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THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARD

Collector Series

Book Fifteen



The Quintessential Bard

Shannon Kalvar

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INTRODUCTION

Of all the D20 classes the bard stands out as the most difficult to pigeonhole. Players often pass it up in favour of more easily understood and playable classes. A fighter is very good at going toe to toe with things. A rogue sneaks around. The wizards and the sorcerers toss out spell after spell. The clerics invoke the power of the gods for healing and smiting.

What then does the bard do?

The bard does a little bit of everything; cast spells, heal, fight with a sword. He also brings a unique skills set and two special abilities to the table. He has all of the skills of a rogue and a wizard, with a broad range of knowledge. He also has a chance to know anything (represented by his bardic knowledge ability). Finally he can create some enchantment like effects using the power of his own performance.

This mishmash of abilities turns a lot of players off. What, exactly, is a bard supposed to do in the average dungeon? Out of the dungeon he can sing for his supper, but in it? Maybe he uses his inspire courage song to assist the fights, but for the most part a bard seems as useless as a third wheel.

We aim to change that with this book.

THE COLLECTOR'S SERIES

The Collector's Series is a range of class and racial sourcebooks from Mongoose Publishing, all designed to greatly widen a player's options for his character within the d20 games system. Slotting seamlessly into any fantasy-based campaign, each will give a comprehensive guide to one class or race within the game, allowing both players and Games Masters the chance to present old character types in a completely new way without overpowering or unbalancing the game as a whole. The Collector's Series will not necessarily allow players to create a better character, but they will be able to do a lot more than they ever thought possible before.

THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARD

Here you will find a plethora of options for giving your bard that little bit of extra focus. From combat worthy bards to bards that are rogues to scholars with a creative flair you can make them all here.

You will also find an expansion to the bardic music ability here. These new musical gifts allow you to explore the mysteries of music without sacrificing combat or magical ability. Indeed with these rules a bard could focus almost exclusively on being a musician and still be an effective and important character for a group.

Of particular interest to bards should be the chapter on duels. Now there are more ways to enter into conflicts with a Non-Player Character than rolling some contested dice or hitting them with a sword. Creativity, style, and grace now play just as important a part as raw power. Yes, that fighter may well be able to ring the bard like a bell when it comes to fighting, but can he do it with grace and style? If not, he can find himself on the losing end of a duel that he otherwise would have won.

You will also find a lengthy new selection of spells to round out your bard's abilities as a master enchanter and manipulator of men.

Finally, there is an entire section dedicated to various ways in which bards find and maintain their own venues for performance. Your bard no longer has to wander around like a vagabond; he can become a wealthy and powerful member of the artistic community.

The Quintessential Bard offers players a comprehensive guide to playing characters of this class that will prove to be invaluable for characters of any level from 1st to 20th.

The intricate cascade of notes finally came to an end. Cutheox's hands came to a rest on the neck of his harp calloused fingertips slightly red from his efforts. Silence followed in the flood's wake passing over the audiences' plate wrapping around the rough chairs they sat on. Only the snap of the pine logs in the fire broke the spell.

Masterbard Olivia's sudden laughter elicited an oath from one of the patrons as he scrambled after his spilled beer mug. 'Child, your interpretation of Master Almasi's Winds of Summer holds some promise. Could you tell me how you came to it?'

Rowan felt her fingers tighten on her mug, sloshing the watered contents nearly to the rim. The Masterbard had not asked her, or any of the other contestants, that question. After pouring her heart and soul into her own attempt the best she managed to elicit from Olivia was a quirk of the eyebrows. *'If only you hadn't stopped to for that bath this morning, you goose'*, she said to herself. *'You know you always need a few hours to warm up.'*

Cutheox rested his lean cheek against the stave back of his borrowed harp. 'Well, there's a bit of a story there.' He looked to the Masterbard. She nodded. 'One day, I was working on a new arrangement of second movement in the Mountain Lay by Master Almasi. My heart had set me to wandering, so I was traveling in the mountains for inspiration. Had been for about a week, maybe more I guess. It had been a while since I'd seen anyone. Or found anything to eat.' His wide mouth parted into a toothy grin. 'Anyway. I was up in the mountains when one of those great winds came out of the east. They hit me so hard that I tumbled down into a canyon. As I sat at the bottom, listening to the wind charge down the walls, I finally realized what the song was about.' Then he laughed. 'Landed on a rabbit to. Dinner and a revelation all in one spill.'

Rowan choked out a chuckle to join the chorus of laughter filling the hall. Her inner voice resumed its tirade. *'See. They laugh for him. You? What's the best you've managed? You got a smile out of that one boy a week ago. Congratulations.'*

The Masterbard nodded. 'Very well. Cutheox Moroe, you may stand down.'

Cutheox nodded curtly, his fingers lingering on the harp's long neck for a moment. Then he stood, brushed past the Masterbard, and took his set out in the audience. A half dozen pairs of envious eyes followed him.

Olivia cleared her throat. 'Thank you. Each of you can be proud of your craft. Clayton Hooker, Ewan Bedwin, Celia Thorton, and Violet Young each have earned one hundred silver pennies for their efforts this evening.'

Rowan's knuckles whitened around the dark glazed mug.

'Bravo, each of you. I have arranged for you to have room and board at this inn for the next five days. If you wish for a letter of recommendation from me you have but to ask.'

Olivia continued. 'The other three, Martin of Silverbridge, Cutheox Moroe, and...'

Martin made it? Such a sweet man. Cracks appeared in the pottery surface.

'Rowan Caldwell. You possess sufficient talent to survive the test I set before you. The one that succeeds will become my apprentice.'

The mutters in her mind trailed off for a moment. 'I can do it', she cried at them triumphantly.

The Masterbard's voice broke though her reverie. 'I expect to see you three here at dawn. You have a long journey ahead of you.'



CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Bards require a very flexible approach when considering what they can and cannot accomplish. Systemically they can acquire 'second best' skills in every area: fighting, healing, stealth, skills and magic. Additionally they possess two unique abilities: Bardic Lore and mind-affecting music. This diversity allows them to span a gamut of potential archetypes, from the dashing rogue swinging into the damsel's chambers at night to the sturdy alderman who helps to guide his community through times of peace and turmoil.

The flexibility of the bard class lends itself to confusion on the part of both players and Games Masters. It is difficult for everyone to understand and agree on what the bard does when he can do so many things. When the two disagree or simply misunderstand one another about what a particular character should or should not do there are conflicts.

Each of the following Character Concepts provides a template for how the bard might best express various concepts and archetypes. These templates provide a starting point for the bard class by recommending roles, activities and subtle alterations intended to enhance the flavour of a specific concept.

ALDERMAN

In every society there are people who want to help others. Those who spend their off time working for the benefit of their fellow citizens. These individuals become involved in local politics, act as patrons for small arts and assist with the day-to-day running of the local communities.

These people are called aldermen. They hail from all walks of life; merchants and bakers, poets and priests. Of them all though only the bard brings his unique brand of social skills, variable abilities and gifts to the role. A bard alderman can converse easily with labourers, then go and sit at the table of the king to discuss the issues of the day. He can discuss magical theory with the local street magician, have a drink with the Thieves Guild front man and spend the afternoon chatting up a barmaid without breaking stride.

An alderman is defined by his involvement with his community. His leadership (formally recognised or not) guides the community in times of peace and war.



In return for his effort he can expect support from his people and assistance in times of need.

Adventuring: The adventuring alderman is not a contradiction in terms. These strongly community focused bards find adventure waiting for them in every challenge their homes face. When there is a need to pick up sword and spell they do so. An alderman's adventurous activities focus on solving problems for his people. As such, they make some of the most effective urban adventurers.

Role-Playing: Aldermen have two primary traits: an insatiable interest in the affairs of others and an ability to communicate that interest in such a way as to avoid offending their constituents. In some this comes across as a kind of 'busy body' mentality. Others manage to project confidence and caring so well that people flock to them just to talk.

Benefits: Each alderman selects one 'home-town', which may be an area, city, town, village, or even hamlet. Aldermen receive a +4 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy, Gather Information, Bardic Lore and Knowledge (Area) skill checks when dealing with people in their home or attempting to remember facts about it. Additionally they may take 10 on a Profession or Perform roll in their home to determine how much income they have over a given week.

Penalties: Aldermen must take responsibility for the goings on in their communities. If they are gone for more than one month, or for more than five months of any given year, they lose the benefits of being an alderman until they regain the trust of their friends.

AMBASSADOR

When nations tremble at the brink of war, or famine strikes a kingdom down the leaders of the world turn to their ambassadors to try to sort things out before things unravel. These remarkably talented men and women use charm, persuasion, threats and sheer will to keep the gears of the world moving smoothly. They stride the halls of power brokering the deals that make or break borders.

Bardic Ambassadors excel at their calling. Their naturally high charisma combined with their broad selection of skills enables them to mingle with the elite. Their magical talents give them an edge in bargaining. Ambassadors are also targets; nothing ends a negotiation more quickly than the death of one of the participants. Yet bards are not easy targets. They are skilled fighters as well as magicians, more than a match for most assassins.

Bardic Lore also serves an ambassador well. He has a chance to know just about any given piece of information. Things that seem trivial to others are of vital importance in negotiations. For example, if a Bard knows that a particular kingdom had poor rainfall this year, he then knows that the nation will most likely need grain. That is information he can use to leverage either the ambassador of the kingdom in question or one of that kingdom's rivals.



Adventuring: Although it might not seem like it ambassadors are one of the most adventurous of the bard concepts. No other archetype is thrown into the same level of intrigue, danger and drama as these brave souls. Whether they are 'troubleshooters' who are sent to difficult spots or long-term liaisons with established allies ambassadors find themselves in the thick of things. Sometimes their 'diplomatic' efforts include activities like spying, corrupting officials, infiltrating secured areas and even slipping into the occasional dungeon to see what kind of opposition the local government faces.

Role-Playing: All ambassadors know the value of connections. They make contacts as quickly as most people have meals. Ambassadors also routinely expect to enter situations that are charged with tension and turn them to their favour. Living up to those expectation leads most ambassadors to serene confidence bordering on arrogance. They have succeeded at some of the most difficult tasks imaginable already; what could possibly be worse?

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Benefits: Ambassadors gain a +4 skill bonus to all Diplomacy, Innuendo and Sense Motive checks. When on missions for their patron they receive a salary sufficient to support a minor noble (typically 200 gold per month, but it could be more in some areas).

Penalties: Ambassadors must choose one patron. This patron can be any established and large organisation or nation. The patron may command the Bard to service at any time, and reasonably expect the Bard to obey. If he fails to do so, he loses the respect of his peers and his skill bonuses. The bonuses may be regained by spending six months in service to the patron. Respect can only be earned through role-playing.

ARTIST

The setting sun. The blinding rain. The flickering flames of a campfire. The babble of a brook. All of these things and more inspire the Artist. They see beauty everywhere. Furthermore they translate that beauty into a form that others can understand.



Artists possess the unique ability to express beauty in a myriad of forms. They see into the heart of the world, understand it and put forth that understanding in a way that others can appreciate. How they do it differs from Artist to Artist. No two have the same style, even if they share a common medium.

Most artists choose a handful of mediums to express their vision. These differ from Artist to Artist. Some choose music. Some choose poetry and language. Others seek out the beauty of painting, stone, or wood. Bardic artists typically chose a performance art, like theatre or music but sometimes dabble in the other creative formats.

Adventuring: Artists tend towards an exploration model of adventuring. They seek out new experiences to further their artistic vision. Most treat their adventuring skills as secondary to their true calling. However, their ability to function as backup for any of the primary roles in an adventuring party makes them a strong group contributor.

Role-Playing: Artists come in two basic types: social and anti-social. Social artists see a benefit to themselves and their art in interacting with other people. They try to reach out to others so they can better express their vision. Anti-social artists are exactly the opposite. In their minds other people distract them from the important business of experiencing the world. Interactions with others sully their vision of the 'real world'.

Benefits: Artists may select one 'method' of expression at 1st level, and an additional one every two levels thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th, etc.). They gain a +2 circumstance bonus to any skill roll involving that method. Available methods include anything within the Performance skill, as well as sculpture, painting, calligraphy and various visual arts.

Penalties: Artists are by their very nature open to the world and its sensations. They also have trouble staying focused on anything that does not attract their attention. As such, they are -1 on all Will checks to resist enchantments and charms, and it takes them 12x (as opposed to 10x) as long to perform a skill when 'taking ten'.

ASPIRANT

Everyone listens to the legends told by their elders. Sitting around the heart with the grandfather of your family telling of the heroes of old is the most common form of entertainment in a pre-literate

society. These stories thrill the children and amuse the elder. Children hear them and hope for a brighter, heroic future when they can be as great as the legends themselves. When they grow up they put them aside though, living their day-to-day lives until their own children are ready to wonder.

In a few cases those stories light a fire within the child's heart. Those children grow up to be aspirants, men and women who strive to re-enact the legends of their people. They aspire to become like the greatest heroes and villains. Whatever their heroes did the Aspirant attempts, be it fair or foul.

In their quest, the aspirant may acquire fame and glory, wealth and power. All of these things are simply by-products of their true mission. They live for the moments when they can most fully realise their heroic dreams, becoming if only for an instant the heroes that they idolise and adore. Many become legends in their own right, their deeds passed down to light a fire in the hearts of a new generation.

Adventuring: An aspirant brings a great deal to an adventuring party. As a team member he has Bardic abilities, as well as an unflagging zeal for adventure. As a leader he can ferret out the most difficult and horrendous quests to accomplish and launch the party towards them. When out on his own, the Aspirant is a knight-errant, seeking out villainy and evil wherever he can find it.

Role-Playing: Aspirants make up the bulk of what one would think of as the 'classic' Bardic adventurers. Daring, foolish, heroic and courageous, these Bards take to the road to right wrongs and do great things. They have stars in their eyes and music in their hearts. For them the trials of the journey mark their progress along their path. They savour obstacles, comparing them to the difficulties faced by various legendary heroes.

Benefits: In keeping with their preoccupation with myths and legends all aspirants receive a +2 knowledge bonus to their Bardic Lore rolls to recognise references to mythic places, items and people. Additionally once per day the Aspirant may call upon his fervent belief in heroics to grant himself a +2 morale bonus to any one roll. This is a free action, but must be declared before the player makes the roll.

Penalties: Most aspirants are a bit naive. They learned about the world from epic stories, not harsh experience. Therefore they have a -2 circumstance penalty on any attempt to Sense Motive, and generally are likely to believe anything that someone tells them.

CANTOR

Not all bards draw their powers from arcane sources. Some use song to bridge the gap between the mundane and the divine. For them making music becomes a form of worship as powerful as any prayer. They serve their gods almost like priests, carrying the truth of their belief in their hearts and voices.

Bards who draw power from divine sources call themselves cantors. They may be associated with a formal religious organisation. If they are then they most likely do not rise very high in the temple hierarchy. Their sacrifice of song is more valuable to the temple out among the people, where it can inspire others. Trapping a cantor's voice in the dusty halls of church politics seems almost impious.

Most cantors content themselves with working in small congregations or as part of a larger choral organisation. The intensely personal nature of their worship allows them to largely ignore the social aspect of their faith. A rare few even break with their temples entirely, pursuing their personal faith at odds with the establishment.



CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Adventuring: Cantors adventure for many reasons. They might be fleeing from a misunderstanding with their home church. Some travel from temple to temple, spreading the joy of their music wherever they go. Cantors also sometimes take long pilgrimages, relying on their native wits and musical abilities to see them to the many holy sites scattered though out the land. In a party the cantor functions like other bards although his magic sometimes differs in its effect.

Role Playing: Cantors possess a deep and abiding faith in a god or an entire pantheon. Every song they sing or spell they cast represents a prayer to their patron figure. This faith forms the core of their outlook on life. It also provides them with solace in times of trouble. A cantor knows without a doubt that his gods hear and answer his prayers.

Benefits: Cantors are divine spell casters. They do not have to make a spell failure check when wearing armour.

Penalties: Cantors must pray for spells like other divine spell casters. The Games Master selects the time of prayer based on the god or pantheon worshiped. Additionally a cantor who displeases his patron may lose his magical abilities until he undergoes *atonement*.



EXPLORER

Not all Bard are eager singers making their way thought the world with silver tongues. There are those who spend their entire lives out exploring the world, seeking out adventure and newness for their own sake. These fellows rely on their wits to keep them alive. A healthy dose of magic and bladework never hurts either.

Explorers search out new places and things for the joy of discovery. They constantly search for rumours, myths and legends to lead them to their next adventure. Some are scholars, questing for obscure truths. Others come from more colourful backgrounds, drawn into the world by their love of adventure and an insatiable wanderlust.

Bards are uniquely well suited for exploration no matter what their background. Their diverse skills give them an edge that other classes simply do not enjoy. By combining solid combat skills with appropriate exploration abilities plus healing and minor magic a Bard can deal with just about anything his travels might throw at him. Add to that his Bardic Lore ability (representing either long scholarly study or the practical wisdom of the road) and the Bard becomes a one-man exploratory party.

Adventuring: Explorers are adventurers in the truest sense of the word. They seek out and explore anything new that thing they can find. They boldly go where angels and demons both fear to tread. If there is an ancient ruin, a forgotten city, or a cryptic map you can pretty much bet that an explorer is going to make a direct path to it. In a party, he brings diverse talents and a strong focus on practical adventuring skills that can only be matched by a Rogue.

Role-Playing: Explorers are typically daring, confident and very bold. They view life as a constant series of challenges to overcome, each one more exciting than the last. Every day becomes another chance to learn something new. Every night is a chance to talk to other people and learn their stories. Every inn is a wellspring of new places to go and new rumours to track down.

Benefits: Bardic explorers have a lot in common with their Roguish cousins. As such, Rogue is always considered a favoured class for them. This counted as an additional favoured class and does not affect the base favoured class of their race.

Penalties: Explorers are less well-versed in music than their compatriots. Perform is always a cross-class skill for them even if they multi-class or join a prestige class with Perform as a class skill.

LAW KEEPER

Every society needs someone who knows its history. Someone who knows the laws, the customs and the history of the people and can transmit that knowledge to future generations. These people are law keepers. Bards excel in this role as they do in so many others.

Bards bring three very important things to the law keeper role; knowledge, wit and wisdom. They have a broad depth of knowledge about the past that guides them in making decisions. Most are capable of transforming that academic knowledge into real



examples people can use in their lives. Furthermore those who live the life of a Law Keeper become very versed in solving everyday riddles. They earn a reputation for wisdom that comes from long experience.

Law keepers might or might not be part of the local political establishment. Some are officially appointed magistrates caring for a town or village. Others are local wisefolk, mayors, or even hermits that people turn to in times of trouble.

Adventuring: Law keepers are unlikely adventurers. When they do leave their home communities, they are most likely either journeying to consult with someone or attempting to track down a criminal. Those tracking down criminals tend to be very focused on their task. A few 'circuit' Law Keepers wander a bit more, as they take care of several towns/villages and must split their time evenly.

Role-Playing: Law keepers are perhaps the most reserved of the bardic archetypes. They keep their thoughts to themselves. In part this is because they do not want to influence the judgement of others unduly. Most of their reserve comes from the role that they must play. People come to them for impartial judgements. If they are involved, then their views may become suspect. Therefore they hold themselves apart from others, hoping to do the most good by being cold.

Benefits: Law keepers may be of lawful alignment without losing their bardic abilities and have a +4 on all Sense Motive checks to oppose Bluff attempts.

Penalties: Law keepers have a sense of duty to the past and to other people. If they fail at any point to assist someone who requests their judgement they receive a -1 morale penalty to all rolls until they redress their error.

LORE MASTER

Buried in the forgotten lore of a thousand years are secrets that can shape the world. Lore masters are bards who pursue that knowledge with the strength at their disposal. They let nothing stand in their way. Hope, fear, terror, death itself; all are obstacles that the Bard will overcome in his quest to know

Lore masters come from all walks of life and from everywhere in the world. They are united by their unquenchable desire for knowledge. What can be known, they will know. What cannot be known they will discover, isolate and reveal to its fullest extent.

CHARACTER CONCEPTS

Nothing lies beyond the questing probe of their intellect or their hunger.

