

Mark Gottlieb

Thursday, June 05, 2003

Wow. I challenged you, and you came through like the crazy people I know you are. The response to my first deck challenge was extraordinary. I was sent 88 decks—and before you start thinking that's a low number, consider that not only did every card in every deck had to have a strong connection to that deck's thematic rock band, but the deck itself had to work. Or at least looked like it worked. I was stunned by the thought, passion, and goofiness you folks poured into creating these decks. They were brilliant, they were surprising, and I loved going through them. Thank you to everyone who played along.



What do you mean, "What are they?" They're musicians!

Because so many decks warrant attention, *Hey, I didn't paint it...*

I'm splitting this article into two parts. This week I'll feature decks from the four most popular bands, as well as a deck based on a song rather than a band. Two weeks from now, the rock decks will be back for an encore as I shine the spotlight on six of my other favorite submissions.

The most popular bands were Pink Floyd, Iron Maiden, Queen, and Metallica, with five tribute decks each. The most obscure bands (to me, anyway) were Nightwish and Kamelot. The most popular card was Akroma, Angel of Wrath, which appeared in 10 decks. Here are the songs used to justify her inclusion:

- "Beautiful One," Smashing Pumpkins
- "Flesh For Fantasy," Billy Idol, which references how she was created by Ixidor
- "Hairspray Queen," Nirvana
- "If God Will Send His Angels," U2
- "Killer Queen," Queen
- "Saw Red," Sublime
- "She's an Angel," They Might Be Giants
- "Thank God for the Bomb," Ozzy Osbourne
- "Thank You for Sending Me an Angel," Talking Heads
- "Under the Bridge," Red Hot Chili Peppers, since it's about Los Angeles, the city of angels

As you can see, some card-song connections were amazing, while others were a bit, well, stretchier. Ämmälä Mikko included some Goblins in his AC/DC deck because they look like the band members. (Does Festering Goblin really resemble Angus Young? Yikes!) This tactic was used elsewhere; apparently Hermit Druid is a dead ringer for Rob Zombie. Liam Turner found that building a Moxy Fruvous deck was an excellent reason to include all of the original Moxes. In a flash of brilliance, Robert Zeigler used the *Seventh Edition* collector numbers to warrant the inclusion of Disenchant ("Lucky 13"), Glorious Anthem ("17"), and Reprisal ("Thirty-Three") in his Smashing Pumpkins deck.

And if anyone understands how Steve Shap connected Phyrexian Colossus to the Sublime song "Burritos," well, perhaps some things are best left unknown.

Pink Floyd

I love Pink Floyd. They're one of my favorite bands, and the following deck wound up being one of my favorites as well. While picking the decks to showcase here, I was, of course, very subjective. I looked for both how well the deck worked and how well the thematic connections worked, but since most people's decks were excellent on both counts, I fell back on how interesting I thought the deck was. This deck was created by an over-40 player who's been into **Magic** for less than a year. And although it needs more land, it's otherwise great. Check out his fantastic card-song connections, noting that some (like



"Alan's Psychedelic Breakfast" and "Grantchester Meadows"

Vengeance) reference the art. In fact, Ron specified the basic lands to use so the pictures match the songs: *Odyssey mountain* #346/350 and *Seventh Edition plains* #344/350.

"The Narrow Way"

Standard-legal Pink Floyd deck by Ron Wirth



Main Deck

60 cards

- 9 Mountain (Alan's Psychedelic Breakfast)
- 9 Plains (Grantchester Meadows)

- 18 lands
- 3 Goblin Digging Team (Several Species of Small Furry Animals Gathered Together in a Cave and Grooving with a Pict)
- 4 Goblin Machinist (Welcome to the Machine)
- 4 Pitchstone Wall (Another Brick in the Wall, Part 1)
- 4 Reborn Hero (The Hero's Return)

- 15 creatures

- 1 Aurification (Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2)
- 2)
- 3 Burning Wish (Wish You Were Here)
- 2 Ensnaring Bridge (Burning Bridges)
- 3 Fire Diamond (Shine on You Crazy Diamond, Parts I-V)
- 4 Golden Wish (The Gold It's in The...)
- 2 Grafted Skullcap (Brain Damage)
- 3 Marble Diamond (Shine on You Crazy Diamond, Parts VI-IX)
- 3 Recoup (Your Possible Pasts)
- 3 Unquestioned Authority (Mother)
- 3 Vengeful Dreams (The Post War Dream)

