Well, y'see, it's not really quite that simple because there are often two (or more) winners.

Subtract your Ego from your Hope. The player with the highest score has the happiest Band. The highest Hope breaks ties. The happiest Band has the least turbulent and most productive future.

The Band with the highest Fanbase is the most Famous. Break ties with highest total Performance Traits. They've cracked it, Made It Big and left all the other Metal Warriors in the dust!

If you've managed to be both the Happiest and Most Famous, then you are the Ultimate Lord of Metal! Rare is the Band who can balance Fame and the Egos of their members. If you've managed this you shall be recorded in the Annals of Metal as one of the greats.





11: BONUS TRACKS

Here we have some extra bits and bobs which might be of interest to anyone who wants more of an insight into how the game works. There are some optional rules, some extra tips for playing and some explanations of how the game was put together.

VARYING THE GAME LENGTH

By default, the Endgame starts when 3 hours have passed. Over the years of playtesting we've found this to be a really good length of game to start with. It's usually a fun game, with lots of depth and characterplay, but without dragging. You might find though, that you want to run the game for longer, over two or more sessions. You might want to have things expand at a slower pace or just tell longer stories.

There are two main ways to decide when the end of the game ought to be:

The first is to set a time limit. If you're playing in 3-4 hour sessions, it's easy to use the end of these as a guideline. Set the Endgame to trigger, say, an hour before the end of the second session or after you've played for a set number of hours. If you're REALLY getting into the game, you might play for multiple sessions and ask everyone how they feel about the game half way through each session. The Endgame starts an hour before the end of the session if all players agree that this is the last session.

The second way to set the length of the game is to play until someone reaches a set number of points in Fanbase. Fanbase is the ideal stat to track, because it always rises and generally relates to the number of Gigs which have been played. So setting a limit of 11 Fanbase is a good place to start: as soon as someone reaches 11 Fanbase you trigger the Endgame. 11 is a good value to use as well, because it's one more.



Regardless of how you choose the length of your game, bear in mind that the game doesn't work so well when the numbers start to get really high. Once you have Bands with Stats or Performance Traits over 10, the game bogs down and you're going to be drawing a LOT of cards. So try to end the game before you get too many Stats or Performance Traits over 10.

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STRATEGY GUIDE

For those interested in how to make the game more competitive, here's an explanation of how the odds work out for the different strategies you might try.

First up, as has been said before, "playing to win" isn't really what this game is about. I mean, sure, it's fun and you should certainly try to win, but if you get wrapped up in winning and lose sight of the story, the game suffers and isn't as much fun. But even with that in mind, it's still frustrating to lose over and over again.

At first sight, many people assume that the best way to play is simply to load all your Performance Traits into Technique and play Ballads at every opportunity. The theory being that since you're always drawing loads of cards during the Attention check, you ought to pretty much shut your opponent out. Even if you don't manage to get any Glory (because your Power is low and you're only getting one Shred from the Ballad) you'll eventually get lucky and score one or two and your opponent has no chance to score anything.

In practice, not only is this very boring, it doesn't actually work! Even if you're drawing more cards in the Attention check, you can't guarantee that you'll prevent your opponent from getting a lucky draw and beating you. They get one good Impression check and they're usually going to get a whole lot of Glory because you didn't really put anything into Stagecraft. Averaging this over the course of a game, and you'll find that Bands with more balanced strategies will actually gain more Glory, and therefore win more Gigs, than any other strategy.



Not only have I seen this proven at the table over loads of playtests, but there have been some hardcore simulations done on computers. Yes, I'm obsessive enough to do that.

In short, while the game is pretty evenly balanced between all the Performance Traits, there is an ever-so-slight bias towards an evenly balanced band, with near equal values in all Performance Traits. Not so much that such bands always win, but enough so that you're better off avoiding the temptation to dump all your points in the same Trait.

A NOTE ON SPLIT SCENES

At first glance, losing a Split Scene might seem really harsh. That's because losing a Split Scene is really harsh! Split Scenes tend to happen only once or twice per game, and it's not unusual for a game not to include any at all. They're a threat which ought to hang in the air over Bands with high Ego scores like the Sword of Damocles, and they tend to encourage players to avoid letting their Ego go too high.

Another thing to consider about Split Scenes is that they cost the initiating player a Scene, with no possibility of any reward in exchange. So it's worth thinking twice before you launch into a Split Scene for another player because there's almost certainly something you can do for yourself instead which helps more. Often the threat of a split scene hanging over a player is enough to make them panic and either hoard Cash or spend turns on Band Member Scenes rather than Rehearsal Scenes.

If you'd like to include Split Scenes in you game which are less punishing to players, then here are two options you might like to try.

Firstly, you can change the loss of 2 points of Ego into the loss of 1 point of Ego and the gain of 1 point of Hope. While this still has the same overall effect on the Ego/Hope balance, it's slightly less nasty

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to the Split Scene's target because the higher Ego makes it easier for them to gain Cash with Work Scenes. Overall, this doesn't have a massive impact on game balance.

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Secondly, you can instead reduce the loss of 2 points of Performance Traits to the loss of 1 point. However, this will have a far greater impact on the game's balance. Mainly, it often causes situations where it is more efficient to let your Band split up and then buy-back the point of Performance Traits you lost than it is to spend Cash defending against a split. This can lead to some pretty odd strategies emerging, so use this variant with caution!"

RANDOM BANDS

Sometimes, it's just hard to come up with a band name on the spot, and sometimes it's just fun to randomly create some craziness. For this, we include the following instructions and tables.

If you want to randomly create a Band, draw two cards from a shuffled deck. The first card determines which of the Four Paths the Band follows and the first word of their name. The second card determines the second part of their name.