Among themselves lore masters participate in intense rivalries. Even friendly lore masters compete with one another constantly to see who knows the most. Between enemies these competitions become deadly, with threats and counter threats so subtle that only another lore master can perceive them.

Adventuring: When out on the road lore masters assist their companions in a variety of ways. Their knowledge of matters both mundane and magical is without equal. They also possess seemingly uncanny magical abilities, a gift for languages and healing abilities. Their most useful role however is that of instigator – their insatiable curiosity drives them on when others just sit around. There is always something new to uncover, and always someone who wishes that the secret stay hidden.

Role-Playing: Curiosity defines the lore master. Not just the subtle prompting of the idly curious, but the deep, driving need to know that shapes a man and his existence. This curiosity borders on obsession. Those around the lore master would almost certainly call it

madness. Many will ignore even mortal dangers to discover one list bit of information.

Benefits: The strength of a lore master lies in his deep knowledge of the world. Therefore all Lore Masters receive +3 Skill points per bard level that must be spent on Knowledge skills. They also receive a generic +1 bonus to all Bardic Lore rolls.

Penalties: Scholars by nature, lore masters are less adept at fighting than their more aggressive cousins. As such they use the magician combat bonus progression rather than the rogue/bard combat bonus progression.

MINSTRELS

Wandering the highways and byways of the world, minstrels carry news, music and good cheer to the benighted corners of the world. They typically travel the same routes for years. Local families offer them food and shelter in return for news and entertainment. Sometimes though they get caught up in a whim and set forth to parts unknown.

Of all the archetypes of the bard class, this one fits most closely with the “classical” bard of myth.



Minstrels are by turns wanderers and scoundrels, heroes and poets. They master music, using it as their sword and shield in the wilds of the world. With a smile they charm a crowd and with a laugh they can defuse the most dangerous of situations.

For all of the glamour associated with the minstrel's life it can be hard. People welcome strangers in the summer and fall. Even then if they do not hay bails and hedgerows provide easy shelter. Winter and spring pose more difficult challenges, both because of weather and lower stocks of food. During these seasons the Minstrel relies on his charm to provide nourishment for his body and soul.

Adventuring: Minstrels make natural adventurers. They can be found anywhere, have a good selection of skills to assist their friends and have no close ties with any communities. They lighten the long nights on the road with entertainment. Most importantly they know how to gain entrance to and trust among the surliest of folk.

Role-Playing: Minstrels are typically easy going, humorous and happy. They also tend towards the gregarious side; the ease with which they make friends can mean the difference between having a good meal and eating rotten turnips. Many minstrels also exhibit a free mentality towards other people's property. It's not that they steal, but simply that they borrow what they need when they need it.

Benefits: At first level minstrels gain one bonus Bardic Feat. Every six levels thereafter (6th, 12th and 18th) the Minstrel gains an additional bonus Bardic Feat. These Feats are in addition to their normal Feat progression. Bonus Feats can only be used to acquire Feats that are Bardic in nature, not General, Fighter, or Meta-Magic Feats.

Penalties: Minstrels training in music comes at a price. They have less time to work on their sword work and magical skills. As such, they may only use simple weapons and wear light armour. Additionally Alchemy, Concentration and Spell Craft are considered cross-class skills. Minstrels may not learn the Decipher Script, Scry, or Use Magical Devices skills at all.

NATURALIST

The original thread of the bardic tradition traces back to ancient druidic cults. The mainstream of bardic knowledge long ago passed beyond the bounds of these cults. A few followers of the old way still linger on in



the quiet places. Among the great trees and hallowed groves they raise up music as old as mankind.

The followers of this old tradition call themselves naturalists. They study the ways of the wild. Many work directly with druids and rangers. Their close connection with the druidic magic allows them to use powers their more civilised cousins left behind.

Naturalists assist druids during the rituals marking the transitions of the seasons and the rise and fall of natural cycles (day/night, the lunar seasons, etc). They also keep their own rituals in which they offer up their musical talents as sacrifice.

Adventuring: Naturalists make natural adventurers. Like all bards the chance for new experiences fascinates them. Their tie to the ancient mysteries motivates them to protect the land and the wild spaces. Naturalists working with existing druidic orders might also travel under the command of their religious leader, perhaps as a messenger or envoy.

Role Playing: Naturalists have a deep respect for nature. This respect manifests itself in a variety of ways. They may spend hours looking at places of great natural beauty. They become enraged when faced with



CHARACTER CONCEPTS

the wanton destruction of wilderness. Many select natural themes for their artistic expression and use very traditional instruments or chants. They generally get along with barbarians, druids and rangers by often regard 'civilised' bards and wizards with deep suspicion.

Benefits: Naturalists are divine spell casters. They do not have to make a spell failure check when wearing armour. Furthermore the spells from the plant and animal domains are added to their spell list.

Penalties: Naturalists must obey the druidic restrictions regarding weapons and armour. They do not know how to use bardic weapons but are limited to using weapons from the druid list. Furthermore they add +2 to the minimum Perform skill required to use bardic music abilities.

SKALDS

Far away from the gaudy world of cities men make music that expresses the ferocity and grandeur of an older time. They chant and drum, using instruments that were ancient when men first learned to write. Their music lifts up their hearts. It strengthens them in their constant struggle for survival.

Skalds are the bards of the barbarian peoples. They serve as living repositories of the stories of a thousand generations. Their songs remind the tribes of the glory and the folly of those who came before. By doing so Skalds lead their neighbours during the rough times their world inflicts upon them.

A skald's training is not that much different from his more warlike brothers during the day. He works the fields, hunts and fights alongside the others. But at night while they sleep he spends long hours learning the chants and history of his people. On their holidays he works, singing the stories as he learned them from his master. When they go to war he marches beside them, shouldering not only his share of the fighting but also the responsibility of remembering the names and deeds of those who will die.

Adventuring: Skalds make excellent adventurers. They can stand in the front lines with the other fighters, heal as needed, and offer a variety of combat support abilities through their musical abilities. After the fights they are knowledgeable healers and often wise commanders, drawing on thousands of years of battle experience passed down through their epics.

Role-Playing: The life of a skald is not an easy one. It does not make easy men. Skalds typically exhibit the intense toughness and pride that come from long hours of labour. The trails they go through make them a breed apart strengthened in ways that other men can only imagine. They also possess a driven intensity hammered into them during the long, tedious nights of their study.

Benefits: Skalds are more warriors than they are magicians or rogues. As such, they roll a d8 for hit points and



may use any martial weapon. Wilderness Lore is considered a class skill for them.

Penalties: Skald's combat training comes at a heavy price. They may cast one less spell per spell level than other Bards. Additionally they cannot cast spells for which they may cast zero spells per day even if their Charisma grants them a bonus spell of that level.

STORM CROW

Around cold hearth fires peasants whisper to one another about dark cloaked figures who appear just before battles. They say that these figures are not men, but demons come to bathe in the blood about to spill. No one knows how the figures learn of battles or what side they serve.

In truth these figures are storm crows, a rare kind of bard who sees battle as the crucible in which epic tales are forged. They serve no master above their own grisly art. Storm crows watch battles as they unfold. After the conflict they walk out onto the blood soaked ground. There storm crows gather up the tales of the dead and dying. Later they weave those tales into an epic saga, heaping glory on the fallen.

For their own part storm crows argue they provide an invaluable service. Without their tales the fallen would vanish from memory. Held up as legends though the fallen have a chance to live on forever. Even common soldiers become elevated to the role of heroes in their tales.

Adventuring: Storm crows constantly travel. Their chosen subject matter of battle and woe shifts from place to place. Many find it difficult to arrive before the battles begin. A few take to travelling with larger adventuring companies, reasoning that such groups often find themselves in the centre of conflicts that span whole empires.

Role Playing: Storm crows tend towards defensiveness. Although they feel their artistic calling is important others treat them poorly. Many develop a healthy respect for violence as they see the graphic results of it quite often. Generally storm crows get along well

with barbarians, fighters, and rangers who share their conviction that death can be glorious.

Benefits: Storm crows constantly look forward to violence. They gain a +2 to any roll to detect ambushers or avoid a surprise attack. They also gain a +1 circumstance bonus to any Diplomacy skill check when dealing with the families of individuals they immortalised in their epics.

Penalties: Anyone not of chaotic alignment finds the storm crow's bloodlust and choice of locations somewhat disturbing. The storm crow suffers a -2 penalty to any Diplomacy or Innuendo checks used on non-chaotic creatures.





CHARACTER CONCEPTS

TALESPINNER

Tall tales make up a large part of any Bard's repertoire. Everyone enjoys a good yarn after all. Talespinners differ in that their 'tales' derive from the truth. Truths they themselves have gone out to make.

Talespinners believe that no tale is as compelling as a true one. So rather than retell the stories of old, they go out and find adventure for themselves. Whatever they do finds its way into their stories. Those stories might not resemble the adventure as those who lived though it remember it, but the kernel of the truth is always there.

Nothing angers a talespinner like a false story. They regard such things as unspeakable blasphemies. Every tale must be true but not necessarily factual. That is to say that the exact details of the tale don't have to match to reality but the essence of the story, what really happened, must be what did happen. Only then can the story touch the hearts of its listeners and transform the world for the better.

Adventuring: Talespinners are exactly the sort of person an adventuring group needs to survive. They keep the camp cheerful with their stories, fight when needed, and heal when doing other things. Their knowledge of history and culture ranges all over the world. Most are expert musicians and performers as well. If nothing else a party with a talespinner will never want for a place to stay, as their stories are always welcome.

Role-Playing: Talespinners are larger than life. They act dramatically, are overly emotional, and live life to its fullest. There is nothing inhibited or held back about them. Every moment becomes an adventure. Every event represents a new story that they can weave into their lives.

Benefits: In order to survive as a talespinner one must possess extraordinary courage and daring. As such, they receive a +3 morale bonus on saving throws vs. fear, and gain +1 hit point per Bard level.

Penalties: Talespinners are not noted for their self-control or for their even temperaments. Resisting any spell or effect that alters the talespinners emotions (except for inducing fear) is at a -3 penalty.

TRICKSTER

Though the ages mortals used humour as a teaching method, a weapon, entertainment and a political tool. It keeps people happy, shows them their own follies

and even has its place at the most sombre of religious ceremonies.

Bardic tricksters make humour a way of life. It is their method of expression. They regard jokes, riddles and the sundry mechanics of jesting as the basic tools for self-expression. Nothing is too serious for them to take lightly or too dangerous for them not to find humour in.

Do not mistake a trickster's methods for his intentions or his heart. They use humour as a tool. Their intentions may be anything at all. They may be striking back against an evil empire. They may just like to see people laugh. Some are spies that use humour to deflect attention while they slither into the underbelly of a country. Others attempt to enlighten while they entertain, passing of profound wisdom as a joke and a laugh.

Adventuring: Tricksters make uneasy travelling companions. They are quite handy in a pinch though. Their humour can drive away the worst doldrums. Comedy requires quick reaction times, so most tricksters react to changing circumstances with remarkable aplomb. They also push their companions mercilessly, cannot be trusted to keep a straight face and are almost guaranteed to say the 'wrong thing' at the wrong time.

Role-Playing: Finding the truth that really stings takes patience, reserve and a good deal of practical knowledge. Despite their outward façade all tricksters possess these qualities in abundance. Not that anyone could ever tell. Tricksters keep other people at arms length with jokes, stories and whatever humour they can muster. Most feel that it is important that their audience never really know anything about them. It helps them to maintain their reserve and find the humour in the situation.

Benefits: Tricksters are +4 to any Bluff roll to confuse or befuddle another person. Any mind effecting effect that they produce that generates a confused state has its DC increased by +2.

Penalties: Tricksters are simply not good at Diplomacy. They receive a -4 penalty to all Diplomacy rolls. Additionally they must make a Wisdom Check (DC 15) when in a stressful situation to avoid attempting humour.

VAGABOND

Wanderlust takes the heart of many young men and women. They feel an irresistible urge to see new places. The desire to find out what is over the next hill gets them up before the dawn. It drives them through the cities. It harries them through the wilderness. No matter what they try, or where they go, they cannot seem to settle down. They are vagabonds, wanderers who have no home.

Bardic vagabonds are not the result of a formal school. They are men and women who gained their knowledge by wandering the world. They picked up a bit of magic from one travelling companion. A wizard they walked with once taught them a bit about magic. Their herb lore they learned from a travelling doctor, and their sword work comes from scuffles they couldn't avoid any other way.

Vagabonds recognise one another as a kind of 'Brotherhood of the Road'. Unless there is a pressing reason for them to interfere with one another they do not. If one needs help others provide it as they can. Most travel alone, but sometimes a band of two or three will get together for a short period of time.

Art, especially music, plays an important role in the travels of a vagabond. They record the sights they have seen in their songs and poetry. This allows them to preserve the beauty they encounter. More importantly it allows them to share it with others, so that it will never be lost to the world.

Adventuring: Vagabonds make great adventurers and travelling companions. They wander already; it is easy to get them from one place to another. The encounters they meet along the way are part of the reason they are wandering after all. Additionally their plethora of practical skills makes them useful companions for almost any group.

Role-Playing: The common bond between vagabonds lies in their wanderlust. As a rule they simply cannot abide being in a single place for any length of time. Each day they look to the horizon for something new. If they fail to find it, it is time for them to move on. What most people think of as hardships (little sleep, short rations, weary feet) they regard as part of the travelling experience.

Benefits: Vagabonds gain the ability to use Wilderness Lore (in rural settings) or Diplomacy (in urban settings) as a Scrounge skill. They can find any item, assuming that they can beat a DC equal to the silver piece cost of the item. This scrounging attempt takes one day, and the Vagabond cannot take 10 or 20 on this roll.

Penalties: Staying in one place for any length of time makes a vagabond uncomfortable. Their wanderlust builds up, distracting them from what is going on around them. For every week that the vagabond does not travel they receive a -1 penalty to all of their rolls. This penalty is cumulative (-2 for the second week, -3 for the third, etc.). It has a maximum penalty equal to the vagabond's total character level.



THE PRESTIGE BARD

Bards in story and legend range from simple singers to masters of magic. Some are priests, others lore masters. The sheer variety of roles the bard can portray makes it difficult to pigeonhole them into a single category.

This chapter will provide a variety of paths that an experienced bard can take. Each path allows the bard to focus on a single aspect of his unique abilities. This focus comes at a price; the bard loses a part of his flexibility in return for great power in a single area.

These prestige classes run the gamut from focused performers to masters of ancient lore. All can be viable adventurers, although some represent archetypes best suited for political or intrigue oriented games.

DREAM DANCER

Stories about the origins of the dream dance range from the sublime to the profane. Some say that it comes from the highest orders of angels, gifts with which to other men their true hearts. Others claim that it originates in the darkest pits. What truth hides in these or any other claim remains unknown.

For the dream dancer the only truth comes in the rhythm of the dance. Whatever the origins of the ancient measure, their flow and pattern sweep the dancer to a new place. Following them the dancer reaches into the hearts of others, bringing forth the threads of deepest desires and wildest dreams. Spinning patterns of flesh and bone become the loom upon which the dancer weaves those threads into the fabric of reality.

The dream dancer's art takes him to the furthest reaches of the human soul. There he subjects himself to spenders and horrors bounded only by man's imagination. In return for his efforts he receives scorn, mistrust and even open hostility from the rest of the world.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a dream dancer the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Perform (dance): 10 ranks

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 3rd level arcane illusion spells

Reflex Save: +8 or higher

Class Skills

The dream dancer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Innuendo (Wis, trained only), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pocket (Dex), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str) and Tumble (Dex). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 6+ Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the dream dancer.



The Dream Dancer

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	See the dream
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Dance of the veil
3	+2	+1	+3	+1	Prediction
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Patterns of misdirection
5	+3	+1	+4	+1	The dream dance

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A dream dancer is proficient with all simple weapons. A dream dancer is also proficient with light armour, medium armour and shields. Not that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour or equipment carried.

See the Dream: At 1st level the dream dancer develops extraordinary empathy with other people. This gift grants him a +4 on all Sense Motive skill checks as well as a +2 bonus on all Perform checks.

Dance of the Veil (Sp): At 2nd level the dream dancer develops the ability to shift his appearance based on what the target would like to see. A number of times per day the equal to his dream dancer level the dancer may grant himself a +6 circumstance bonus to Bluff, Disguise, Diplomacy, Innuendo, or Perform skill checks. This bonus lasts for the duration of the skill check. The dancer does not have any control over how his features change to put the target at ease.

Prediction (Su): At 3rd level the dream dancer's empathic link with his audience becomes even stronger. As a free action he can make a Sense Motive skill check (DC 30) to accurately predict how a specific target will react to an impending statement or situation. This ability allows the dancer to predict a target's reaction to a particular performance, as well as his anticipated actions in combat and how he will react to various attempts at manipulation.

Patterns of Misdirection (Sp): At 4th level the dream dancer's dancing becomes equal to a *hypnotic pattern* spell cast at a level equal to the dancer's character level. The dancer may invoke this ability one time per day per positive point of his Charisma modifier.

The Dream Dance (Sp): At 5th level the dream dancer masters the dream dance. After a full round of dancing

all targets within 30 ft. must make a Will save with a DC equal to the dream dancer's Perform skill check. Those that fail succumb to the lure of the dance. They see their wildest fantasies and deepest desires played out in front of them. The victims stand helpless for 1d6 rounds after the performance ends. If attacked they snap out of the illusion but are stunned for 1d4 rounds as they attempt to return to reality.

ELDER

Sitting by the fireside in the camps of prehistoric people the wizened elder rasps out the history and legends of his people to a new generation. His voice rolls with the thunder that rocked the sky when his people's heroes stole fire. The laughter of a thousand generations of tricksters cackles along with his humour. His lore embodies the past and so nourishes the future.

Becoming an elder requires extensive training. It also demands utmost sacrifice. The elder must learn all the ancient lore. He must also give up thoughts of personal gain, self-promotion, or success. His focus becomes the future of his people. Nothing else truly matters to him.

Not all elders manage to live up to their lofty goals. Some use their position for petty gratification. Others betray the trust given them, using community resources for their own gain. These creatures drain the life from their homes, eventually either destroying them or being replaced by a more suitable candidate.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become an elder the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Knowledge (history): 7 ranks

Profession (lawyer): 7 ranks

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Perform: 5 ranks
Language: Any 5
Feats: Skill Focus (history)
Special: Must have the bardic knowledge ability

Class Skills

The elder's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Intimidate (Cha), Intuit Direction (Wis), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int) and Use Magical Device (Cha, exclusive skill). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 6+ Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the elder.



Weapon and Armour Proficiency: An elder is proficient with all simple weapons. An elder is also proficient with light armour, medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour and equipment carried.

Wisdom of the Ages: At 1st level the elder gets a +3 bonus on all bardic knowledge checks. This bonus improves to +5 at 3rd level and to +7 at 5th level.

Voice of Command (Su): At 2nd level the elder may issue a one word command (as the *command* spell) to any target that you successfully intimidate using an intimidate skill check. Issuing this command is a free action that can only affect a specific target once per day. The target does not get a saving throw or a spell resistance check, but this is a mind affecting ability and subject to all of the restrictions associated with that.

Wisdom's Shield (Su): At 3rd level the elder may add his Wisdom modifier to his AC, Fortitude saving throws and Reflex saving throws. These bonuses apply even if the elder is flat-footed, stunned, or otherwise incapacitated.

Wisdom's Sword (Su): At 4th level the elder may verbally assault one target within 60 ft. The elder takes the opportunity to explain to the target, in detail, why he is a fool and why his actions will bring death and destruction upon him, his family and his people. This assault is a standard action that takes a full round to come into effect. If the target fails a Will save with a DC equal to 10+ the elder's character level he suffers a penalty to all rolls and skill checks equal to the elder's Wisdom modifier for 3d4 rounds. The elder may use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier.

Will of the Ancients (Su): At 5th level the elder gains the ability to contact the spirits of his ancestors. In effect, he can invoke a *divination* or *contact other plane* spell once per day as a full round action.

GRANDMASTER

Some bards find the intricate art of music more compelling than any other pursuit. These musicians struggle to master the most elusive and transitory of all arts. The perfection they seek lives for but a moment, dwelling forever after in the only memory of the artist and his audience.