Sideboard

- 1 Aegis of Honor (Take It Back)
- 1 Aurification (Another Brick in the Wall, Part 2)
- 1 Breath of Life (Coming Back to Life)
- 1 Devastating Dreams (The Gunner's Dream)
- 1 Ensnaring Bridge (Burning Bridges)
- 1 Grafted Skullcap (Brain Damage)
- 1 Jayemdae Tome (One of My Turns)
- 1 Price of Glory (Money)
- 1 Pyroclasm (Goodbye Blue Sky)
- 1 Searing Flesh (In the Flesh)
- 1 Solitary Confinement (Is There Anybody Out There?)
- 1 Unquestioned Authority (Mother)
- 1 Vengeance (Careful with That Axe, Eugene)
- 1 Words of War (Keep Talking)

27 other spells

1 Wrath of God (The Great Gig in the Sky)

15 sideboard cards

I swear that "Several Species of Small Furry Animals Gathered Together in a Cave and Grooving with a Pict" is a real song title. It can be found on *Ummagumma*, which I swear is a real album title.

Here's what Ron says about his deck: "The premise of the deck is to establish a controlled environment with the Ensnaring Bridge with no cards in your hand. Then using the Goblin Machinist with Unquestioned Authority opens the door for unblocked attacks on your opponent. The Grafted Skullcap and Reborn Hero would also enable additional attacks in your turn but still have some defense if needed. There are a couple of other combos that I like: direct damage with Words of War/Grafted Skullcap, creature removal with Goblin Digging Team/Aurification, recovering discards with Pitchstone Wall or Recoup, and Solitary Confinement/Jayemdae Tome."

Iron Maiden

I was surprised by Iron Maiden's popularity, but I shouldn't have been—the band itself is a **Magic** card! The only other submitted bands that share that distinction are the Rolling Stones and Oasis. Alex made sure he used at least one song from each Iron Maiden studio album when constructing this deck.

"The Edge of Darkness"

Type 1 Iron Maiden deck by Alex Kallend



Main Deck

60 cards

12	1 Enslaved Horror (Powerslave)	1 Dirge of Dread (Fear is the Key)
Plains	2 Exalted Angel (The Angel and the Gambler)	2 Insidious Dreams (Infinite Dreams)
12	3 Expendable Troops (The Trooper)	2 Iron Maiden
Swamp	4 Fallen Angel (The Fallen Angel)	1 Necra Sanctuary (Sanctuary)
	1 Gloomdrifter (Drifter)	2 Psychotic Haze (Can I Play with Madness)
24 lands	4 Highway Robber (The Mercenary)	4 Purgatory (Purgatory)
	2 Royal Assassin (The Assassin)	2 Ray of Revelation (Revelations)
	1 Shambling Swarm (Lord of the Flies)	1 Wrath of God (Judgement of Heaven)
	1 Trap Runner (The Loneliness of the Long Distance Runner)	
	2 Weathered Wayfarer (The Nomad)	
	21 creatures	15 other spells

This deck revolves around Purgatory. The main combo is to sacrifice Highway Robber to Fallen Angel, pay 4 mana and 2 life to bring it back with Purgatory, then gain 2 life when the Robber comes into play. It's a recurring engine that makes your opponent lose 2 life a turn. There are plenty of other good creatures to keep bringing back as well. Weathered Wayfarer has a nice interaction with Iron


Maiden as your opponent debates whether or not to play lands. And the answer to Psychotic Haze's song title is "Yes!"

Queen

The decks I picked for both Queen and Metallica are monoblack decks, though they have quite different styles. I'd expect Metallica to provide a vicious, death-filled deck, but Queen's effectiveness at evil surprised me a bit. Check out the nice song-card connections on Chainer's Edict (great art reference), Smother, and Duress.

"The March of the Black Queen"

Standard-legal Queen deck by Jim Cawlo



Main Deck

60 cards

24	2 Ebonblade Reaper (The Hitman)	4 Chainer's Edict (Don't Lose Your Head)
Swamp	2 Phage the Untouchable (Death on Two Legs)	4 Charcoal Diamond (Bijou)
24 lands	1 Visara the Dreadful (Killer Queen)	2 Corrupt (Pain Is So Close to Pleasure)
	5 creatures	1 Cover of Darkness (The Night Comes Down)
		2 Dark Banishing (Another One Bites the Dust)
		2 Death Pulse (Sheer Heart Attack)
		4 Diabolic Tutor (Gimme the Prize)
		2 Dirge of Dread (Breakthru)
		4 Duress (Under Pressure)
		2 Mutilate (All Dead, All Dead)
		2 Skeletal Scrying (One Vision)
		2 Smother (You Take My Breath Away)
		31 other spells

Jim's comments: "Instead of going the easy route with songs such as 'Dragon Attack' or 'Ogre Battle,' I decided to base the deck around the song 'Death on Two Legs,' which I thought fit the card Phage the Untouchable extremely well. Essentially the deck would play like a MonoBlack Control deck and kill most if not all the creatures played by your opponent, then play Phage and attack the next turn for the win via either Dirge of Dread or Cover of Darkness."