Look up the first card on the table. The suit determines the Band's Path:

Diamonds = Thrash Metal Spades = Classic Metal Hearts = Glam Metal Clubs = Death Metal

The value of the second card determines the second word of the Band's name. This second word is chosen from the same table as the first word, so if you draw Spades for your first card, you just use the value of the second on the Classic Metal table to determine the second word of their name and ignore the suit.

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DIAMONDS - THRASH METAL

| Card | 1 st Word | 2nd Word |
|------|-----------|-----------|
| Ace | Motor | Grinder |
| 2 | Broken | Head |
| 3 | Agony | Fate |
| 4 | Deth | Harvest |
| 5 | Hammer | Testament |
| 6 | Dark | Emperor |
| 7 | Carnage | Reign |
| 8 | Ritual | Guardian |
| 9 | Machine | Decay |
| 10 | Razor | Exodus |
| J | Sacred | Heathen |
| Q | Forbidden | Kingdom |
| К | Suicide | Onslaught |

SPADES - CLASSIC METAL

| Card | 1 st Word | 2nd Word |
|------|-----------|-----------|
| Ace | Black | Priest |
| 2 | Gun | Maiden |
| 3 | Murder | Sabbath |
| 4 | Judas | Rhapsody |
| 5 | Blind | Wolf |
| 6 | Speed | Chain |
| 7 | Crimson | Rage |
| 8 | Led | Rebellion |
| 9 | Hawk | Shadow |
| 10 | Steel | Warning |
| J | Soul | Mountain |
| Q | Speed | Blade |
| K | Screaming | Reaper |

HEARTS - GLAM METAL

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| Card | | 1 st Word | 2nd Word |
|------|--------|-----------|----------|
| Ace | 8 | Poison | Dwarves |
| 2 | a - 18 | Killer | Slave |
| 3 | | Manacled | Serpent |
| 4 | | Fatal | Squad |
| 5 | | Naked | Wish |
| 6 | | Flaming | Maniacs |
| 7 | e :: | Lust | Rocket |
| 8 | | Dirty | Machine |
| 9 | | Whip | Storm |
| 10 | | Savage | Anvil |
| J | | Mayhem | Sin |
| Q | L | Danger | Force |
| К | | Sweet | Jungle |

CLUBS - DEATH METAL

| Card | 1 st Word | 2nd Word |
|------|------------|-----------|
| Ace | Death | Angel |
| 2 | Doom | Obituary |
| 3 | Unholy | Idol |
| 4 | Morbid | Messiah |
| 5 | Rancid | Cradle |
| 6 | Black | Mass |
| 7 | Possessed | Corpse |
| 8 | Cannibal | Noir |
| 9 | Divine | Perdition |
| 10 | Shadow | Baptism |
| J | Infernal | Grave |
| Q | Malevolent | Prophecy |
| К | Gore | Sanctuary |

Alternatively, if you're stuck, just look over the tables and choose something!

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STYLE CARDS



STYLE CARD BACKS



CHEAT SHEET - SIDE A

Work Scene

EGO vs the CASH you want to earn (Limit: EGO + 1) Win: Earn that much CASH Lose: Earn CASH and + 1 EGO

Publicity Stunt Scene

Draw CASH spent vs your current FANBASE Win: +1 FANBASE Lose: +1 FANBASE, +1 EGO

Rehearsal Scene

Spend CASH equal to a Performance Trait +1 to that Performance Trait

Member Scene

Draw CASH spent cards vs EGO Win: +1 HOPE Lose: +1 EGO

Split Scene

Pick an opponent who has EGO at least 4 more than their HOPE Target one member of their band. Target player draws HOPE + CASH spent You draw their band's EGO **You win:** Target Member leaves Band and they lose 2 points of Performance Traits (the highest) and they also lose 2 points of Ego **They win:** Member stays with Band

Clash Scene

Pick a "fight" with another player's Band Both players draw EGO Winner: +1 FANBASE Loser: +1 EGO

Promotion Scene

Schedule a Gig, Decide the Venue and who else is playing Your next scene will be the Gig

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CHEAT SHEET - SIDE B

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Song Style

Both players pick a Style in secret

Attention Check

Reveal Styles Draw POETRY + TECHNIQUE Winner makes Impression Check

Impression Check

Draw SHRED + POWER Other player draws STAGECRAFT Subtract STAGECRAFT successes Gain this much GLORY! If you get 5 or more GLORY, the other Band is boo'd off stage and you win automatically!

Showboating

Only the Band with the highest EGO gets a Showboating card. Goes Badly if you lose narration for that round. You gain no Glory this round if Showboating Goes Badly

Encore

At the end of the third round of a Gig, the player with the highest EGO may call for an Encore. This means that the Gig will have a 4th round, which is played as normal. If you call an Encore and still lose the Gig, you gain +1 Ego at the end of the Gig.

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Cleaning Up

Band with the most GLORY is the winner **Winner gets:** +1 HOPE, +2 FANBASE, ½ FANBASE in CASH **Loser gets:** +1 EGO, +1 FANBASE, + 1 CASH **In a draw with no Glory scored, both Bands get:** +1 FANBASE, +1 CASH **In a draw with one or more Glory scored, both Bands get:** +2 FANBASE, +1 HOPE, +1 EGO, +1 CASH

| | game of metal | | | |
|------------|---------------|---|------------------------|--|
| | | Setlist: | | |
| | | Zerformance Eraits: power technique stagecraft | slivjd | |
| Zand Zlame | Concept: | ljope ego fattbase caslj | Zand Zlembers: name | |







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