The Elder

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Wisdom of the ages (+3)
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Voice of command, +1 Caster Level
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Wisdom's shield, Wisdom of the ages (+5)
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Wisdom's sword, +1 Caster Level
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Will of the ancients, Wisdom of the ages (+7)

This dedication does not make them any less proficient in dealing with others. In order to achieve true mastery a musician must reach into his audience's hearts. This empathy keeps the grandmaster grounded in reality while his soul soars into the lofty heights inspired by his art.

A Grandmaster obsession leads him to become an embodiment of the musical arts. He practices daily. He seeks out new experiences solely for the sake of the music they reveal to him. Wherever he goes he leaves behind in the hearts of those who met him an impression of perfect beauty, captured just for a moment in the notes of a song.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a grandmaster the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Perform: 12 ranks

Feats: Any 3 Mysteries

Special: Must have the bardic music ability, must be of mature adult age or older

Class Skills

The grandmaster's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pockets (Dex), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), Tumble

(Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha, exclusive skill). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 6+ Int modifier



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Class Features

All of the following are class features of the grandmaster.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A grandmaster is proficient with all simple weapons. A grandmaster is also proficient with light armour, medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour and equipment carried.

Student of Music: The character's level in grandmaster count towards his total number of bardic music effects per day. Thus Calvin, 10th level bard/9th level grandmaster may use bardic music nineteen times per day.

Bonus Mystery: At 1st level and every 2 levels thereafter (3rd, 5th, 7th and 9th) the grandmaster gains a bonus mystery. Details about the mysteries can be found in the *Mysteries of Music* chapter of this book.

Bonus Bard Feat: At 2nd, 6th and 10th level the grandmaster gains a bonus feat. This feat must either be a feat marked as being for bards only, or that requires the bardic music ability as a prerequisite.

Majesty of Music: At 4th level the grandmaster's music becomes difficult to resist. The DC to resist any bardic music effect the bard creates is raised by +2.

Mastery of Music: At 8th level the grandmaster gains total mastery of musical expression. He may roll two dice when making a Perform skill check and keep the higher of the two rolls.

Perfect Mastery: At 10th level the grandmaster has attained perfect mastery of the mysteries of music. By spending 100 experience points he can grant himself access to any specific mystery of music for a single round.

JESTER

Comedy represents one of the two most ancient facets of dramatic arts. Humour is both the first thing that mortals discover and their first and final refuge in the face of horror. Jests and laughter permeate all cultures, races and times.

Most people consider a jester just a clown, a fool who makes jokes to please others. In truth a jester holds the keys to an ancient art that not only shows him the absolute truth but also gives him ways of saying it that leave others laughing and uncomfortable at the same time.

A jester may present clownish, foolish, or even downright insane behaviour as the situation warrants. He laughs in the face of fear, makes fools of kings and pricks the egos of the righteous. Yet always he must keep in mind that those that he taunts can destroy him with a whim. He walks on a razor's edge where the slightest miscalculation could spell death.

The Grandmaster

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Student of music, Bonus mystery
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Bonus bard feat
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Bonus mystery
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	Majesty of music
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	Bonus mystery
6	+4	+2	+5	+5	Bonus bard feat
7	+5	+2	+5	+5	Bonus mystery
8	+6	+2	+6	+6	Mastery of music
9	+6	+3	+6	+6	Bonus mystery
10	+7	+3	+7	+7	Bonus bard feat, Perfect mastery

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a jester the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Must be of chaotic alignment

Bluff: 8 ranks

Diplomacy: 8 ranks

Perform (comedy): 8 ranks

Sense Motive: 8 ranks

Class Skills

The jester's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pockets (Dex), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int,

exclusive skill), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha, exclusive skill). See *Core Rulebook 1* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 6+ Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the jester.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A jester is proficient with all simple weapons. A jester is also proficient with light armour, medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour and equipment carried.

Immune to Fear: At 1st level the jester becomes completely immune to all fear effects.

Immune to Confusion: At 1st level the jester becomes completely immune to all effects inflicting a *confused* state.

Mask of the Jester: At 2nd level the jester's mind hides behind the mask of his art. It is not possible to detect his thoughts or read his emotions in any way. This includes the Sense Motive skill as well as magical spells like *detect thoughts* or *discern lies*.

Jibe (Sp): At 2nd level the jester gains the ability to enrage his foes. By taking a full round action to taunt an opponent the jester can lower his target's AC and attack rolls by his Charisma modifier for a number of hours equal to his jester level. The target can resist this effect by making a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + the jester's character level + the jester's Charisma modifier.

Jester's Laugh (Sp): At 3rd level the jester has learned how to make other's laugh. By taking a full round action and laughing hysterically he can cause all intelligent creatures (Int 5 or higher) to burst into laughter. This has the effect of a calm emotion's spell, with a DC equal to 10 + the jester's class level + the jester's Charisma modifier. The effect lasts for 1d4 rounds. The jester may use his laugh once per day per jester level.

Caper: At 4th level the jester learns the final secrets of distraction. When he takes a full defence action he may select one target per positive point of his Charisma modifier. Every round that target must make a Will



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The Jester

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Immune to fear, Immune to confusion
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Mask of the jester, Jibe
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Jester's laugh
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Caper
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Light behind the lie

save vs. a DC equal to 10 + the jester's class level + the jester's Charisma modifier. If the target fails he may not attack the jester that round. If he succeeds he still must hit the jester's AC, modified by the full defence action..

Light Behind the Lie (Sp): At 5th level the jester gains *true sight*, as the spell. Invoking this ability is a standard action. It lasts for 10 rounds. The jester may use the light behind the lie a number of times per day equal to 3 + his Charisma modifier.

SENESCHAL

Working from the crown doesn't seem like an overly adventurous occupation to most heroes. They see the constant drudgery of the accounts. They hear about the long nights spent in discussions with farmers. It all sounds rather unglamorous. Certainly such tasks have less danger and reward than slaying dragons, rescuing maidens and saving whole kingdoms?

Those who take up the challenge of the seneschal have a hard road. At the end of it lies not fame or glory, but the quiet power that comes from knowledge and trust. Seneschals run the household of nobles and rule their servants. Those who work in important households have access to information, resources and influence that even the most powerful adventurer would be hard pressed to match.

Seneschals must master finance, diplomacy, heraldry and commerce. Their work encompasses all aspects of their domain's existence, from planning feasts to ensuring that sufficient resources exist to survive times of trouble. They interact with nobles regularly. They haggle with merchants. They stand as judge and often jury in domestic affairs. In short they become leaders

of their domain, second only to the master of the house himself.

Most seneschals leave their adventuring days behind in favour of their real work. Others take 'holidays' during which they have trusted assistants fill in for them while they gallivant around.

Hit Die: d4

Requirements

To qualify to become a seneschal the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Diplomacy: 8 ranks

Knowledge (nobles and nobility): 5 ranks

Profession (merchant): 8 Ranks

Special: Intelligence 13+, Charisma 13+, must take a place on the staff of a noble house

Class Skills

The seneschal's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 4+ Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the seneschal.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A seneschal is proficient with all simple and martial weapons. A seneschal is also proficient with light armour, medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour and equipment carried.

Resources: At 1st level the seneschal gains access to the resources of his house. He may request services or goods totalling to no more than 50 gp. In effect the seneschal purchases these things on 'credit' against his master's wealth. He receives access to another 50gp of 'credit' per month.

Master of the House: At 1st level the seneschal has 2 1st level experts assigned to assist him in his duties. Every level thereafter he gains an additional 1st level expert, with skills of his choice. The seneschal's master will not replace these servants if they die in service. The seneschal may, of course, replace them with his own reputation or money.

Words of Authority: At 2nd level the seneschal can speak for his master in minor matters. The seneschal can act as judge over minor civil matters in his master's domain, or expect to receive assistance from the local law in other domains. So long as he himself does not break any laws the local authority will give him the benefit of the doubt, granting him a +6 bonus to all Bluff and Diplomacy skill checks made when dealing with them.

Exchange of Favours: At 3rd level the seneschal develops a reputation among others in his profession. Once per week he can call in a 'favour' from another seneschal. In effect this allows him to take 20 on a single Diplomacy roll when dealing with a merchant or other person providing services or goods. At 6th level the seneschal can accumulate enough favours to use this ability twice per week. When he achieves 9th level he can exchange favours three times per week.

Leadership: At 4th level the seneschal gains the Leadership feat. This stacks with the effects of other Leadership feats the character may already have.

Ward of the Herald (Su): At 5th level the seneschal gains protection from random violence. When acting on a mission from his master the seneschal gains the effect of a *sanctuary* spell when dealing with lawful folk. This spell always functions, even when the



seneschal is asleep, stunned, flat-footed, or otherwise incapacitated. The DC to resist the effect is 10 + the seneschal's Charisma modifier. This ability only affects creatures of lawful alignment.

Master of Details: At 8th level the seneschal develops the uncanny eye for details and memory that mark a great administrator. He never forgets a face, conversation, or event. Furthermore he gains +2 on all Knowledge skill checks and +2 on all Spot and Search skill checks..

Voice of the Ruler: At 10th level the seneschal's power within his domain becomes equal to that of his master's. His resource allocation increases to 100 gp a day. Furthermore he may take 10 on any Diplomacy or Knowledge (nobles and nobility) rolls that he must make. Finally the seneschal will be accorded all of the rights and privileges of a noble of his land, no matter what his birth.

THE PRESTIGE BARD

The Seneschal

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+0	+2	Resources, Master of the house
2	+1	+0	+0	+3	Words of authority
3	+1	+1	+1	+3	Exchange of favors (1x per week)
4	+2	+1	+1	+4	Leadership
5	+2	+1	+1	+4	Ward of the herald
6	+3	+2	+2	+5	Exchange of favors (2x per week)
7	+3	+2	+2	+5	
8	+4	+2	+2	+6	Master of details
9	+4	+3	+3	+6	Exchange of favors (3x per week)
10	+5	+3	+3	+7	Voice of the ruler

SINGER OF THE DAWN

Music springs from mortal hearts as an expression of life and joy. No one knows or uses this truth as well as a singer of the dawn. He draws for the life of his music so strongly that the forces of unlife (undead in particular) find his songs uncomfortable, distracting and even damaging.

No one sets out to learn the singer's art. It develops spontaneously in those who both feel the beauty of life profoundly and who experience the horror of undeath most closely. Somewhere between the two experiences a singer of the dawn learns how to tap into the positive powers of music. His song becomes uplifting, penetrating and unstoppable.

Most of the time a young singer cannot find a tutor in his new art. He explores it on his own, sometimes learning great things, most often pursuing fruitless paths. Sometimes an older singer finds the student. The older may or may not be able to help the younger student; each singer approaches and their art uniquely.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a singer of the dawn the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Any good

Perform: 8 ranks

Feat: Iron Will

Special: Must have lost at least one loved one to the undead. Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The singer of the dawn's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pockets (Dex), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha, exclusive skill). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 4+ Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the singer of the dawn.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A singer of the dawn is proficient with all simple weapons as well as small martial weapons. A singer of the dawn is also proficient with light armour, medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick

Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour and equipment carried.

Musician: The character's level in singer of the dawn count towards his total number of bardic music effects per day. Thus a Rowan a 9th level bard/4th level singer of the dawn may use bardic music thirteen times per day.

Song of Light: At 1st level the singer of the dawn learns to infuse his soul into his music. He may use his bardic music to turn undead as a cleric of equal level to his class level. This ability functions like a cleric's turn undead ability, but lasts as long as the singer continues playing. Each use of the song of light counts as a use of bardic music for that day and is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Song of Purity: At 2nd level the singer of dawn's song becomes so heartbreakingly beautiful that it drives impurities and negative effects out of the listeners. Everyone within 30 ft. gains a bonus to saves against effects generated by undead equal to the singer's Charisma modifier. This bonus lasts for as long as the singer maintains the song of purity and 5 rounds after the song ends. Each use of the song of purity counts as a use of bardic music for that day and is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Song of Jade: At 3rd level the singer of the dawn can use the intricate purity of his music to repel evil outsiders. This ability functions just like a cleric's turn ability, but only effects outsiders. Like the song of light it lasts as long as the singer continues to play. Each use of the song of jade counts as a use of bardic music for that day and is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.



Song of Sunset: At 4th level the singer of the dawn learns how to use his music to lay the dead to rest. Every undead within 30 ft. of the singer must make a Will save with a DC equal to the singer's Perform skill check or fall into torpor. In this state the undead is unaware of its surroundings and can be attacked as though it were helpless. Any attack on an undead

The Singer of the Dawn

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+2	+0	+2	Musician, Song of light
2	+1	+3	+0	+3	Song of purity
3	+2	+3	+1	+3	Song of jade
4	+3	+4	+1	+4	Song of sunset
5	+3	+4	+1	+4	Song of dawn

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within the area of the song immediately breaks the torpor on all of the targets. The targets in the area of effect remain unable to act for as long as the singer sings and for 5 rounds after the singer completes his song. Each use of the song of sunset counts as a use of bardic music for that day and is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. This song cannot affect undead with more HD than the character's class level.

Song of Dawn: At 5th level the singer of the dawn learns his ultimate song. When he sings it every undead or evil outsider within 30 ft. must make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to the singer's Perform skill check or take 2d8 sonic damage + the singer's Charisma modifier. All targets must make this save every round that they are within the area of effect. This damage is not subject to damage resistance or to spell resistance, but is subject to sonic energy resistance abilities. Each use of the song of dawn counts as a use of bardic music for that day and is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.



SOUL TAKER

Many people find music a soothing diversion. A skilful performance can uplift the heart, enrapture the mind and release the soul from its burdens.

For the soul taker these attributes of music make it perfect for stealing the minds, bodies and even the souls of their targets. They twist magic and music together into a potent brew. Some of their songs chain the heart, forcing their victims to obey the taker's will. Others wrap threads around the target's mind, siphoning off their knowledge for the taker's personal use. Still others weaken the target's body transferring that strength to the taker.

No one knows the origins of the soul taker's arts or how they pass them on. Fortunately for the rest of the world their numbers seem small. But who really could tell? Soul takers move like shadows through the world, untraceable save for the wake of broken lives they leave behind them.

Hit Die: d6

Requirements

To qualify to become a soul taker the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Alignment: Any evil

Bluff: 12 ranks

Diplomacy: 8 ranks

Sense Motive: 12 ranks

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 3rd level arcane spells of the enchantment school

Class Skills

The soul taker's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Handle Animal (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pockets (Dex), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (Int), Swim (Str) and Tumble (Dex). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the soul taker.

The Soul Taker

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Seduction (+2), Kiss of darkness
2	+1	+0	+3	+3	Lure
3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Seduction (+4), Hand of the tempter
4	+3	+1	+4	+4	Enrapture
5	+3	+1	+4	+4	Seduction (+6), Chains of the flesh

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: A soul taker is proficient with all simple weapons. A soul taker is also proficient with light armour, medium armour and shields. Note that armour check penalties for armour heavier than leather apply to the skills Balance, Climb, Escape Artist, Hide, Jump, Move Silently, Pick Pocket and Tumble. Also, Swim checks suffer a -1 penalty for every 5 pounds of armour and equipment carried.

Seduction: At 1st level the soul taker learns the secrets of seduction. He masters the arts of ambiguity, subterfuge and misdirection, all focused on leading his target to believe that the soul taker will fulfil his wildest fantasies. At 1st level this art gives the soul taker +2 on all Bluff and Sense Motive rolls. This bonus increases to +4 at 3rd level and +6 at 5th level.

Kiss of Darkness (Su): At 1st level the soul taker may make a touch attack against a target that inflicts 1d4 temporary Con damage if the target fails a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + the soul taker's class level + the soul taker's Charisma modifier. The soul taker may use this ability one time per day per level.

Lure (Su): At 2nd level the soul taker may draw one target to him. The soul taker may select one target within 120 ft that can see him. That target must make a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + the soul taker's class level + the soul taker's Charisma modifier. If he succeeds nothing happens. If he fails he immediately makes his way to within touch range of the soul taker, bypassing any obstacles that might be in his path. This lure lasts for one hour, during which time the target will always seek to be within 5 ft. of the soul taker. The soul taker may use this ability once per day per level.

Hand of the Tempter (Su): At 3rd level the soul taker may make a touch attack against a target that saps its will. The target must make a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + the soul taker's class level + the soul

taker's Charisma modifier. If he succeeds nothing happens. If he fails he takes 1d6 temporary Wisdom damage. If the target goes to zero or few points of wisdom he must obey whatever commands the soul taker issues until his Wisdom heals above zero. The soul taker may use this attack once per day per level.

Chains of the Flesh (Su): At 5th level the soul taker gains access to the pinnacle of their art. Once per day they may invoke the chain of the flesh that binds them to any single target they have previously damaged with the *kiss of darkness* or the *hand of the tempter* that is within 60 ft. If the target fails a Will save with a DC equal to 10 + the soul taker's class level + the soul taker's Charisma modifier the soul taker dominates him (as the *domination* spell). This effect lasts for as long as the soul taker maintains concentration.

WORLD SINGER

Magic and music go hand in hand for many people. The two arts possess many similarities. Both require native talent in order to be successful. Both demand constant practice for refinement. Both have underlying mathematical constructs that make them predictable. Both contain within them the seeds of chaos that prevent anyone from ever fully mastering them.

A world singer sees beyond these similarities a startling truth. For him music and magic become one and the same. Every song is a spell. Every spell is a song. With his voice or instrument he shapes the world to his wishes.

The world singer might come to this realisation either though the path of magic or that of music. In either case he sets aside his former studies to explore the limits of his new understanding. With it he whip up a storm, calm earthquakes, or unleash the fury of the oceans upon those who displease him.

Hit Die: d4



THE PRESTIGE BARD

Requirements

To qualify to become a world singer the character must fulfil all of the following criteria.

Perform: 9 ranks

Spellcasting: Ability to cast 3rd level arcane spells

Special: Bardic music ability

Class Skills

The world singer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Alchemy (Int), Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int, exclusive skill), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intuit Direction (Wis), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Pick Pockets (Dex), Profession (Wis), Scry (Int, exclusive skill), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak

Language (Int), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha, exclusive skill). See *Core Rulebook I* for skill descriptions.

Skill points at each level: 4 + Int modifier

Class Features

All of the following are class features of the world singer.

Weapon and Armour Proficiency: The world singer gains no new proficiencies in weapons or armour.

Spells: A world singer casts spells as a bard and has full access to the standard spell list. World singer levels are added to his base class level for level based effects.

Spells per Day: The world singer's magical power continues to grow as he gains levels. Thus when every odd numbered world singer level is gained the character gains new spells per day as if he had also gained a level in an arcane spell casting class he belonged to before he became a world singer. He does not gain any other benefits that a caster of that class would have gained (improved saves, bonus feats, etc.) This essentially means that he adds one half (rounded up) of his world singer levels to the level of one of his arcane spell casting classes. For example Alan a 13th level bard/3rd level world singer casts spells as a 15th level bard.

Singer: The world singer may add his world singer level to his bard level when determining the number of times he may use the bardic music ability per day.

Songs of Power: At 1st, 2nd, 4th, 6th, 8th and 10th level the world singer may select one of the following songs of power. Using each song counts as a standard use of the bardic music ability. All of the songs of power count as standard actions that do not provoke an attack of opportunity unless otherwise noted. Continuing a song of power is also a standard action.

Flame: This song draws forth the dancing flames that lie in every object and person. Everyone other than the world singer within a 30 ft. radius of the singer must make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to the Perform skill check of the world singer or take 1d8 fire damage per round. Objects within range suffer this damage as well.



THE PRESTIGE BARD

Forest: This song causes plants within range to awaken to their original, primal state. It acts as a *plant growth* spell over a 60 ft. radius. Additionally while the world singer plays hostile creatures within the area of effect are subject to an *entangle* spell, with a DC equal to the world singer's Perform skill check.

Land: The song of the land causes the soil to shift, as if the world singer had cast the *move earth* spell at a caster level equal to his spell caster level.

Moon: When the world singer sings the song of the moon all creatures that do not have their normal shape (though shape shifting, illusion, or other effect) must make a Will save with a DC equal to the world singer's Perform skill check or be restored to their normal form. This effect lasts for 5 rounds after the singer completes the song.

