

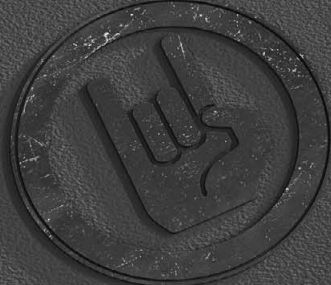


⚡ SUPER DISTORTION ⚡

OUTPUT

INPUT

game of metal





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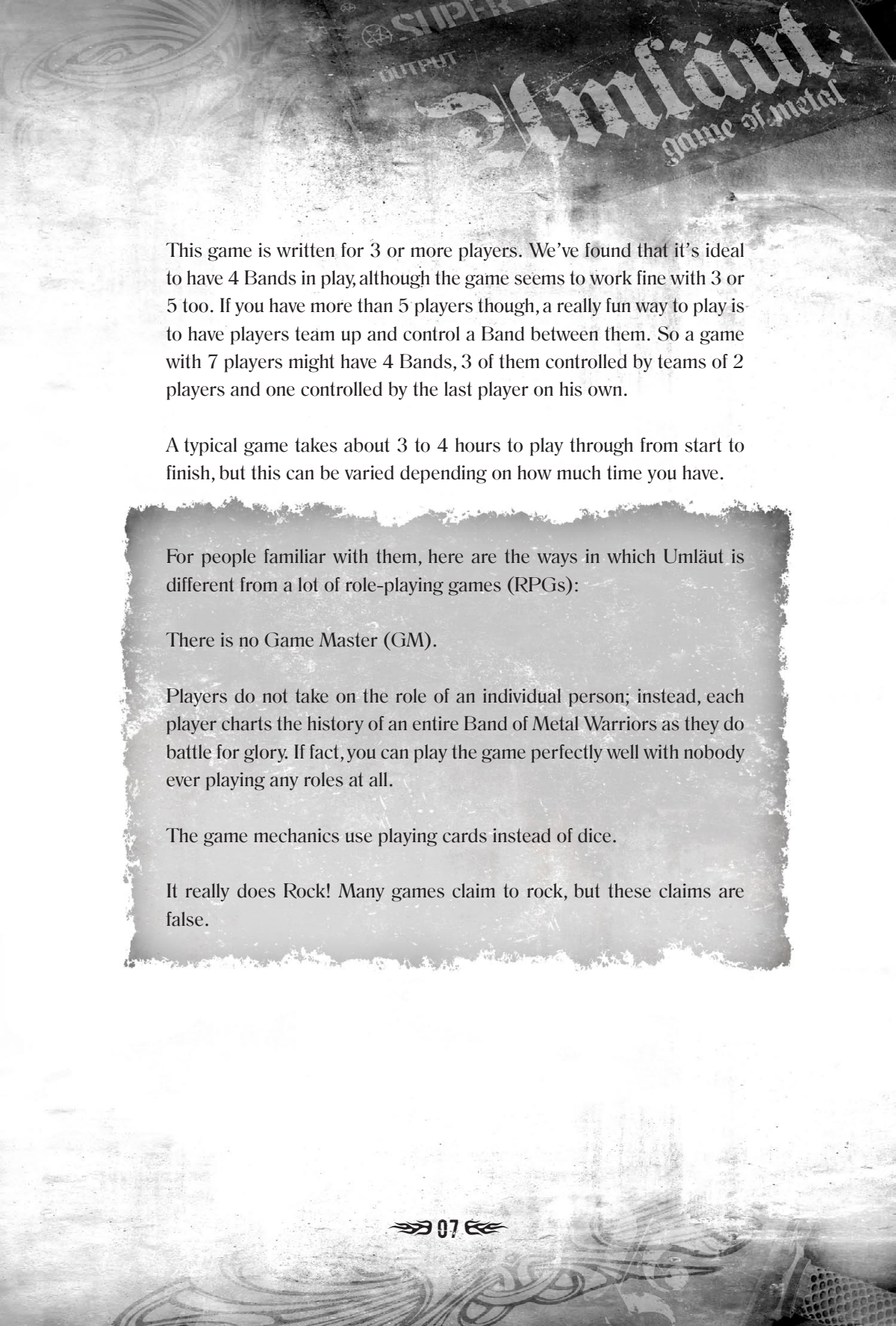


1: INTRODUCTION

Umlaut 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.



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.

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 Umlaut 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. In 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:

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:

- ☪ Hope is how happy your Band is
- ☪ 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



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.

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 *Um-läut* 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 Umläuf 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.

ROADIE:

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.

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.