Metallica

Here's the other monoblack deck, and the last of the four most popular bands. This one is a Cleric build as opposed to the creature-light Queen deck. As I read over the entries, it was interesting to see the different takes people had on the same subjects. Among the five Metallica decks, the song "Disposable Heroes" was used for Expendable Troops, Goblin Offensive, and Festering Goblin, while "The Thing that Should Not Be" was either Scion of Darkness, Petradon, or Despot's Scepter.

This deck includes the one card reference I changed in this whole column. Steven used "Fight Fire with Fire" for Corrupt. Sorry Steven, but that felt too much like a burn spell to me, especially with so

many other great choices among Metallica's gloomy oeuvre: "Damage Inc.," "Killing Time," "Bleeding Me," the song I used for the deck title, and the one I eventually substituted for Corrupt.

"Die, Die, My Darling"

Standard-legal Metallica deck by Steven Powell



Main Deck

60 cards

2 Barren Moor (Wherever I May Roam)	4 Dark Supplicant (Sad but True)	2 Corrupt (To Live is to Die)
2 Cabal Coffers (Fixxxer)	4 Drinker of Sorrow (Harvester of Sorrow)	4 Diabolic Tutor (Seek and Destroy)
20 Swamp (Fuel)	4 Festering Goblin (Disposable Heroes)	3 Mutilate (Creeping Death)
24 lands	4 Rotlung Reanimator (My Friend of Misery)	2 Oversold Cemetery (The Memory Remains)
	1 Scion of Darkness (The Thing That Should Not Be)	4 Smother (Don't Tread on Me)
	4 Shepherd of Rot (The Unforgiven)	15 other spells
	21 creatures	

Steven's card-song connections are a little more conceptual, which is cool. For example, he felt the Dark Supplicants matched "Sad but True" because they sacrifice themselves, and Shepherd of Rot is "The Unforgiven" because it damages you too.

Red Hot Chili Peppers

A few people were adventuresome enough to base their decks not on the song titles of a band, but on the lyrics of a song. The "Stairway to Heaven" and "Bohemian Rhapsody" decks were very cool, but I was especially struck by BlackDiamondDragon's deck based on the emphatic anti-bigotry song "The Power of Equality" by the Red Hot Chili Peppers. The deck as a whole is thematic to the song because it's dedicated to preventing combat (although I don't know how the Peppers feel about pinging your opponent to death).

The Power of Equality

Type 1 Red Hot Chili Peppers deck by BlackDiamondDragon



Main Deck

60 cards

1 Glacial Chasm (Giving up blood/Just to exist)	4 Goblin Sharpshooter (Count 'em off quick)	1 Balance (The Power of Equality)
7 Mountain	1 Orim, Samite Healer (People in pain/I do not dig it)	3 Bend or Break (But I'll break before I bend)
7 Plains	4 Peacekeeper (My name is peace/This is my hour/Can I get/Just a little bit of	1 Fervent Charge (Red black or white/This is my fight)
7 Swamp		

22 lands	power)	4 Hatred (Blackest anger)
	3 Witch Hunter (I've got my Public Enemy)	1 Misery Charm (Misery is not my friend)
	12 creatures	2 Pox (Little Piccadilly sickness)
		2 Seeker (Whitest fear)
		2 Temporary Insanity (What I see is insanity)
		2 Winds of Change (Dealing with the hand/That I've been dealt)
		4 Winter Orb (Sitting in the grip/Of a killing fist)
		4 Zombify (Whatever happened to humanity)
		26 other spells

Really cool, and some of those lyric-to-card parallels, like Seeker and Fervent Charge, are just eerie. It's too bad those cards aren't that useful here because attacking isn't really your priority. And, as is so often the case, I think more lands are necessary to go with the Pox, Bend or Break, Winter Orb, and Peacekeeper.

Curtis Scharding sent in my second-favorite Red Hot Chili Peppers deck, which tries to Donate ("Give It Away") a Transcendence ("Universally Speaking").

That's all for this week, but I'm not even halfway done. Since this entire column was too long for one post, I'll return to this topic on June 19 with six more guitar-smashin' decks. Until next week, rock on!

Mark

Mark may be reached at houseofcardsmail@yahoo.com. Send rules-related **Magic** questions to ask@wizards.com.

© 1995-2009 Wizards of the Coast LLC, a subsidiary of Hasbro, Inc. All Rights Reserved.

[Terms of Use](#) | [Privacy Statement](#)