Sea: This song invokes the sea's infinite bounty and healing power. All of the world singer's allies within a 10 ft. radius gain Fast Healing with a value equal to the world singer's Charisma bonus. This ability starts one round after the world singer begins singing and lasts for as long as he keeps singing and the beneficiary is within range. Singing or continuing the song of the sea is a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Storm: The cackling sound of the song of thunder portends doom for those around the world singer. Every round that the world singer makes a DC 25 Perform roll he can select one target within 120 ft.

Lightening lances from the air around the world singer towards that target striking it for 5d8 damage. The target may make a Reflex save (DC 25) to take half damage. Any round that the world singer fails to make his Perform skill check the song breaks and he must start it again if he wishes to conjure more lightening.

Sun: Singing the song of the sun causes light to gather around the musician. Every round that he makes a Perform check with a DC of 25 pure sunlight illuminates a radius that expands by 5 ft. per round. Thus on the first round the light covers a 5 ft. radius circle, on the second round a 10 ft. radius circle and so on. When the singer finishes the song the radius begins to retract at a rate of 5 ft. per round. If the world singer fails a Perform skill check the song breaks and he must start it again.

Wind: The song of the wind draws a tempest of air around the world singer. Every one of Large size or less within a 40 ft. radius must make a Strength check with a DC equal to the Perform skill check of the world singer or be pushed back in a straight line to the edge of the song's effect. Targets that hit hard objects are not damaged. Ranged attacks are at a -8 circumstance bonus to hit anyone within the area of effect. A world singer cannot move while singing the song of the wind, or he will be swept into the effect as well.

The World Singer

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Singer, Song of power	+1 existing class level
2	+1	+0	+3	+0	Song of power	
3	+2	+1	+3	+1		+1 existing class level
4	+3	+1	+4	+1	Song of power	
5	+3	+1	+4	+1		+1 existing class level
6	+4	+2	+5	+2	Song of power	
7	+5	+2	+5	+2		+1 existing class level
8	+6	+2	+6	+2	Song of power	
9	+6	+3	+6	+3		+1 existing class level
10	+7	+3	+7	+3	Song of power	

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

Like most adventurers bards rely on their wits and their skills to survive. However, bards approach the world in a unique way. Their skills focus around interacting with and manipulating other people. As such bards typically exhibit a strong social focus that can be difficult to work with in some games.

The various sections of this chapter provide clarifications about potential uses for existing skills, suggested methods for providing assistance using the Perform skill and a list of potential professions/activities for bards to engage in to generate cash during their non-adventuring periods.

SKILLS

Bards, more so than any other class, rely on their social skills to get ahead. Where wizards blast through problems and fighters swing their swords, bards have long drawn out conversations about motivation and character. They control the situation by controlling the participants, not by stealth or sword.

In particular bards use the following skills a bit differently than other classes: Diplomacy, Gather Information, Innuendo, Intimidate, Pick Pocket and Use Magic Device.

Diplomacy

The Diplomacy skill governs 'polite' social interactions between two or more characters. It allows the bard to correctly assess political situations, control the ebb and flow of a conversation, or slip in and out of a negotiation.

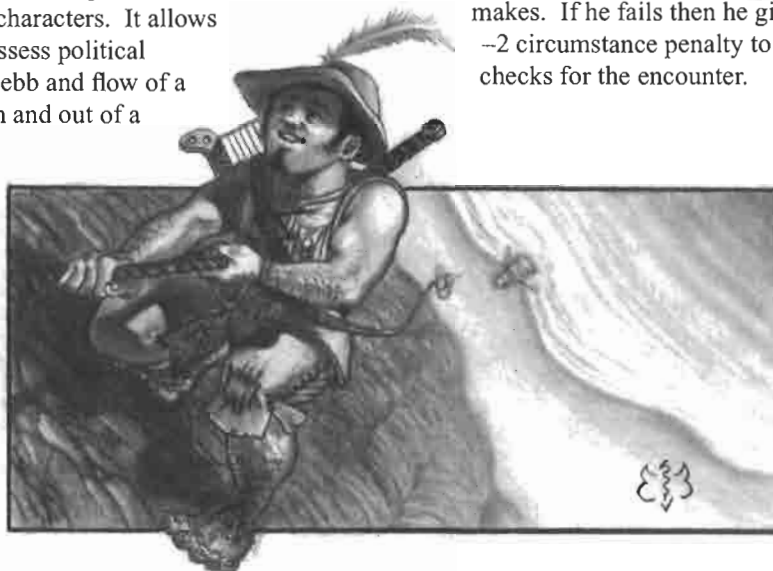
The key to diplomacy lies in its focus on reasonable, long-term interaction. Sudden interactions or those that involve less verbal interplay (like exuding a threatening presence) are better suited to other skills.

New Use: Complicate: Sometimes the bard finds it to his advantage to delay the resolution of a specific discussion for a while (or even indefinitely). Every time the bard attempts to complicate the situation in order to delay resolution he makes a singled Diplomacy skill check. The other participants in the discussion make opposed Sense Motive skill checks. If the bard succeeds then he can prevent any of the discussion's participants from coming to agreement for a single day, without seeming to be interfering. Each participant that beats his Diplomacy skill check realises what the bard is doing.

The danger associated with this activity is directly related to the importance of the situation. Complicating the negotiations between two countries on the brink of war exposes the bard to a high degree of risk. Similar actions taken to delay the discussions of a sea captain and a merchant so that the bard's party can get onto a ship carry a fairly low degree of danger.

New Use: Interpret: The art of interpretation goes beyond just translating from one language to another. It involves expressing nuances of feeling, intention and desire that may differ across cultures. The translated message must not only be accurate, but it must also convey the meanings that exist between the lines, including the subtle implications.

When interpreting the bard makes a Diplomacy roll, with a DC established by the Games Master based on the difference between the two cultures. If the bard succeeds he manages to convey the complete meaning of the message from one language to another. This gives a +2 circumstance bonus to any Diplomacy skill checks that the person using the bard as an interpreter makes. If he fails then he gives his client a -2 circumstance penalty to all Diplomacy skill checks for the encounter.



New Use: Influence

The subtle art of applying influence to get your own way has much in common with intimidation. It involves creating an impression that you are more important than you really are by implying association with people that the target considers important. If done properly this makes the target more willing to co-operate with the bard. If unsuccessful influence attempts tend to anger the target, making him much less willing to assist the bard for any reason.

In order to influence a target the bard must make a Diplomacy skill check, opposed by the target's Sense Motive skill check. If the bard succeeds he improves the target's reaction by one category. If he fails, the target immediately becomes hostile and will not assist the player in any way.

Gather Information

The Gather Information skill represents the character's ability to pull together the threads of rumours into coherent information. Each skill check encompasses a single evening's activities; moving from bar to bar, listening to conversations in the streets and even slipping into the occasional establishment of ill repute. This kind of activity very quickly comes to the attention of others, especially in times of great tension or toil.

Every time the character fails his skill check he must make a second skill check with a DC of 20. If he fails this second skill check he has come to the attention of one of the local 'power centres' in the community. This attention is not necessarily hostile; the Games Master should deal with the power centre's reaction based on the questions the character asks and the power centre's attitude toward the information he seeks. For example, a character asking questions about the location of an evil relic who comes to the attention of a lawful good power centre will most likely be questioned closely about his intentions, but might be given aid if sufficient reason exists for his quest.

Additionally the character can use Gather Information in the following ways.

New Use: Support Bardic Knowledge: By spending a single day out gathering information and making a Gather Information skill check (DC 10) the bard can grant himself a +2 circumstance bonus to a single, specific bardic knowledge check. If the bard fails his bardic knowledge roll he cannot attempt it again.

New Use: Uncover locations: Gathering information is a task that sometimes takes the character to some rather seedy places. Some of those places would rather than clientele of the law abiding sort not find them. In order to fully explore the underside of the rumour gathering world the character will sometimes have to make a Gather Information check (DC 10) to discover the location and entrance requirements to drug dens, houses of ill repute and similar places. Getting in and out of such places can be tricky of course, but if the character is successful he can make a second Gather Information skill check with a +2 circumstance bonus.

Innuendo

Innuendo represents the character's skill at conveying information through subtle phrases and glances. It allows for the rapid communication of information, as well as the creation of multiple layers of meaning in a conversation. It is an essential skill for diplomats, spies and courtiers of all sorts.

Additionally Innuendo allows the character to 'load' information into statements. This information does affect the target, although he might not realise it.

New Use: Flatter: By changing his inflection and carefully choosing his words the character can flatter the target without the target realising it. The character makes an Innuendo skill check opposed by the target's Sense Motive skill check. If the character succeeds his flattery goes unnoticed, but the target becomes more willing to believe the character. This grants the character a +2 circumstance bonus on his next Bluff, Diplomacy, or Disguise check. If the character fails the target realises what the character was doing.

New Use: Insult: Often the most effective way to deal with a particular social problem is to make the other person careless. This can be done in a number of ways, but usually the most effective is making the target angry without giving him a focus for that anger. The character does this by slipping subtle insults into a normal dialogue, using tone of voice and phrasing to up the target's tension level. The character makes an Innuendo skill check opposed by the target's Sense Motive skill check. If the character succeeds he increases the target's irritation level. This imposes a -3 circumstance penalty on all Charisma based skill checks that the target undertakes for the next ten minutes. If the character fails he still annoys the target; however the target knows what the character attempted and now has a focus for his anger.



Intimidate

The art of intimidation uses threats, suggestions of violence, posture and tone of voice to make the character more menacing than he already is. This allows the character to modify other's behaviour fairly quickly. It also puts the character at some risk; the target of an intimidation check will often bear considerable ill will towards the intimidator.

New Use: *Attract Attention:* Sometimes a character needs to pull every eye in the room to him. He can do this by careful posturing, taking outrageous actions, or just shouting to get everyone's attention. The character must make an Intimidate skill check (DC 20). If he succeeds he creates a distraction for one round. If he fails he does not gain the crowd's attention. Failure generally precludes a second attempt, although the Games Master may allow one under specific circumstances.

New Use: *Bully:* In some cases the character will use his intimidate skill over a long period of time. This bullying slowly erodes the target's ability to resist, until finally it caves in completely. Every time that the character successfully intimidates a target but does not demand anything he gains a +1 cumulative circumstance bonus to his next intimidate check. This check can only be done once per day and the bonus lasts until he fails an intimidate skill check against the particular target. Once the bully fails his intimidate skill check he loses the circumstance bonus and cannot attempt to intimidate the target again.

Use Magic Device

The skill of using magical devices allows the character to 'trick' magic into reacting as though he were something that he is not. Using this skill requires a certain amount of concentration and focus from the character.

New Use: *Gain Passage:* When faced with a magical barrier requiring a specific class, race, or alignment the character can use his Use Magic Device skill to emulate the required attribute. If the enchantment covers the entire area rather than just being a barrier the character must make a skill check every round to avoid discovery.

ASSISTING ACTIONS

Although most people don't think about it, music sets the stage for many of life's adventures. Mortals turn to music whenever they need solace, excitement, or support. It figures prominently in most festivals,

ceremonies, events...essentially every time that people gather they look for a bit of music to lighten the load.

Bards may master music but it is not their sole domain. Most people can sing a song to help lighten their burdens. Common folk sing while working in the fields, when weaving cloth and when plying their trades. Soldiers sing while on the march or in battle. Sailors sing shanties to keep the rhythm of the oars or maintain the pattern of their work on the sails.

This spontaneous music fits in naturally with the pattern of life. It supports it, guides it and assists those who might accidentally fall behind. Anyone with the Perform skill has access to these songs, although it does take a bit of talent to get the rhythm right.

The following effects are common enough that just about anyone with the Perform skill can attempt them:

Assisting with Music Effects

Type	DC	Effect
Battle Hymn	15	+1 morale bonus to saves vs. fear
Chamber Music	15	+2 to Diplomacy checks
Folk Dance	15	+2 to Perform skill checks while attempting to dance
Harvest Songs	10	+2 to Profession (farmer) checks
Lullaby	15	+2 to Heal Checks for people who completely rest
Marching Song	15	+2 to Constitution check for forced march

Battle Hymn

When men engage in the insanity of battle they use music to bolster their hearts. Battle hymns fulfil this need; giving the men something bold and powerful to think about. Hymns are typically simple, with easy to remember words and simple structures.

The most common instruments used for battle hymns include vocals, bagpipes, trumpets, great drums and great harps. Each of these instruments can produce sounds loud enough to be heard over the clamour of war. They also have the advantage of being readily identifiable.

Skilled generals will 'code' their orders into battle hymns, passing information directly to the troops about

what they should do. These codes typically include commands to charge, retreat, move in one direction or another and to stand ground. As most battle hymns cover the entire battlefield it is difficult to issue orders to specific units this way.

The character leading the musical troop of a military company makes a Perform skill check at the beginning of the battle and each time the general wishes him to issue orders. The Perform skill check at start of the battle (DC 15) grants the entire army a +1 morale bonus to saving throws vs. fear effects. The Perform skill check made to assist the issuing of orders (DC 20) allows the general to effectively communicate with his army during the battle, removing any penalties associated with lack of communication.

Chamber Music

Most cultures have an entire branch of music devoted to being light, soothing background noise. Although the style varies from place to place the intention behind such music remains the same. It provides a relaxed atmosphere in which people can hold otherwise emotionally charged discussions.

The instruments used for this kind of music generally have a soft tone, or at least can be played in a quiet manner. Most stringed instruments fit the bill nicely, as do some of the less complex wind/reed style instruments. Sometimes chamber music involves vocal harmonies, but voices can be distracting to the participants in a conversation and therefore such arrangements are usually avoided.

When creating chamber music (either as a conductor for a group or performing solo) the character makes a Perform skill check (DC 15). If he succeeds the music blends flawlessly into the background. If he fails then the music becomes overpowering, either distracting the people in the room or actively annoying them.

On a successful roll everyone within the chamber gets a +2 circumstance bonus to all Diplomacy skill checks. The music helps to smooth out emotional difficulties and allows people to more easily come to agreeable accommodations.

Folk Dance

In most societies dances form the central core of their mass entertainment. People gather for dancing at least two or three times a week. In most communities there are dances every evening, although not everyone attends. These 'folk dances' possess all of the intricacy of human expression, as well as being very closely

aligned with the feelings and events of the people's lives.

Folk dance music makes use of simple instruments. These instruments must be made of readily available materials, not be too complicated to construct and be reasonably durable. The people most engaged in folk dance simply cannot afford things like great harps or intricately made horns. Instead they use instruments they make with their own hands: hand drums, flutes and simple stringed instruments.

The leader of a folk dance makes a Perform skill check (DC 15). If he succeeds then the measure he sets is easy to follow and grants everyone participating in the effort a +2 to Perform (dance) skill checks for the duration of the dance. If he fails then the dance is more difficult and the participants gain no bonus for his efforts.

Harvest Songs

Harvest songs establish the rhythm of the work in the fields. This may not seem particularly important to those not involved with the toil. But during harvest time most farmers use instruments perfectly capable of inflicting serious injury, even death, on their fellow workers. Failure to establish a smooth pattern can result in inadvertent homicide.

Harvest songs (as with most of the work songs) are almost entirely vocal in nature. They must also be extremely simple, with a very noticeable and easy to follow tempo. Most have an almost infectious quality; people find it difficult to avoid singing them after being exposed to them.

The leader of a harvest song must make a Perform skill check (DC 15). If he succeeds then everyone in his group gains a +2 circumstance bonus to all Profession (farmer) skill checks made that day. This helps to reduce the chance of accidents, as well as increasing yields.

Lullaby

Mothers in every culture and time sing lullabies to help soothe children to sleep. These quiet, dreamy songs help to ease the mind, guiding the listener into slumber. They also help to settle troubling dreams. Some healers, recognising these benefits, pay to have musicians attend their patients, helping them to get the healing rest that they need.

Although the preferred instrument for lullabies varies from culture to culture, they uniformly use





TRICKS OF THE TRADE

quiet instruments capable of variable volume. Wind instruments and string instruments are common choices, while instruments using percussion are rarely used.

When performing a lullaby the character makes a Perform skill check (DC 15). If he succeeds he grants everyone within the area of effect +2 circumstance bonus on all Heal skill checks and +1 circumstance bonus on all saving throws related to the healing process (i.e. resisting a poison's secondary effects or recovering from a negative level). These benefits are the direct result of restful sleep; if the targets do not get complete rest the bonuses vanish.

Marching Song

Travellers and soldiers often sing songs while marching in order to alleviate the boredom of the road. These songs give the marcher something to focus on other than his weary feet, the blisters his boots raise and the infinite stretch of the road. Most possess a seemingly infinite number of verses; they are old songs with simple words so people add to them constantly.

Marching songs typically include vocal and simple percussion elements. Given their lack of complexity any instrument could be used for one, but anything that required excessive amounts of breath or weighs more than a few pounds is unlikely to find much use.

When performing a marching song the character makes a Perform skill check (DC 15). If the character succeeds everyone who joins in the marching song gains a +2 circumstance bonus to the Constitution check at the end of a forced march. If the character fails then no harm is done.

PROFESSIONS

All characters (save for those that support themselves solely through adventuring) find it necessary to generate income every once in a while. They do this in a variety of ways ranging from standing guard for caravans to breaking and entering. Most try to follow reasonably honest professions. If nothing else, being in jail can seriously reduce one's adventuring time.

Bards in particular find various professions quite rewarding. Not only do they provide a steady source of income, but they also provide a reason for bards to travel, meet people and explore interesting places. A solid professional guise can also conceal other activities from the legitimate to the extremely illegal.

Traditionally bards focus on entertainment professions. The entries below lists various kinds of activities that a performer can undertake, as well as listing alternate skills that they might use in their performance.

In order to take advantage of these variants the character must have the Perform skill at rank 5+ and the skill he wishes to substitute at rank 5+.

Acrobat

Acrobats use the Tumble skill in place of the Perform skill. They typically perform on street corners or during festivals. Their acts include feats of balance (walking tightropes, balancing on balls), flexibility (holding their bodies in odd positions while walking tightropes or balancing on balls) and agility (leaps, bounds and various flips).

Actor

Actors use the Perform (acting) mode of the Perform skill. Most find employment doing improvisations on street corners. A few find steady jobs either with a travelling company or (more profitably) with an established theatre group in an urban area. Performing on street corners can be risky, especially if the subject matter is either ribald or controversial...a travelling performer enjoys few protections. On the other hand, he can also easily gain entrance to most households.

Animal Charmer

Animal Charmers use the Handle Animal or Animal Empathy skill in place of the Perform skill. Performance income for animal charmers is 1.5x normal income. Typically an animal charmer either works street side with a single animal, or works with a troupe of some sort that has several animals as part of their act. If an animal charmer loses one or more of his pets it typically takes him 6 months to train another one.

Busker

Street busking is the activity that most people think of when they think of a bardic profession. Buskers work the streets, playing an instrument or singing for their meals. If the performer does well people drop a few small coins into an obvious container (hat, instrument case, or whatever). In some cases a busker can set up a relationship with the local street vendors, receiving a steady 'income' in food as repayment for his playing.

Conductor

Conductors co-ordinate groups of musicians in the performance of complex pieces. They use their Knowledge (music) skill in place of their Perform skill check and can be assisted by the Perform skill checks of the musicians in their group. Conductors rely on their groups to generate income, but the combined skill of several musicians under the direction of a skilled conductor can create quite a lot of cash.

Dancer

Dancers use either the Perform (dance) or the Tumble skill for their skill check. Dancers typically work in conjunction with a busker. In these cases both the busker and the dancer may make skill checks to determine their income for the day. The higher of the two rolls is used and the results split according to the arrangement between the two. Dancers typically perform on street corners or courtyards where they have enough room for more elaborate dances.

Demagogue

A demagogue makes his living through public speaking. He may use his Diplomacy skill in place of the Perform skill when making an income check. Demagogues work street corners or local gatherings, speaking about the issues of the day. If they choose they may make a Gather Information skill check (DC 15) to determine what a good topic for their daily discussion would be. If they succeed, they double their income for the next day.

Fool

The performance of a fool involves juggling, acrobatics and other similar skills. However, it relies primarily on a keen insight into the crowd; as such a fool may use Sense Motive in place of Perform for his skill check. Low humour typically dominates a fool's performances, although satire and even high comedy could emerge if the crowd were so inclined.

Clutz

People cannot help but be fascinated by the sight of another person in pain. Even the most stolid citizen stops to watch accidents or see if someone was injured in a fight. A clutz takes advantage of this natural impulse by focusing their minds and inflicting minor (but seemingly dangerous) wounds to his own body. They also eat things that others consider dangerous of disgusting, perform impossible acts of physical stamina and take baths in live ants. Clutzes take 1d8 damage per hour that they engage in their performance, but may make a Perform skill check every hour. Additionally a person performing a clutzy act may substitute the Concentration skill for his Perform skill when he makes his skill check.

Juggler

A juggler may use his Pick Pockets skill in place of his Perform skill when performing. Jugglers typically work with acrobats or other jugglers, performing complex displays involving knives, torches and sometimes even live animals. Most jugglers actually find employment during the evening at parties, festivals and similar events.

Storyteller

Professional storytellers use the Perform (storytelling) mode to earn their living. Some hold forth on street corners. Most work local bars and inns, telling stories to small groups in order to generate coin. A few travel the countryside. There they stay with farmers and other common folk, trading their stories for simple goods and a place to sleep. A storyteller may make a Sense Motive skill check (DC 15) before he begins his work in a particular place to assess their mood. If he succeeds he gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his Perform skill check. There are no negative penalties for failure.

Street Magician

A street magician performs minor acts of legerdemain (card tricks, shell games, vanishing coins, etc) in on street corners to make a living. Illusion is his stock in trade. A performer with a street magic act may substitute Pick Pockets for Perform when making his skill check. Additionally if the performer has the *prestidigitation* spell available he gains a +4 circumstance bonus to his skill check.

Tavern Minstrel

Many performers consider a tavern minstrel's position to be nearly ideal. In return for giving one quarter of the performance income to an innkeeper the minstrel gets food, lodging and a base of operations. They gain a +4 circumstance bonus to their Perform skill checks, as they have the opportunity to develop a stable audience. Unfortunately most taverns in a city already have a minstrel, so competition for any open spots will be quite fierce.

Town Crier

A town crier makes his living passing information to people. He gets up before dawn, gathers news and official proclamations and spends the rest of the day passing out information to people. His income comes from people who want information spread around, or from people willing to pay for additional details about the news he carries. A town crier can use the Gather Information skill in place of the Perform skill when making his income roll for the day.



FEATS

Bards possess the unique distinction of being the second best in everything to start. This can cause them some minor problems, as being second best at everything translates into being really good at nothing at all. Fortunately a bard (like any other character) has the option of tailoring his feats to make himself better at the activities that he wishes to engage in.

The following feats cover a wide gambit of possibilities, from enhancements to musical abilities to lore-based feats, arcane magic enhancements, and even a few combat abilities. All help to round out the 'second best' nature of the bard class, while providing some interesting alternatives for other characters.

Antiquarian (Bardic)

Years of training have taught you to recognise subtle clues about an item's origin and potential abilities.

Prerequisite: Bardic knowledge

Benefit: You gain +4 bonus on bardic knowledge checks to determine an item's history and potential magical abilities. If you roll a natural 20 on your bardic knowledge check you immediately gain knowledge of one property of the item.

Book Learning (Bardic)

Long years in dusty libraries developed your deep and broad knowledge of the history of the world.

Prerequisite: Bardic knowledge

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus on bardic knowledge checks to determine details about a historical fact, place, or figure. If you roll a natural 20 on your bardic knowledge check you gain one piece of obscure or even 'forgotten' information.

Descant (Bardic)

You have learned the subtle art of slipping your own effects into someone else's song.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Countersong

Benefit: Rather than negating a song, a bard with the Descant feat can attempt to 'overlay' his own song over another bard's. The two bards make opposed Perform skill checks; the bard with the highest result has his song take effect. The loser's song has no effect what so ever.

Normal: Everyone within 30 ft. of the bard may use the bard's Perform skill check in place of their saving throw against sonic or language-dependant magical effects.



Dissonance (Bardic)

Your profound sense of motion and style allows you to break up other's efforts.

Prerequisite: Bardic music

Benefit: As a standard round action you may attempt to 'disrupt' the actions of your opponents. All opponents in the area must make a Will save (DC 10 + one half your level + Wis modifier). If they fail the save all attack rolls and skill checks they take until your next action have a -2 circumstance penalty.

Dwarven Warcry

You can give forth a deep bellow that shakes your opponent's bones.

Prerequisite: Dwarven blood

Benefit: Once per day you may take a standard action to unleash a mighty bellow. Everyone within 30 ft. of you must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + one half your character level + your Con modifier). Those that fail suffer a -2 morale penalty to their attack and damage rolls for the next 4 rounds.

Special: You may take this feat any number of times. Each time you take it you gain the ability to let out a war cry one additional time per day.

Elven Dreamweaving

You long ago mastered the intricacies of the elven dream trance.

Prerequisite: Elven blood

Benefit: You have mastered the art of shaping your dreams and memories when resting in the elven manner. Your dreams heal and shelter your spirit, clearing your mind for the day ahead. You regain your spells after four hours of rest and one hour of preparation. You may only do this once per 24 hour period.

Normal: You must rest eight hours to regain and prepare spells.

Enduring Song

You can perform for long periods of time without rest.

Prerequisite: Con 15+

Benefit: You gain a +2 competence bonus to resist fatigue or the ill effects of performing for long periods of time. At a minimum you can perform for two hours without rest.

First Strike (General)

You know how to seize advantage when it comes your way.

Prerequisites: Combat Reflexes, Dex 19+

Benefit: If someone provokes an attack of opportunity you strike slightly before they do. This means that your damage is inflicted before they take their action, and any penalties you inflict on them take place before their roll.

Normal: Damage is inflicted during the action of the target, so he can complete his action normally.

Geographer (Bardic)

You have an intimate knowledge of the geography of your world.

Prerequisite: Bardic knowledge

Benefit: You gain +4 bonus on bardic knowledge checks when asking questions about the location of people, places, and various geographical features. If you roll a natural 20 on your bardic knowledge check you not only know where something is, but also know the general conditions of the road leading from where you are to that place.

Gossip (Bardic)

You are in touch with the social world wherever you travel.

Prerequisite: Bardic knowledge

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to bardic knowledge checks about the activities of people who are currently active in society. When you roll a natural 20 on your bardic knowledge check you gain one piece of relatively uncommon/hidden information that is absolutely true.

Harmony (Bardic)

You have learned how to merge your songs with those of other bards.

Prerequisite: Bardic music

Benefit: When making music together bards with the Harmony feat may each roll their Perform skill when making a skill check. The highest result among them is the roll that they use. Additionally they may add +2 for each bard with the Harmony feat in the group.

Normal: Bards may attempt to assist each other using the Perform skill.





FEATS

Healing Surge (Metamagic)

You have tapped into a source of wild healing power.

Prerequisite: Ability to spontaneously cast cure spells

Benefit: As a full round action you may cast a cure spell as a spell one level higher. If you do so you may roll for the healing effect twice, and take the higher result.

Normal: You roll the dice once to determine the number of hit points healed.

Magical Craft (Craft Skill)

You can create objects of art that focus your magic.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast spontaneously arcane spells

Benefit: You can create magical craft items using a specific craft or professional skill. These objects follow the rules outlined in the Tools of the Trade chapter (page 40).

Special: You may select this feat multiple times. Each time you select it you must designate a specific craft skill.

Magical Masterpiece (Craft Skill)

You can make a magical craft object permanently manifest its effect.

Prerequisite: Ability to spontaneously cast arcane spells, Magical Craft (Craft Skill)

Benefit: By investing 25 XP per spell level you can make a magical craft item with a non-instant effect become active until destroyed.

Normal: Magical craft items remain active as long as you have invested a spell per day in them. They become non-magical within one month per positive point of your Charisma modifier when you die.

Master of the Craft

You can activate another person's magical craft items.

Prerequisite: Ability to spontaneously cast arcane spells, Magical Craft (Craft Skill)

Benefit: You have the ability to activate another person's magical craft items in any craft that you yourself have the Magical Craft (Craft Skill) feat for. You may use their objects as though they were your own.

Normal: You may not activate another character's magical craft items.

Master of Illusion (Metamagic)

Your eye for detail and ability to make realistic illusions knows no equal.

Prerequisite: Ability to cast 3rd level illusion spells

Benefit: Your illusion spells are particularly detailed and complete. Viewers do not receive a bonus to 'disbelief' when someone demonstrates that the illusion is not real.

Normal: When someone reveals the illusion other viewers gain a +4 bonus to their saving throw.

Mystery (Bardic)

Choose one instrument or performance type that you know in your Perform skill. You are in tune with the magic of this particular music type.

Prerequisite: Bardic music

Benefit: You gain access to a new set of songs as described in the Mysteries of Music chapter.

Special: You may gain this feat multiple times. Its effects do not stack. Each time you take the feat it applies to a new instrument or performance type.

Occult Knowledge (Bardic)

You have a wide-ranging knowledge of things men were not meant to know.

Prerequisite: Bardic knowledge

Benefit: You gain a +4 bonus to bardic knowledge checks about arcane matters (i.e. spells, rituals, magical effects, and various magical creatures). When you roll a natural 20 on your bardic knowledge check you have perfect (rulebook) level knowledge of the particular effect or creature.

Shout (Bardic)

You have learned how to shorten an entire song into a single musical phrase.

Prerequisite: Bardic music

Benefit: As a free action you can 'shout' a song, causing its effect to happen instantly. If the song has a lingering effect it will last for 3 rounds after the shout. Using a song as a shout does count as a use of bardic music for the day. Additionally, every time you shout you must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + the Perform requirement of the song) or lose your ability to use the Perform skill for the rest of the day.

Sidewinder (General)

You are adept at striking an opponent who is otherwise occupied.

Benefit: You gain +2 damage bonus when you flank a non-undead, non-construct opponent

Signature Instrument (Bardic)

You have a single instrument that you have chosen to represent the pinnacle of your art.

Prerequisites: Bardic Music, Mystery of the instrument you choose as your signature instrument, masterwork instrument

Benefit: Your signature instrument gains a magical ability as described in the Tools of the Trade chapter under Invested Instruments. Each time you select this feat you may add an additional ability appropriate to your alignment.

Special: You may select this feat more than once.

Sudden Silence (Bardic)

Your music can be particularly moving, making it difficult to speak after a performance.

Prerequisite: Bardic music, Cha 15+, Signature instrument, Mystery (instrument), masterwork instrument

Benefit: When you end a performance using bardic music everyone within 30 ft must make a Will save (DC 10 + one half your level + Wis modifier). Those that fail their saving throw cannot speak for one round. This prevents them from casting spells with verbal components, as well as preventing communication with others. The effect does not prevent other forms of communication.

Swordman's Dance (General)

You have developed considerable skills as both a dancer and a warrior, allowing you to combine the two into a beautiful and deadly combination.

Prerequisites: Base attack bonus +4 or higher, First Strike, Dodge, Mobility

Benefit: When someone makes an attack of opportunity against you because of a move action that you take, you may make an attack of opportunity targeting the person attacking you. If you provoke multiple attacks of opportunity you must select one attacker as your target, even if you have multiple attacks of opportunity during the round.

Normal: You do not have a reaction to attacks of opportunity

Thunder's Shout (General)

By summoning your voice you can unleash a shout that deafens those around you.

Prerequisite: Con 15+

Benefit: Once per day you may shout that deafens your foes within a 30 ft. radius for 1d6 rounds unless they make a Will save (DC 10 + one half your level + Con modifier). Deafened foes cannot hear, suffer a -4 penalty to their initiative, and have a 20% chance of spell failure when casting spells with verbal components. When you shout you must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or be unable to speak for 1 hour.

Special: Each time you take this feat you may thunder shout an additional time per day.

Transfer Craft Item (General)

You can pass the maintenance requirements of a magical craft item to another person.

Prerequisite: Ability to spontaneously cast arcane spells, Magical Craft (Craft Skill)

Benefit: You may 'transfer' an active magical craft item to another person. That person then becomes the item's activator and may choose to spend spell slots to maintain its powers.

Normal: Magical craft items cease function as soon as you revoke their power.



TOOLS OF THE TRADE

Although not overly dependent on tools, bards can benefit from instruments, magical items and various kinds of masterworks. Their primary focus rests on instruments; these tools for making music are the focus of their magic and many of their skills.

MASTERWORK INSTRUMENTS

The art of making instruments that express the soul and emotion of the player remains an elusive one. The craftsmen create such instruments may only produce a few in a lifetime; each one suited for a particular artist. Most such items are beautiful and functional in the hands of any player.

A standard masterwork instrument provides a +2 circumstance bonus to Perform checks made using that instrument. These rare instruments are typically made for one bard and passed on to another, or made by a craftsman who has not studied the bard's personal style.

If the bard wishes to spend more time with the craftsman he can create a masterwork instrument that more accurately suits his needs. The construction of these instruments can take weeks, or even months. In return for his investment the bard receives an exquisite instrument built especially for him.

The only limit to how many 'features' a craftsman can put into an instrument is his own skill and the coin the bard wishes to expend. These features work for the bard who commissioned the instrument, or for a bard who can duplicate the owner's unique style by making a Perform check (DC 35).

The effect that a craftsman can build into an instrument include:

Masterwork Instrument Effects

Effect	Craft Modifier	Cost
Beautiful	+3	+200 gp
Expressive	+5	+100 gp
Pure	+3	+150 gp
Resonant	+4	+100 gp
Rich	+5	+50 gp

Beautiful: The instrument possesses the fine lines of a masterpiece. It is obviously very valuable, although it may or may not be richly ornamented. Wood instruments are made of the finest woods. Those with metal fittings use gold or silver alloys in their construction. A beautiful instrument adds an extra +2 bonus to the player's Perform check for purposes of determining how much income he earns that day.

Expressive: An expressive instrument has subtle adjustments that make it perfect for shaping sound to match the bard's innermost feelings. When using such an instrument the bard gains an extra +2 bonus to his Perform skill check when using a mystery that creates an emotional effect.

Pure: Pure instruments produce absolutely perfect music. Their sound has an almost ethereal quality, as if the instrument were an ideal rather than a real thing. Using a pure instrument increases the DC of sonic and language dependent spells cast by the bard by +1.

Resonant: A resonant instrument is build so that it can continue to produce sound after the bard has finished playing. Mastering the use of a resonant instrument is tricky, but once mastered these instruments assist the bard by continuing to sing 'on their own' for a full round after the bard finishes his song. This enables the bard to take other actions, or even start a new song if he wishes, while the first song continues to play.

Rich: Rich instruments have a variety of subtle ranges and tones, allowing the performer to put impressive nuances into his music. A rich instrument allows the bard to add an extra +2 (for a total of +4) when he is assists another musician.

INVESTED INSTRUMENTS

For many bards, their instrument is their sole source of support. It is their friend, their lover and their travelling companion. They have as intimate a relationship with it as they would have with their parents or any other loved one.

As a result of the closeness of this relationship a bard's instrument may begin to develop seemingly magical powers. This phenomenon is most common among bards of great experience, tremendous natural magical talent, or who have endured many epic trials.

These kinds of magical artefacts are not so much 'created' as they are invested with the bard's unique spirit. Its powers are an expression of who and what he is. As such they are limited in their scope; they

can only develop abilities in keeping with the bard's personal beliefs and motives.

A bard invests his instrument by selecting the Signature Instrument feat. Each time he does so, his signature instrument gains an ability that he selects from the following table:

No one else can use a bard's signature instrument. If the bard loses his signature instrument he must spend one month working with a new instrument to attune it to his magic.

Alignment	Ability
Good	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) +1 per dice to the effect of songs that create healing effects 2) Creatures of evil alignment within the area of effect of any song gain a -1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks. This effect can be resisted with a Will save (DC 20). 3) While playing the bard radiates an aura of light that extends for 20' and adds a +2 circumstance bonus to all Search skill checks. 4) All good aligned creatures within the area of effect of the bard's song gain an additional +1 bonus against fear effects. This bonus stacks with those granted by other songs, or by other classes special abilities.
Neutral	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Any song that requires a full round action to perform can be performed as a standard action instead. 2) Once per day the bard may add his Perform skill rank as a bonus to a roll made when casting the <i>dispel magic</i> spell. 3) Any creature of non-neutral alignment within the area of effect of one of the bard's songs must make a Will save (DC 10 + one half your level + Cha modifier). Any creature that fails the save cannot attack its targets for a single round, although they may defend themselves normally and may attack if attacked first. This ability only affects a specific creature one time per day. 4) Any creature within the area of effect of one of the bard's songs under an altered emotional condition (i.e. under the effect of a <i>calm</i> or <i>emotion</i> spell) gains an immediate second save against the effect.
Evil	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) +2 to the DC to resist the bard's suggestion and charm spells 2) Creatures of good alignment within the area of effect of any song gain a -1 circumstance penalty to all attack rolls and skill checks. This effect can be resisted with a Will save (DC 20). 3) Creatures of evil alignment with the area of effect of any song gain an additional +1 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls. This is in addition to any morale bonuses granted by the song, but does not stack with other morale bonuses. 4) When issuing <i>suggestions</i> using the bardic music ability the bard may implant two suggestions rather than one.
Chaotic	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) While playing the bard gains complete immunity to spells that would detect his thoughts or alignment. 2) Any being of lawful alignment targeted by the bard's music must make a Will save (DC 10 + one half your level + Cha modifier) or be dazed for one round. This effect only works on a target once per day, but can be used any number of times per day. 3) When the bard plays a song that has an emotion altering effect the bonus or penalty associated with the effect is increased by 1. 4) Once per day the bard may invoke his wild soul and take 20 on a single Perform skill check.





TOOLS OF THE TRADE

These special abilities only work when the bard uses his signature instrument to create the music or as a focus in his spells.

MAGICAL INSTRUMENTS

There already exist several complete compendiums of various historical instruments that a bard might use. However, the technology of a fantasy world is not limited by historical boundaries. Any fantasy world will have developed instruments that take into account what can be accomplished using the powers available to it.

The following list of magical instruments is by no means exclusive. It provides the smallest sample of what might be possible in a magical culture that turns a fraction of its attention to artistic endeavours.

All of these magical instruments can be classified as wondrous items. They do not have spell like effects built into them, although it is possible that they could be further enhanced.

Blanket of the World: The blanket of the world is a 5 ft. by 5 ft. rug that weighs 50 lbs. When unfurled it has a circular pattern, with a blank space in the centre and an intricate pattern containing depiction of birds, animals, plants and various land features within it. By laying a finger a specific depiction the musician can cause a sound like that made by the thing depicted to originate from the carpet. A trained musician can vary these sounds in volume, timber and pitch. *Caster Level: 7th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, sculpt sound; Market Price: 2,000 gp. Cost to Enchant: 1,000 gp + 80XP.*

Chorus Harp: A chorus harp looks like an ordinary floor harp (about five feet tall and perhaps three feet deep). Closer inspection reveals that the harp has far more strings than a normal harp. Each string holds a single note sung by a mortal vocalist and can play that note back when plucked. Mastering a chorus harp takes considerable time and effort, but allows the musician to create truly incredible music. *Caster Level: 7th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, sculpt sound; Market Price: 2,000 gp. Cost to Enchant: 1,000 gp + 80XP.*

Hall of Winds: These elaborate structures take years to plan and build. The simplest are narrow passages lined with magical crystals that create notes when someone walks by them. At a normal walking pace the hall becomes a musical instrument, playing a single song for whoever happens by. More complex halls

have branching corridors and an almost maze like structure, capable of creating unique music each time the listener enters. These halls take decades to plan and execute, but are some of the greatest marvels of the world.

Night Flower: Night flowers are the product of druidic and bardic magic working together to create a unique garden. The garden sings to itself at all times of day or night, varying their song with the time of day and the season. A properly made garden grants a +6 bonus to all Healing skill checks to care for anyone who rests in it. Additionally just being in the garden for one hour removes fatigue and exhaustion effects.

Rain Staff: These gnarled wooden staves typically exceed seven feet in length. Their surface appears to be worn smooth and carries a slightly glossy look. They are slick to the touch. When used by a skilled musician they can produce all of the sounds of wind and storm, interwoven to create a tapestry of notes that both resembles normal music and in some ways surpasses it. *Caster Level: 7th; Prerequisites: Craft Wondrous Item, sculpt sound; Market Price: 2,000 gp. Cost to Enchant: 1,000 gp + 80XP.*

EXOTIC TOOLS

Like all fields, music has a variety of exotic seeming tools that fit the needs of the performer. In some cases these are simply props designed to evoke a particular mood or feeling. In other cases these items are vital, if esoteric, tools for performing specialised tasks.

Bards that engage in theft, smuggling, or other such activities often find that their unique tools give them a discrete advantage. People expect to find strange things in a bard's baggage; they rarely question what they see.

Bag of Glass: One of the simplest props that a troupe of actors needs is some way to simulate wealth. The bag of glass fits that need nicely; it contains a variety of different kinds of coloured glass, all cut to resemble gemstones. These can be handled during performances, scattered about the stage, or pasted onto costumes as required. Additionally one could drop a real gem into the bag, shake it up and make it very difficult (Search skill check DC 25) to spot. A bag of glass costs 10 gp and contains anywhere between fifty and one hundred and fifty glass gems of various sizes.

Magician's Chest: A magician's chest is actually a very complex piece of equipment that contains a falls bottom designed to allow access to the centre stage

door. The chest is also rigged to fall apart very easily. In addition to adding a +2 circumstance bonus to a character's Hide attempts when he uses the box for it's intended purpose anyone can cause the box to fall apart noisily by inflicting one point of damage on it. This sudden noise causes a distraction that someone can take advantage of to make a Hide skill check. A magician's chest costs 100 gp.

Metronome: A metronome is any device that can keep a regular, steady beat. Bards use them for all kinds of performances, including music, chants and various plays. Most metronomes are mechanical in nature, but a few are magical constructs that keep perfect time. A metronome can also be used to create a distracting environment (counts as a distraction for everyone who fails a Will save (DC 15)), as its regular ticks can startle anyone within 20 ft. of the device. Metronomes cost anywhere from 10 gp all the way up to 200 gp, depending on their construction, reliability and materials.

Pocket full of Sashes: Most stage-magicians carry a number of sashes that they can appear and disappear at will into various hidden pockets. A pocketful of sashes is goodly number (between 7 and 12) of multicoloured sashes. One of the sashes contains within it a length of hard wire, woven into the material. This makes it suitable for use as a garrote, inflicting 1d6 damage per round to an opponent during a successful grapple. A pocket full of sashes costs 20 gp.

Tuning Fork: Many musical performances hinge on the ability of the performers to consistently generate the correct notes. This can be difficult as most instruments fall out of tune remarkably quickly when subjected to the lifestyle of a wandering bard. Fortunately the dwarven smiths long ago discovered the secrets of crafting a device of metal that always reproduces single, perfect note when struck. These tuning forks are actually quite loud – they can be heard clearly within

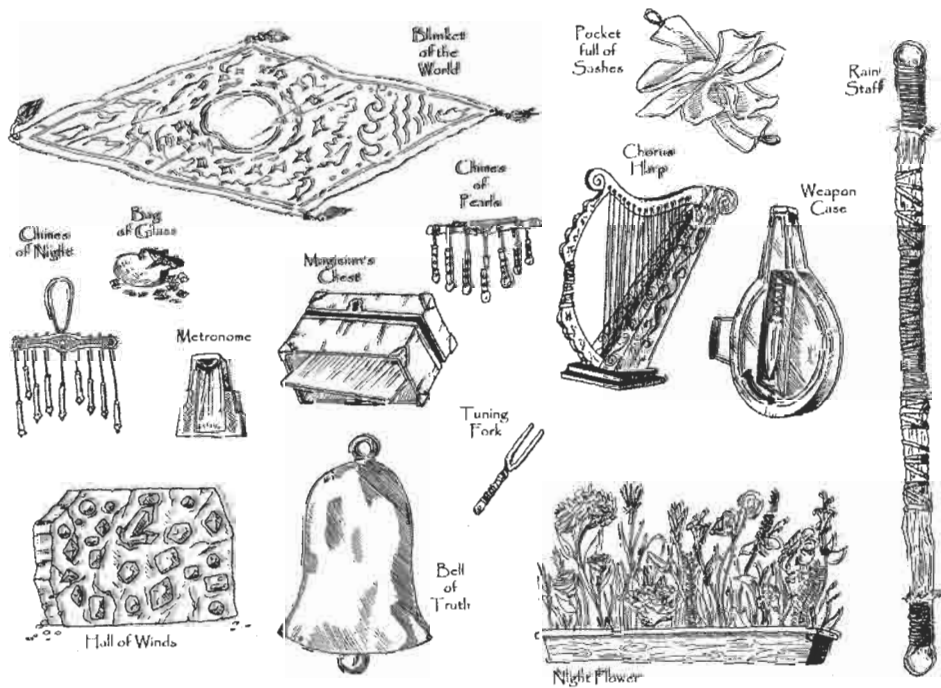
a 30 ft. radius. Bards also use them for signalling, communicating simple commands and for passing messages. A tuning fork costs 5 gp.

Weapon Case: Sometimes a bard needs a backup weapon in case something goes horribly wrong. Unfortunately these situations are often the very same times that a bard cannot carry a weapon with him. In recognition of this many bards have small 'hold out' compartments built into their bulkier instrument cases. Any hard sided case can have a storage slot large enough for a single, small sized weapon to be placed inside added to it for 50 gp. Hard sided cases are typically used for instruments that are particularly fragile, like some forms of string instruments and woodwinds.

MAGIC ITEMS

Bards (and others with the Perform skill) have access to some truly wondrous magical items. These items combine the beauty and mystery of all musical instruments with the impressive powers of magic.

Bell of Truth: This large, golden bell ring a deep, resonate note. It is large enough that it requires a Strength of 15+ to use properly as an instrument. When sounded it generates a *zone of truth* equivalent to the spell of the same name cast by a 12th level cleric. This zone of truth lasts for ten minutes. The bell's chime echoes in the area for the entire duration of the effect. *Caster Level:* 12th; *Prerequisites:* Craft



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Wondrous Item, *zone of truth*; *Market Price*: 48,000 gp. *Cost to Enchant*: 24,000 gp + 1920XP.

Chimes of Night: These silver inlaid bone wind chimes typically hang in underground passages. They strike against one another in the breeze created by the passage of creatures. One round after sounding the chimes immediately strip everyone not of elven blood of their darkvision or low-light vision in a 60 ft. radius. Everyone with one of the effected abilities may make a Will save (DC 20) to resist the effect. The effect lasts for one hour. *Caster Level*: 9th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *deeper darkness*; *Market Price*: 54,000 gp. *Cost to Enchant*: 27,000 gp + 2126XP.

Chimes of Pearls: Although this instrument looks like a standard wind chime of some sort, it is actually a tool used by undersea peoples to create haunting music. Careful inspection will reveal that each chime has an elaborate array of baffles and holes within it. When swung through air or water each chime generates a variety of different notes. With practice a skilled musician (Perform rank 10+) can learn to use the instrument for performances. Additionally three times per day the chime of pearls can summon forth a small elemental (either air or water) to assist the wielder for five rounds. *Caster Level*: 5th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *summon nature's ally III*; *Market Price*: 18,000 gp; *Cost to Enchant*: 9,000 gp + 720 XP.

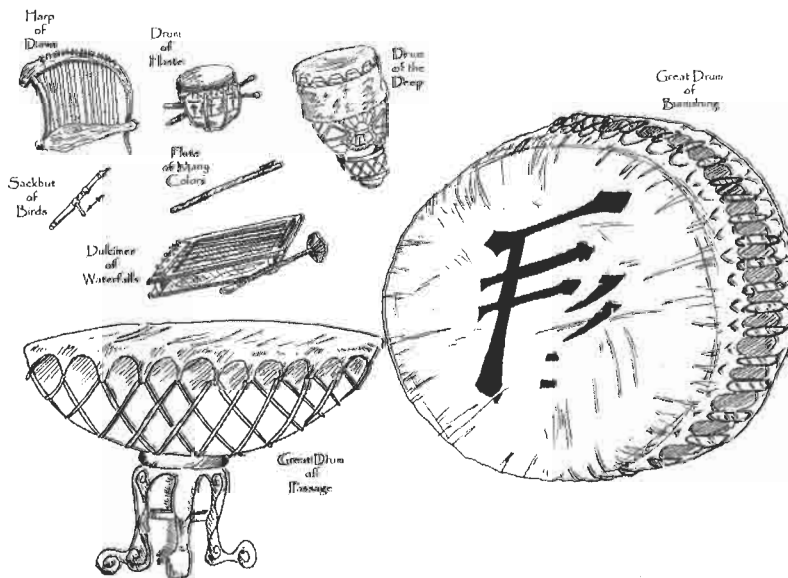
Drum of Haste: The drum of haste typically takes the form of a medium sized drum, such as would be used by an army on the march or by a travelling group of players. These drums can produce a wide range of tones without requiring much in the way of set-up or extra maintenance. Anyone with a Perform skill rank

of 5+ can use the drum once per day to generate a pounding rhythm that enables all allies within 120 ft. to take an extra partial action per round. Every round that the musician attempts to sustain this effect he takes 2d10 points of subdual damage that cannot be resisted, healed, or redirected in any way. When the effect ends everyone who took advantage of the extra partial action must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) or become fatigued until they have a chance to rest. *Caster Level*: 5th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *haste*; *Market Price*: 6,000 gp.; *Cost to Enchant*: 3000 gp. + 240XP.

Drum of the Deep: The drum of the deep is a large, black drum strung with a dark grey hide of some unknown beast. When sounded it gives off a massive, deep boom far greater than its size would imply. That boom shakes the foundations of the earth, causing the ground to shake slightly every time the drum sounds. The drum can be heard up to three miles away under open sky, or up to six miles away when sounded underground. Once per day, wielder may (as a standard action) strike the drum with all of his might and summon forth 1d4 earth elementals (large). These elementals remain for up to one hour and assist the sounder of the drum as he requests. *Caster Level*: 13th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Item, *summon nature's ally VII*; *Market Price*: 36,400 gp.; *Cost to Enchant*: 18,200 gp. + 1456XP.

Dulcimer of Waterfalls: A dulcimer is a stringed instrument that typically lies flat on a surface and is played with light mallets. They produce a cascade of sounds not unlike running water at times, or like the patterns of light rains. A dulcimer of waterfalls creates such sounds when played but with an added, magical flair. All waters within 120 ft. of the dulcimer of waterfalls stir when a musician uses it. This causes streams to dance, water in buckets to surge about and creates considerable discomfort for any water elemental creature within the area. Once per day the player of the dulcimer may attempt to command all water elementals within the area of effect as if he were a cleric of equal level rebuking undead. *Caster Level*: 13th; *Prerequisites*: Craft Wondrous Items, *summon nature's ally I*; *Market Price*: 48,000 gp; *Cost to Enchant*: 24,000 gp + 1920XP.

Flute of Many Colours: A flute of many colours takes the form of a flute made of crystal. Rather than being clear this crystal flute holds within it a rainbow of moving colours that



look like thin ribbons of light. When played the flute sounds normal, but by making a Perform check (DC 20) as a full round action a skilled musician can create a *rainbow pattern* (as the spell of the same name) that lasts for as long the musician continues his performance. All effects of the *rainbow pattern* are based on the level of the character using the flute, not on the level of the flute's creator. *Caster Level:* 7th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *rainbow pattern*, *dancing lights*; *Market Price:* 56,000 gp; *Cost to Enchant:* 28,000 gp + 2240 XP.

Great Drum of Banishing: This man-sized upright free-standing drum cannot easily be moved. Formed of the finest woods and carefully selected leather these great drums are nearly permanent installations in shrines, temples and other holy places. Anyone wishing to play the great drum must have Strength 15+ or be unable to wield the stick well enough to maintain a steady rhythm. When sounded this drum does 2d10 sonic damage per round to all incorporeal creatures within one mile of the drum. This damage affects creatures that would otherwise be immune to sonic attacks that are also incorporeal. Sounding the drum is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. *Caster Level:* 15th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *consecrate*, *protection from evil*, *protection from good*; *Market Price:* 125,000 gp.; *Cost to Enchant:* 75,000 gp + 5000XP.

Great Drum of Passage: This huge ground standing drum has a ceramic body and a wide head. It can accommodate up to six musicians, each one playing a different beat. When six people play the drum and each succeeds a Perform check (DC 25) all six players come under the effect of the *astral projection* spell. This spell lasts for six hours, during which time the players can journey the planes as they choose. The great drum of passage can be used for astral travel no more than once per week. *Caster Level:* 18th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *astral projection*; *Market Price:* 64,800; *Cost to Enchant:* 32,400 + 2592XP.

Great Harp of Battles: The great harp of battles stands nearly seven feet tall. Its strings were never intended for human hands; the user of the harp must be of at least Large size in order to reach all of the notes. When played by a master musician (Perform rank 9+) the great harp of battles can swing the tides of war by providing all allied creatures within 300 ft. with a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls as well as a +2 morale bonus to Constitution. These bonuses last for as long as the musician uses the harp and continue for 5 rounds after the targets move out of the area

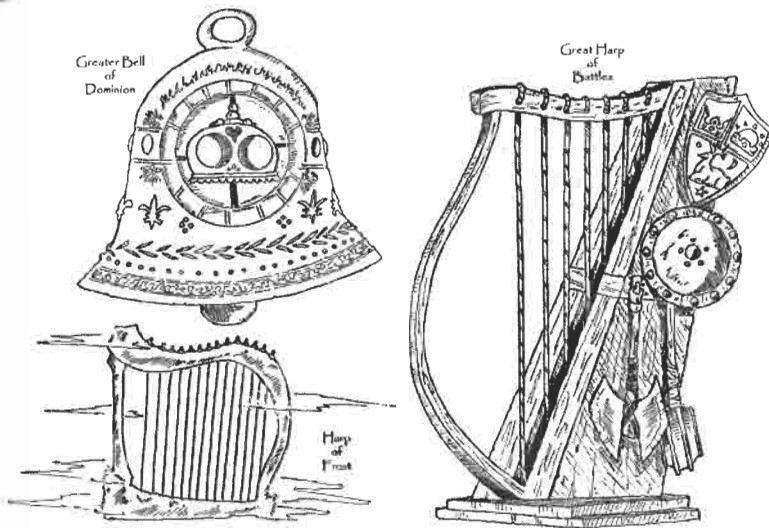
of effect. *Caster Level:* 12th; *Prerequisites:* Craft Wondrous Items, *emotion*; *Market Price:* 48,000 gp.; *Cost to Enchant:* 24,000 gp. + 960XP.

Greater Bell of Dominion: Cast in bronze these enormous bells are typically made to commemorate the founding of a new kingdom. Each bell is a unique work of art representing the hopes, deeds and aspirations of the founder of the new realm. Each bell also holds tremendous divine power. When rung the bell can be heard throughout the land it was made for, no matter what conditions prevail. Additionally when rung by the hand of the rightful ruler of the land the bell sends forth a distinctive note that can bring tears to the eyes of the most hardened and evil criminal. Finally once per year the greater bell of dominion can summon forth a celestial advisor (a solar or other similar celestial being) to provide the ruler with helpful advice and material assistance. *Caster level:* 18th; *Prerequisites:* Create Wondrous Items, *planar ally*, *sculpt sound*; *Market Price:* 175,000 gp; *Cost to Enchant:* 87,500 gp + 7000XP.

Harp of the Dawn: This small oaken harp appears to be nothing more than a battered old instrument. Careful inspection reveals a small number of worn golden inlays on the wood, usually of suns, clouds, or simple geometric shapes. When played the harp has a beautiful sound to it and adds +2 to all Perform skill checks attempted while using it, or +4 when performing bardic music. In the hands of a person with the bardic music ability the harp shows its true abilities. By using one of his bardic music attempts per day the player may call down a sunbeam (as the *sunbeam* spell) as though cast by an 18th level druid. This beam is 5 ft. wide and 280 ft. long. All creatures within the area of effect take 3d6 damage and are blinded unless they make a Reflex save (DC 23) which negates the effect. The beam does 18d6 damage to any undead caught in it and on a successful save they take half damage. *Caster level:* 18th; *Prerequisites:* Create Wondrous Items, *sunbeam*; *Market Price:* 126,000 gp; *Cost to Enchant:* 63,000 gp + 5040XP.

Harp of Frost: This dark wood harp has a fine, almost mirror like sheen to its surface. When played the harp becomes cool, emitting whips of fine fog. If played by a musician with the bardic music ability the musician may use one of his bardic music attempts per day to activate the harp's unique magic. When activated the harp radiates chill, causing everyone within a 30' radius to act as though under the effects of a *slow* spell. Targets that have any level of resistance to cold damage are unaffected, as is anyone who makes a Fortitude save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check.





The effect takes a full round to create and lasts for 5 rounds after the music ends. Targets that move out of the area of effect remain slowed for 2 rounds. *Caster Level: 5th; Prerequisites: Create Wondrous Items, slow, ray of frost; Market Price: 15,000 gp; Cost to Enchant: 7500 gp. + 600XP.*

Sackbut of Birds: A sackbut is a curious, sliding wind instrument that looks something like a proto-trombone. It has a different sound sometimes associated with waterfowl. A musician playing a sackbut of birds can communicate with any avian or air elemental using its music as if he had cast the speak with animals spell (or in the case of elementals as if he knew the Auran language). *Caster Level: 3rd; Prerequisites: Create Wondrous Items, speak with animals, Speak Language (Auran); Market Price: 12,000 gp; Cost to Enchant: 6000 gp. + 480XP.*

MAGICAL CRAFTS

Bards represent the artistic archetype in adventure games. Although most focus on music or performance arts some turn their attention to more permanent mediums. These visual arts include painting, landscaping, and weaving. By learning to focus their artistic gifts into a stable medium these bards gain a new avenue for expressing the magic in their souls.

These magical crafts allow the character to create items that channel their magic. Paintings that talk, statues that move, and similar effects all exist within the realm of possibility. The magic affecting the item comes from the character, making these items as much spells as they are wondrous artefacts. In the hands of someone other than their creator these items seem nothing more than beautiful works of art.

General Rules

In order to use a magical craft the character must have the magical craft feat. Each feat focuses on a specific craft. The character may only create magical craft items in a craft he knows. A character may not use a craft object created by another person, even if he possesses the appropriate magical craft feat.

Activating magical craft items requires the expenditure of an appropriate level spell slot per day. In effect the craft object becomes an addition to the character's spell list. Activating an item is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The character must be within 10 ft. of the magical craft object to light it. The character may not use a stored

magical spell (i.e. a scroll or a wand) to activate the item.

The DC to resist an effect generated by a magical craft object is equal to 10 + the level of the spell expended to activate the effect + the character's Cha modifier.

Some craft items remain active until the character revokes their power. While these items continue to exert an effect the character cannot regain the spell slot he used to activate them. The character may deactivate the item at any range as a standard action. Deactivating an item does not immediately regain the spell slot. The character regains the slot normally after his next rest period.

When magical craft items enter an anti-magic field it ceases to function until it leaves the area. Area uses of *dispel magic* treat magical craft items as normal magic items.

Creating magical craft items follows the normal craft rules. The character may use any spells or feats he may possess to speed up the process. Games Masters may allow a 1st level character to start with one crafted item for every magical craft feat he possesses.

Creating Magical Craft Objects

Magical craft items are masterwork items of a particular artistic form. They do not necessarily have to be made from costly materials, but their superior workmanship sets them apart from the common run. No matter how simple their form or decoration magical craft items clearly express the innermost soul of their maker.

In order to create a magical craft item the character needs access to sufficient tools and materials. When using masterwork artisan's tools the character receives a +2 circumstance bonus to any craft rolls per week. The character may create a magical craft item of any level, assuming he can match the DC and pay the cost. However he cannot activate that item without the ability to cast a spell of the appropriate level.

When the character finishes the item he makes a Concentration skill check (DC 15). If he succeeds then he can focus his magic through the item. If he fails then the item lacks the necessary spark. It may well be a powerful artistic statement, a wonderful example of its kind, but it cannot channel magic.

If magical craft items take damage from any source they continue to manifest their magic. They continue to manifest until reduced to zero hit points. The character may repair destroyed items but they can never again act as a focus for his power.

Magical Effects by Craft

The effects listed below take on the following format:

Name – Provides the name of the craft used
Description – an untitled section describing the craft.
Effect (Spell Level, Create DC, Cost) – The name of the effect including the spell level required to activate it, the DC to create the object and the market price of the object.

Each craft entry provides seven listings (ranging from spell level 0 to spell level 6) for each craft. The Games Master may approve new craft objects using the guidelines for the creation of spells. Craft entries also contain any rules specific to that craft.

Architecture

The art of architecture involves more than simply imagining buildings. Architecture focuses on the creation and manipulation of space. This space can have a variety of functions, from simple work or living arrangements to sacred and profane uses. A single structure may have space designed for one purpose. More commonly structures have several separate spaces within, each designed for something different.

Character's use architecture to design buildings, gardens, temples, bridges or any other form of designated space.

Magical craft architecture creates a magically charged space in which living beings operate. Unlike other

magical craft objects anyone who can cast spells can activate magical craft architecture. Investing the appropriate level spell 'infuses' a 20 ft. by 20 ft. area within the structure with the appropriate power. Once invested the effect remains active until the caster revokes his power investment.

Architectural effects require that the building designer have the Magical Craft (architect) feat. The designer must beat the DC indicated in the space design. Failing this roll indicates that the space does not perform as designed. The cost is a base % increase to the cost of the structure as a whole, rather than a flat fee.

It is possible although difficult to 'layer' architectural spaces over one another so that multiple effects stack. The first architectural space has a normal DC. The second has its regular DC +3, the third +6 and so on. If the character fails any of his skill checks on any of the spaces none of the spaces function properly. The builder adds the percent increases in the total cost together before making the final calculation.

Comfortable Space (0th level, DC 12, +5% total cost): *Comfortable space* allows the character to create a space that supports easy living and work. While working in an active *comfortable space* a character gains a +1 morale bonus to all Craft and Profession skill checks. This skill bonus vanishes when the character leaves the space.

Healing Space (1st level, DC 15, +10% total cost): *Healing space* creates a area in which wounds heal quickly and without additional complications. A healer can tend up to double the normal number of long term care patients a day in a *healing space*.

Healthy Space (2nd level, DC 18, +20% total cost): *Healthy space* creates an area in which disease, pain, and suffering fall away. Anyone sleeping within a *healthy space* for a full eight hours heals 1d4 points of temporary ability damage and gets a free saving throw (with no possible penalties) against negative levels.

Sanctum (3rd level, DC 21, +30% total cost): *Sanctum* creates an area filled with arcane energies. Arcane spells cast within the sanctum add +1 to all dice rolled. Furthermore the *sanctum* allows the character to maintain a spell with concentration duration as a free action.

Oubliette (4th level, DC 24, +40% total cost): *Oubliette* creates a standing area of anti-magic that resists any arcane or divine spell. Every creature and object within the *oubliette* has SR 15 + the activator's





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Cha modifier. This SR resists all spells, including harmless ones. The *oubliette* also attempts to counter-spell any magic cast within its boundaries as a 7th level caster. Finally the *oubliette* suppresses enchantments and similar effects on anyone who enters its area.

Sanctified Space (5th level, DC 27, +50% total cost): *Sanctified Space* creates an area where celestial or infernal powers flow freely. The character must choose whether to support celestial (good) or infernal (evil) divine magic when he designs the space. Supported casters gain +1 bonus to their effective spellcasting level while within the space. Opposed casters must make a Will save (DC 15 + activator's Cha modifier) or be at a -1 penalty to their effective caster level.

Barred Space (6th level, DC 30, +60% total cost): *Barred space* creates a space in which celestial and infernal powers do not function. Characters with either good or evil alignments must make a Will save (DC 16 + activator's Cha) or be unable to cast divine spells while within the space. Good and evil outsiders must make a similar Will save or be banished back to their home plane. Outsiders can sense active barred space within 120 ft. automatically.

Chandlery

The art of creating candles goes back as far as mortal memory. The bulk of a chandler's business revolves around the creation of vast numbers of simple tapers. The chandler's art though comes from his understanding and mastery of the production of light. Chandler's assist everyone from lords to paupers by helping them to light up the dark places. When not creating vast numbers of bulk candles the chandler designs speciality candles to grace and illuminate the world.

Magical craft candles automatically light when activated regardless of weather conditions or available fire starting equipment. The candles completely vanish after activation, totally consumed by the expenditure of their magic.

Light from activated magical candles dispels darkness from any magical source of lesser spell level without impacting their illumination radius. A darkness spell of equal spell level cancels the candle's effect but is also dispelled. Darkness spells of higher spell level automatically cancel candles light without impacting their area of effect.

Wind-fuelled Flame (0th level, DC 10, 1sp): By expending a 0th level spell into a *wind-fuelled flame* candle the character prevents that item from being put

out by weather or other natural occurrences. Once activated a *wind-fuelled flame* candle burns steadily unless deliberately put out or immersed in water. The candle lasts for one hour.

Ever Bright (1st level, DC 12, 2 sp): *Ever bright* candles burn as long as the character wishes. The candle gives off light equal to a torch (30 ft. radius). They remain lit, fuelled by magic, until the character revokes the spell. *Ever bright* candles do not have any special protection from weather or outside influence. Anything that extinguishes the candle cancels the magic.

Sun's Mirror (2nd level, DC 14, 4 sp): *Sun's mirror* candles expend themselves in a single burst of light. When activated they flare into brilliant light equal to sunlight for a single round. Creatures within 60 ft. who have dark vision must make a Fortitude save or be blinded for 1d4 rounds. Undead and other creatures vulnerable to sunlight must also make a Reflex save or take 2d4 damage from the flare.

Shadowless Flame (3rd level, DC 16, 8 sp): *Shadowless flame* candles shed eerily steady bright light illuminating a 20 ft. radius. The candle burns for one hour. Spells and effects with the shadow descriptor are subject to a *dispel magic* effect as soon as they enter the area of illumination. Anything illuminated by these candles does not cast a shadow.

Hidden Flame (4th level, DC 18, 16 sp): *Hidden flame* candles illuminate a 40 ft. radius with light that only the character and his allies can see. The light provides normal illumination for the character and a number of people up to his character level that he specifies at the time of activation. For everyone else the candle provides no light at all. *Hidden flame* candles last for one hour.

Boundary Candle (5th level, DC 20, 32 sp): *Boundary candles* radiate light in a 20 ft. radius. Creatures wishing to harm the character or anyone else within the area of illumination must make a Will save (DC 15 + the character's Cha modifier) to enter the light. Creatures already within the light who fail their save are gently pushed back to the circle's edge. If a creature successfully saves on one round it still must make another save in the next round just before its action or be pushed back. Boundary candles burn for one hour.

Eye of the Sun (6th level, DC 22, 64 sp): *Eye of the sun* candles shed fierce light that illuminates a 60 ft. radius. Within this illumination everyone receives a

+10 bonus to all skill rolls and saving throws to resist illusions, reveal secret doors, notice invisible creatures, or pierce any other form of visual obstruction. Creatures in the astral or ethereal planes appear as blurred outlines within the candle's area of effect. *Eye of the sun candles* burn for thirty minutes.

Embroidery

The ancient art of embroidery involves decorating already existing cloth and leather goods with threads, beads, and other small trinkets. Although initially confined to making clothing decorations embroidery later developed into an artistic form in its own right. Elaborate embroidered tapestries grace the halls of the highest nobles. Embroidered cloths serve as decoration and as ritual objects in many temples and home.

Embroidery can address any subject matter. Typically embroidery on clothing depicts geometric or abstract patterns. Non-clothing embroidery usually includes these patterns but also depicts human figures, landscapes, and similar subjects.

In many societies having elaborately embroidered clothing acts as a sign of social status. The more and more elaborate the embroidery on a person's clothing the higher his status. The newly rich sometimes fall into the trap of paying for extremely expensive embroidery on poor fabrics. This happens so often that in most noble courts they consider such a mistake to be the sign of a 'peasant in nobles clothing.'

Magical craft embroidery may be added to any cloth or leather item for the cost listed below. Embroidered items do not lose any hardness or hit points due to the process. The stitches of magical craft embroidery weave into other embroidery patterns. The character may hide the special stitches among the other patterns, preventing anyone from seeing the magical embroidery until it becomes active.

Cleaning Stitch (0th level, DC 10, 10 sp): The *cleaning stitch* prevents the material it is on from becoming soiled or faded. This stitch functions until revoked. The material does not gain any additional hardness or hit points.

Bright Stitch (1st level, DC 13, 40 sp): The *bright stitch* grants a +2 circumstance bonus to a specific skill selected when the stitch was made. While active the stitch provides this bonus to anyone touching or wearing the embroidered item. This stitch functions until revoked.

Covered in Glory (2nd level, DC 15, 160 sp): This elaborate interwoven pattern of stitches tricks the eye. Unlike the other stitches covered in glory represents a definite and recognisable pattern, incorporating elements from both arcane and divine magical symbolism. While active covered in glory grants a +4 Charisma bonus to the wearer of the garment or a +1 effective casting level bonus to any divine or arcane spell cast using the active item as a focus. This embroidery remains active until the creator revokes its power.

Evergreen Stitch (3rd level, DC 18, 800sp): The *evergreen* stitch repairs damage to the cloth or leather item it protects. While this stitch remains active the item gains Regeneration 5 (acid). Even if completely destroyed the item will return in a like new condition as soon as it has completely regenerated its hit points. The evergreen stitch remains active until revoked.

Shielding Stitch (4th level, DC 21, 1,600 sp): The *shielding* stitch makes ordinary cloth or leather as tough as dragon's scales. Items with the shielding stitch in them gain +10 hardness and +20 hit points. If applied to clothing or armour the *shielding stitch* grants a +3 deflection bonus to Armour Class. This stitch functions until the character revokes its power.

Sheltering Stitch (5th level, DC 24, 3,200 sp): The *sheltering stitch* transforms ordinary clothing into an extraordinary ward against harm. Clothing affected by an active sheltering stitch absorbs the first twenty points of damage from acid, cold, fire, electricity and sonic damage (twenty points each) dealt to the character in the round. Additionally the wearer can ignore environmental effects, breaths normally in any area without air, and does not need to drink. The sheltering stitch remains active until the character revokes its power.

Awing Stitch (6th level, DC 27, 6,400 sp): The awing stitch generates a moment of divine majesty around the object. All intelligent creatures within 60 ft of the stitch must make a Will save (DC 16 + activator's Cha modifier) or be stunned for 2d4 round by the display of power. The activator does not have to make a save to resist the stun. This stitch can only affect a specific target once per day. The stun is a mind-influencing effect.

Engraving

The art of engraving, like embroidery, involves adding decorations to already existing items. Engraving etches words, pictures, or abstract patterns into hard materials like stone, glass, wood, or metal. The artist





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must exhibit extreme care when engraving an item to avoid damaging it.

Engravings directly affect the subtle energies that fuel magic. The creator of the engraving chooses whether they affect arcane or divine spells at the time of creation. It is not possible to change the type of magic a particular engraving effects. Engravings designed to effect arcane magic have no effect on divine spells. Those designed to effect divine magic have no effect on arcane spells.

In order to use an active engraving the character must touch the engraved object. No matter how many active engravings the caster touches he may only use one effect per spell.

Capture Spell (0th level, DC 12, 20 sp): Once activated the *capture spell* engraving allows the object to maintain a spell cast upon it. The engraving extends the duration of a spell targeted at the object by one minute. Once that minute expires the spell resumes its normal duration.

Channels in the Air (1st level, DC 15, 80 sp): *Channels in the air* creates a subtle shift in the pattern of magical energies around the object. When active the engraving makes it more difficult to target the character with either arcane or divine energies. The character gains a +4 bonus to his Armour Class against magical spells of the appropriate type. Spells that target the character but do not ordinarily require an attack roll must make a ranged touch attack to strike. The engraving remains active until the activator revokes its power.

Fence of Iron (2nd level, DC 18, 160 sp): *Fence of iron* creates a grounding field around the character. While wearing the activated object the character cannot cast spells (either arcane or divine) but gains a +5 to all of his saves against spells from the appropriate type. This engraving remains active until the activator revokes its power.

Runic Patterns (3rd level, DC 21, 640 sp): *Runic patterns* etches lines of pure power into an object. When the object comes into contact with an existing magical spell of the appropriate type it attempts to cast a targeted dispel magic. This dispel targets every magical effect (blessing, curse, positive or negative) on the target. The dispel functions at the activator's level and has an additional +4 bonus on its dispel roll. The engraving functions for one round per point of the activator's Cha modifier.

Woven Net of Energy (4th level, DC 24, 2,560 sp): The *woven net of energy* drinks magical spells out of the air. When activated the woven net of energy can consume up to 4 levels in spells of either arcane or divine origin (as appropriate). Every spell it absorbs reduces that absorption pool by an amount equal to its spell level. The activator may spend more spells into the absorption pool, increasing it by the level of the spell slot extended. The absorption pool has a maximum value of 18. If it cannot absorb a spell the *woven net of energy* simply allows it to pass through, saving its absorption for something it can deal with.

Interlacing of Earth and Sky (5th level, DC 27, 10,240 sp): The *interlacing of earth and sky* engraving changes the rules of distance and timing within its area of effect. The holder of the object treats all targets within 100 ft. as if they were within close (10 ft.) range for the purpose of targeting them with spells. The *interlacing* supports a number of spell casts equal to the activator's Charisma modifier before collapsing. If unused the interlacing collapses one hour after activation.

The Weaver's Web (6th level, DC 30, 40,960 sp): *The weaver's web* duplicates some of the intricate patterns of force that make up the fabric of the universe. The web may be discharged to cast any 1st level spell that the character could cast, whether he knows it or not. The weaver's web remains active for one minute after activation.

Glassblowing

The art of glassblowing focuses on the creation of a variety of useful and decorative items. Glass is used to make vases, beads, decorative figurines and place settings. Large flat panes of glass do exist, but the difficulty in making them even close to transparent limits their use to the extremely rich.

Most windows with glass in them have small pieces of nearly opaque glass bound together by a lead lattice. Although originally the pieces of glass shared the same colour highly creative artisans lost little time in converting 'stained glass' into yet another medium for art.

Magical craft items made by glassblowing require light to function. They cannot activate in darkness, whether in a closed room or under some kind of magical spell. A single candle flame or low light conditions provides ample light for them.

Capture Flame (0th level, DC 10, 40 sp): Any glass item designed to *capture flame* contains within

it a special mixture of sands that hold light. When activated in the presence of light these sands capture enough illumination to act as a torch. The glass item continues to glow until the activator revokes his power.

Maze of Dancing Lights (1st level, DC 12, 120 sp):

The *maze of dancing lights* represents a complex internal arrangement within a glass object. When activated, this internal structural arrangement begins to glow and move, attracting the eye of weak will creatures. Intelligent creatures with 2 or fewer HD within 30 ft. of the item must make a Will save (DC 11 + activator's Cha modifier) or be dazed until struck. This effect lasts for 2d4 rounds.

Graven Image (2nd level, DC 15, 600 sp):

A *graven image* object may only be activated once. When activated it makes a perfect, three-dimensional image of the target and his immediate surroundings. This image permanently embeds within the glass object. Breaking the object does not destroy the image. Instead each piece of the object holds the complete image, visible under any light. The target must be within line of sight and no further than 60 ft. away. The object records the target and a 10 ft. radius around him in perfect detail.

Mirror's Vision (3rd level, DC 18, 3,000 sp): This ability requires that the character create a matched set of mirrors. These mirrors look and seem in every way non-magical. However, the creator may activate either mirror at will. When activated, the active mirror shows whatever is reflected in its twin's surface. The two mirrors must be on the same plane of existence to operate. A mirror remains active for ten minutes. When active both mirrors radiate magic.

Capture Shadow (4th level, DC 21, 15,000 sp): This glass object only functions once. When activated it 'captures the shadow' of everyone visible within a 30 ft. radius. Every target may make a Will save (DC 14 + activator's Cha modifier) to resist the effect. If they fail, then the glass object sucks up their shadow. Not only does the character cast no shadow but he is at a -4 penalty to all skill checks and loses the ability to heal normally. Characters may get their shadows back by destroying the glass item.

Glass Heart (5th level, DC 24, 45,000 sp): This glass object only functions once. In order to activate it the character must get blood from the target onto the object. He then activates the object, creating a sympathy between the glass and the target's heart. He can then break the object as a standard action, making a ranged coup de grace attack on the target inflicting

3d8 damage. The target may make a Will save (DC 15 + activator's Cha) to avoid the automatic Fortitude save to resist death.

Prison of Glass (6th level, DC 27, 9,000 sp): The *prison of glass* only functions once. The character selects one visible target within 60 ft. That target must make a Will save (DC 16 + activator's Cha modifier) or be placed into the glass. The target can be released by breaking the object. Any spell that releases the target immediately breaks the *prison of glass*. If the target makes the saving throw then the *prison of glass* shatters.

Painting

The art of painting involves using pigments and other coloured mediums to express the form and spirit of the subject. The painter may execute his art on any surface capable of holding pigments. Traditional painting takes advantage of the texture of the surface; modern painting uses a featureless surface so that the artist can create a specific effect.

Magical craft painting creates images that not only represent the image of the subject, but are in some way connected to that subject. As the complexity of the painting increases the connection between the item and the subject increase as well. At the highest levels there is little practical difference between the painting and the subject depicted.

The painter creates each painting to capture a single subject. This subject may be a person, place, or object. Once created, the powers of a particular painting only express that subject. In order to depict a new subject the character must create a new painting. Painting a picture of something the character cannot see increases the DC by 5.

The powers of a painting only affect those who see it. Paintings have no effect on blind characters, or on characters that cannot see the painting. A character in low light conditions who does not have low light vision is immune to a painting's effect. Similarly a character without dark vision in a dark area cannot be affected by a painting.

Matching the Changes (0th level, DC 15, 225 sp):

Painters creating a painting to focus *matching the change* tend to use a highly realistic style. After finishing the painting the creator can activate the painting at any time. Upon activation, the painting shifts to display an accurate depiction of the person, place, or thing in the painting as it exists at the time





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of activation. This transformation lasts for one round, then the painting returns to its original depiction.

True Depiction (1st level, DC 17, 289 sp): A *true depiction* may take any style. When activated the painting radiates the essence of the thing it depicts. This allows anyone viewing the picture to have a +2 circumstance bonus to all rolls to recognise the subject for the next week. This bonus works against any mundane or magical attempt to hide the target's identity. The true depiction remains true for a number of rounds equal to the activator's Cha modifier. Up to three people per round may study the painting closely enough to gain the bonus.

The Truth of Now (2nd level, DC 19, 361 sp): A painting designed to express *the truth of now* typically incorporates a sense of timelessness, a feeling that the subject exists outside of time and space. When activated the target may make a Will save (DC 12 + activator's Cha modifier). If the target fails the picture animates. It also changes to display his surroundings, actions, and companions for the next 2d4 rounds. The target may make a Scry skill check to determine if something watches him. The activator cannot interact with the target in any way. *The truth of now* does not carry sound, only images and pictures.

From One to the Other (3rd level, DC 21, 441 sp): Paintings allowing for the transfer initiated by *from one to the other* typically depict intelligent creatures. When activated the painting absorbs any disease, poison, negative level, or temporary attribute damage suffered by the target. The painting itself changes to reflect this damage, slowly becoming a bent and gnarled version of the target. If something damages or destroys the painting then all of the stored damage immediately transfers back to the target. All stored effects happen simultaneously regardless of whether that would kill the target or not. The creator may initiate a transfer from the target to the painting at any time.

Words not Spoken (4th level, DC 23, 529 sp): Unlike *the truth of now* *words not spoken* allows the target and the activator to communicate. When activated the target receives a general impression of who is trying to mentally contact him. If he wishes to resist the contact he may do so by making a Will save (DC 14 + activator's Cha modifier). If unsuccessful or if he does not resist the activator may enter into a normal conversation with the target. Both sides of the conversation communicate freely. The communication lasts until the activator wishes to end the conversation.

Words not spoken can reach the target so long as he remains within the same plane of existence.

One Step Away (5th level, DC 25, 625 sp): *One step away* creates a magical bond between a painting and the thing depicted. By activating that bond and taking a single forward step the character can immediately teleport himself to the person, place, or thing depicted in the painting. The character may carry up to 100 lbs of gear though the teleport.

Hidden Truth, Hidden Lies (6th level, DC 27, 729 sp): *Hidden truth, hidden lies* creates a mystical bond between the painting and the subject. Once the painting becomes active the subject cannot be targeted by any form of divination or detection spell. So long as the painting remains active all such spells discover information about the painting. A active hidden painting can be terribly difficult to find, as it is an inanimate object without will or volition to betray itself.

Pottery

The potter's craft stands on the boundary between pure commercial activity and artistic expression. Potters make hundreds of every day items, from plates to ornaments. Most of these show little in the way of artistic sensibility. However, when the potter has time to work on higher price pieces, like ceremonial bowls and other works of art, his mastery of form and colour become apparent.

Magical craft pottery falls into the second category. These complex and beautiful pieces grace the homes of the most wealthy and powerful members of noble courts. Many are exquisite works of art in their own right, while still contributing to an artistic effect felt from the entire set.

The shape of pottery makes it surprisingly tough, but hardly capable of containing the forces that magical craft pottery can. Magical craft pottery takes no damage from any force or being it entraps. Creatures with more than 25HD or effects doing more than 20dX of damage might, at the Games Masters option, be able to make some impression on the inner surface of the pot.

Once a pot contains a force or entity it must remain sealed. Anyone may break the seal and release pot's contents as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. If the magical effect on a pot breaks for any reason then the force or creature contained within immediately escapes. Should the activator choose to revoke his power the jar immediately discharges.

The prices given below are for an 'average' sized pot about 1 ft. across. Larger pots cost more, smaller pots cost about the same amount.

Seal (0th level, DC 10, 100 sp): Once activated, a *sealed* pot has an open DC of 23. This prevents casual leakage as well as more sustained efforts to open the pot. This power remains active until revoked.

Preserve (1st level, DC 12, 200 sp): Once activated a *preserving* pot prevents decay or weathering of whatever it contains. The contents do not suffer from any weather or time related effect. A *preserving* pot shatters if it is activated while containing a living creature. This power remains active until revoked.

Capture Wind (2nd level, DC 15, 400 sp): A jar designed to *capture wind* usually has cloud or sky motifs in its decorations. When activated the air becomes still within a 60 ft. radius for 3 rounds. At the end of that time the stopper fits itself into the jar. When someone removes the stopper the jar unleashes a blast of air equal to the *gust of wind* spell within a 60 ft. radius. The jar retains the wind until the activator revokes his power.

Capture Energy (3rd level, DC 18, 800 sp): A jar designed to capture energy typically has storm or mountain motifs in its decorations. When activated the jar sucks in one energy effect (acid, cold, electrical, fire, force or sonic). The jar sucks in the first effect occurring within a 60 ft. radius. It can only absorb a number of dice equal to the activator's level. The jar remains active for a number of rounds equal to the activator's positive Cha modifier. When someone removes the stopper the jar unleashes the energy contained within it in a 10 ft. radius. Anyone within the area of effect may make a Reflex save (DC 13 + activator's Cha modifier) for half damage. The jar retains energy until the activator revokes his power.

Capture Incorporeal (4th level, DC 21, 1600 sp): A jar designed to *capture incorporeal* entities typically has cage and cloud motifs in its decorations. When activated the jar sucks in one incorporeal entity within a 60 ft. radius. The effect targets the closest entity first, then the next closest and so on until it captures an entity. Each entity may make a Will save (DC 14 + activator's Cha modifier) to resist the effect. Once it captures an entity the jar stoppers itself. Creatures outside the jar may communicate verbally with the trapped entity. The jar retains the entity until the activator revokes his power or someone opens the jar.

Capture Outsiders (5th level, DC 24, 3200 sp): A jar designed to *capture outsiders* typically has abstract patterns and geometric designs in its decorations. When activated the jar sucks in one outsider within a 60 ft. radius. The effect targets the closest creature first, then the next closest and so on until it captures a creature. Each creature may make a Will save (DC 15 + activator's Cha modifier) to resist the effect. Once the jar captures a creature it stoppers itself. Creatures outside the jar may communicate verbally with the trapped creature. The jar retains the creature until the activator revokes his power or someone opens the jar.

Capture Physical (6th level, DC 27, 6400 sp): A jar designed to capture physical creatures typically has complex patterns of lines and squares among its decorations. When activated the jar sucks in one non-incorporeal creature within a 60 ft. radius. The effect targets the closest creature first, then the next closest and so on until it captures a creature. Each creature may make a Will save (DC 16 + activator's Cha modifier) to resist the effect. Once the jar captures a creature it stoppers itself. Creatures outside the jar may communicate verbally with the trapped creature. The jar retains the creature until the activator revokes his power or someone opens the jar. Living creatures trapped in the jar breath normally and do not age or require sustenance while trapped.

Sculpture

The art of sculpture allows for the creation of images and symbols out of solid and semi-solid materials. Although most sculptors work in stone or wood a few work in wax, sand, and other unstable mediums. Sculpture exists either as a free standing art form (statues and the like) or as additions to existing buildings/sites.

Magical craft sculpture awakens the innate power of the material the character works with. It also 'patterns' ambient magical energy, allowing the sculpture to display magical effects. When active these sculptures seem almost alive, as if they were about to step away from their supports and start moving.

The cost given for each sculpture assumes it uses common stone as a base material. It also assumes that the sculpture weights approximately 10 lbs. The Games Master should feel free to increase the cost of the item if it uses unusual materials or is of greater size.

The Watcher (0th level, DC 10, 20 sp): The first of the magical craft sculptures typically takes on the form of a figurine or fresco. When activated the





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sculpture radiates a sense of watchfulness. Although not actively doing anything, anyone within 30 ft. of the sculpture must make a Will save (DC 10 + activator's Cha modifier) or be at a -2 penalty to Bluff, Hide, and Move Silently checks because of the constant pressure of *the watcher's gaze*. This is a mind-influencing effect. *The watcher* remains active until the activator revokes his power.

Features Melt like Wax (1st level, DC 12, 120 sp):

Features melt like wax requires that the sculpture depict a 'generic' figure, typically human but often from one of the other races. This figure has no detectable features of its own. When activated, the statue assumes the features and appearance of the first intelligent creature to pass within 10 ft. of it. The statue retains these features for one week, or until it is deactivated by revocation of the activator's power.

Voice of the Statue (2nd level, DC 15, 600 sp): When activated a sculpture that can manifest the voice of the statue records all sounds taking place within 30 ft. of it. The sculpture can repeat these sounds on command. It can store up to a week of sounds. Its memory resets when the activator revokes his power. Only the activator can command the sculpture to repeat what it overhears. While active, the sculpture radiates a magical aura.

Will of Stone (3rd level, DC 18, 1200 sp): By touching a statue with *will of stone* the activator can transfer his own physical injuries to the sculpture. The statue absorbs 4d8 hit points of damage from the activator. The statue takes this damage as though it were an attack. If the statue accumulates enough damage to destroy it then the activator cannot use this power again until he creates another will of stone magical craft item.

Freedom (4th level, DC 21, 2400 sp): Upon activation a sculpture with *freedom* steps off its base and moves about. In effect it becomes a large animated object as defined in the *Core Rulebook III*. The sculpture remains animated until destroyed. The activator may revoke the sculpture's power at any time. Doing so causes the statue to freeze in place wherever the revocation occurred. The activator may give the sculpture simple, one word command when the sculpture is within verbal range.

Embodiment of the Subject (5th level, DC 24, 4800 sp): Upon activation a sculpture with *embodiment of the subject* becomes an exact duplicate of the medium-size or smaller creature touching it. The sculpture exactly mimics the creature, down to the smallest

physical features. It also gains the ability to move no more than 10 ft. per round. It can perform simple tasks if requested but cannot hold a conversation. Magical and other forms of detection treat the *embodiment* as if it were the target. The *embodiment* remains active until the activator revokes his power.

Guardian Force (6th level, DC 27, 9600 sp): When activated a *guardian force* generates a spiritual power that shocks and dazes everyone around it. Anyone who attempts to pass through a 40 ft. radius around the guardian force must make a Will save (DC 16 + activator's Cha modifier) or be stunned. Every round the target may make a new Will save to resist the effect. If the target fails six times in a row he cannot move until someone pulls him from the area. The *guardian force* remains active until the activator revokes its power.

Weaving

The weaver's art involves the creation of cloth for specific purposes. The texture, materials, and finish of the cloth are all manipulated to create the most pleasing possible presentation. A skilled weaver also blends multiple kinds of fabrics together to create particularly spectacular creations.

Magical craft weaving allows the character to create cloth that has various magical properties. This cloth can be made into any kind of clothing or used for decorations like curtains or tablemats. While inactive the cloth looks beautiful but does not radiate magic. When active the cloth provides the wearer with bonuses or abilities as appropriate.

Each use of the Craft (weaving) skill creates enough cloth to make one outfit. The cloth can then be tailored by anyone with the Profession (tailor) skill into a useable outfit.

Clothing made of magical cloth is very subject to disruption by damage. Anytime the character takes damage from a magical effect the clothing must make a saving throw as well. If it fails then the cloth must be repaired before it can function again.

Cloth of Colours (0th level, DC 10, 100 sp): *Cloth of colours* typically looks grey until activated. When activated the cloth changes to whatever colour the activator's desires. He may specify different colours for different parts of the outfit, but cannot magically add embroidery or complex dye patterns. The colour remains until the activator revokes his power.

Cloth of Woven Song (1st level, DC 12, 144 sp):

Cloth of woven song has a light feel to it. The cloth typically has a loose weave and several different kinds of fibres. It may be of any colour. When activated the *cloth of woven song* gives off a faint melody that enhances the wearer's performance skills. The wearer gains a +2 competence bonus to all Perform skill checks until the activator revokes his power.

Cloth of Forest's Silence (2nd level, DC 15, 225 sp):

Cloth of forest's silence looks and feels like a heavy wool blend. It typically has a dark green colour. When active the cloth absorbs sounds that the wearer makes. This gives him a +4 competence bonus to Hide and Move Silently skill checks as long as the cloth remains active. The cloth also absorbs the first five points of damage from a sonic attack every round. The cloth remains active until the activator revokes his power.

Cloth of the Sky (3rd level, DC 18, 324 sp):

Cloth of the sky looks and feels like closely woven sky blue silk. When active the cloth allows the wearer to fly at 20 ft. per round with good manoeuvrability. He can carry up to 20 lbs of gear with him while flying. The cloth remains active until the activator revokes his power.

Cloth of Glory (4th level, DC 21, 441 sp):

Cloth of glory looks and feels like a heavy brocaded silk. It may have any colour. When active *cloth of glory* allows the wearer to overwhelm those who look at him. Everyone who looks at the wearer must make a Will save (DC 14 + activator's Cha modifier). Those that fail believe the wearer is a highly ranked noble, or even royalty. They do not see the wearer's features, but instead believe he looks like an idealised version of their highest nobility. Those that succeed see the wearer as he really is. The cloth remains active until the activator revokes his power.

Cloth of Wonders (5th level, DC 24, 576 sp):

Cloth of wonders looks like medium weight brown sack cloth when not active. When activated it begins to shift and transform in appearance, responding to both wearer and those looking at it. The cloth of wonders grants its wielder a +10 bonus to all Disguise skill checks. It also acts to protect the wearer, granting him DR 5/+1 so long as it remains active. The cloth remains active until the activator revokes his power.

Cloth of Star and Shadow (6th level, DC 27, 729 sp):

Cloth of star and shadow looks like black velvet laced with thin blue and silver lines. When activated the cloth bends the borders between the planes. By making a Concentration check (DC 25) a character wearing clothing made of this cloth can step into

the Astral Plane, although if he does not have the power to activate the cloth he will not be able to step back. Stepping over is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The cloth remains active for a number of rounds equal to the activator's Cha modifier.

COMPOSITIONS

Once every great while an explorer finds a set of scrolls covered with what looks like magical markings. Unfortunately *read magic* cannot decipher the marks. Although the scrolls radiate magic they do not have any obvious command words, triggers, or other activation mechanisms. An *identify* spell reveals that the scrolls form a single magical item useable by a bard.

Barring magical influence understanding the scrolls requires a Decipher Script skill check (DC 20) and one day of effort. At the end of that day the deciphering character discovers that the scrolls contain some form of musical notation. After another day of study and another Decipher Script skill check (DC 20) the character fully translates the text. The scrolls contain a complete musical piece, requiring specific musical instruments to play.

Each composition creates a single unique effect. This effect manifests when someone successfully performs the musical piece. Some compositions mimic arcane or divine spells. Others bewitch the listeners. A few transport the audience, either emotionally or physically.

The entire original composition must be within 100 ft. of the performance for the composition to activate. Furthermore each performer must make a successful Perform skill check with a DC equal to the compositions complexity. One failure prevents the composition from functioning. A composition may only activate once per day.

Compositions have an effective casting level equal to the highest spellcasting level of the performers. If none of the performers have magical ability then the composition casts its spell as if were a 1st level caster regardless of the minimum level required to cast the spell.

Arranging Compositions

In order to invoke the effect of a composition a bard or other musician must first make a Perform skill check against the complexity DC of the piece. Each attempt takes one day. Failing this check means that the performer does not yet understand the composition. Success reveals the number of performers required,



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Table 6-1: DC Modifiers for Arrangement

DC Modifier	Change
+4	Remove a player
+3	Change a woodwind to percussion or vice versa
+2	Change percussion to strings or vice versa
+1	Change strings to woodwinds or vice versa
+1	Change any instrument to voice

the instruments needed, and the meaning of the composition.

Once the character understands the composition he may attempt to perform it. He simply needs to gather the requisite number of musicians, make sure they can understand the composition, and play the piece.

If the character cannot gather the required items and performers he can 'arrange' the composition for the number of players and types of instruments he can access. Arranging a composition requires at least one day per player or instrument changed. Each change requires a separate Perform skill check. The DC of this skill check equals the composition's complexity DC plus:

The notations for an arrangement share in the magical effect of the original composition. The papers gain a faint magical aura. Failure on any given skill check increases the DC of the skill check by +2. This penalty accumulates over successive failures to make a specific change. For example, a character attempting to change a flute to human voice on a complexity 20 piece has a base DC of 21. If he fails twice his base DC for the Perform skill check raises to 25.

Creating Compositions

In order to create a composition the composer must have the Create Wondrous Items feat. Furthermore he must be able to cast arcane or divine spells. He must also sacrifice a number of Experience Points to fuel the composition's magic.

Composition Descriptions

Each composition description follows the same format. This format includes: composition title, complexity, number of performers, instruments, history and effects.

Composition Title – gives a quick poetic title for the composition

Complexity – gives the base DC for the performance and manipulation of the composition. This line also

gives the effective spell level of the effect in (). For example: 12 (2nd).

Number of Performers – provides the minimum number of performers that a composition requires before arrangement
Instruments – provides a list of the instruments the composition requires before arrangement

History – a summary of the history of the composition and any other narrative details

Effect – a description of the composition's magical effect.

Composition Effects

A composition can carry one arcane or divine spell-like effect. This spell effect does not have to be known to the composer. The composer can also create compositions that mimic spell effects with a higher level than he can personally cast.

The maximum level of a composition's effect equals the number of performers required to activate it. The composition does not have to manifest a effect at the maximum level.

The minimum performance time for any composition equals its complexity in minutes. Highly complex compositions require a considerable amount of time. Less complex ones can take as little as ten minutes to perform.

Each composition possesses a single spell like effect, governed by all of the rules related to spell creation. The simplest method for assigning a composition its effect is simply to allow it to cast a spell. More daring composers might create unique spells for each composition.

If the composition's effect requires a target the character with the highest Perform skill in the group selects that target when the performance begins. Once the performance begins the target cannot be changed. If the target moves out of range of the effect then the composition fails.

A performance interrupted by a silence spell or by a bard's *countersong* ability immediately fails. Deaf musicians have a 20% chance to fail in their performance regardless of their skill check.

The DC to resist a composition's effect equals 10 + the effect's effective spell level + the highest Cha modifier among the performers. Unless otherwise stated a

composition's effect takes place at the end of the performance.

Composition Costs and Complexity

A composition takes 1 week per level of its effect to create. The base complexity of a composition as well as its XP cost is also based on the effects level.

In order to reduce the complexity the composer may add performers beyond the minimum number required. For each performer past the minimum number of performers required the complexity of the piece goes down by one. For example a composition with a 9th level spell like effect requires 27 performers to reduce the complexity to 15.

The composer must select one unique instrument for every three performers in the piece. However, he may select vocal performance (singing, chant, or other vocal expressions) as many times as he desires. The voice is an amazingly versatile instrument.

Creation Process

In order to create a composition the composer must:

- 1) Design the composition
- 2) Pay the costs in terms of time and gold for the composition
- 3) Make a Perform skill check with a DC equal to the complexity of the piece. If he fails then he wastes the time and the gold, but does not have to spend any XP.
- 4) If he succeeds at the Perform skill check he spends the XP to invest the composition with a portion of his own spirit.

This process represents a slight change from the standard process for the creation of a wondrous item.

Repairing Compositions

A skilled composer can repair a composition with lost or damaged pieces. The repairing composer must understand the piece, be able to create wondrous items, and have sufficient time to perform the work. Repair takes one week per 10% of the composition that is lost or damaged.

A composer cannot repair a composition less than 60% intact.

Legendary Compositions

The following compositions demonstrate the kinds of effects commonly associated with these items.

The Blushing Barmaids

Complexity – 12 (2nd level)

Number of Performers – 2

Instruments – Mandolin

History – The origins of this well-known composition long ago vanished from history. Variations of it can be found in taverns and inns though out the land. The original composition was considerably more complex than the common drinking song so popular today. It was also amazingly distracting and infectious, allowing the performers to defuse tense situations though the sheer joviality of the performance.

Effects – At the end of the performance everyone within a 60 ft. range must make a Will save (DC 12 + the highest Cha of the performers) or come under the

Table 6-2: Composition cost and base complexity by effect spell level

Effect Spell Level/Number of Performers	Gold and XP Cost	Base Complexity
1	350 gp + 14 XP	10
2	2,100 gp + 84 XP	12
3	5,250 gp + 210 XP	15
4	9,800 gp + 392 XP	18
5	15,400 gp + 616 XP	21
6	23,100 gp + 924 XP	24
7	31,500 gp + 1260 XP	27
8	42,000 gp + 1680 XP	30
9	53,550 gp + 2142 XP	33





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effects of a *calm emotions* spell for a number of rounds equal to the effective caster level of the performance.

Rest Beneath these Branches

Complexity – 14 (3rd level)

Number of Performers – 4

Instruments – drum and chant (high)

History – This extremely familiar tune began life as a ritual composition for an ancient druidic sect. The tune, stripped of its religious meanings, went on to form the core of hundreds of popular ballads. The bark scrolls containing the original composition vanished when the druidic sect disbanded. They resurface from time to time, an archaic reminder of a long lost time.

Effects – A number of willing targets up to one per the compositions effective caster level fall into a deep regenerative slumber for eight hours. They each heal at six times their normal rate. Additionally each one heals 1d4 temporary ability damage if they slept under a tree. The targets of this spell cannot awaken normally and any spell under 3rd level that attempts to awaken them fails. They awaken normally if attacked, although an awakened target is dazed for one round after coming awake. Targets awakened before the end of the eight-hour period receive no benefit.

The Mountain Lay of Master Almasi

Complexity – 15 (3rd level)

Number of Performers – 3

Instruments – great drum and song

History – One hundred and twenty years ago a court composer named Master Almasi became annoyed with the court. His masterpiece compositions ‘entertained’ the nobles after their heavy feasts. Unfortunately most of the nobles he slaved for fell into a deep sleep long before his orchestra began playing. To help express his frustration Master Almasi penned this rather startling piece.

Effect – Everyone within 100 ft. of the performance must make a Fortitude save (DC 13 + the highest Cha modifier of the performers) or be awakened no matter what effects attempt to keep them asleep. For the duration of the performance they cannot be put to sleep, nor do they fall unconscious due to subdual damage. Characters under this effect may be rendered unconscious by sufficient amounts of real damage.

The Song at the Worlds End

Complexity – 33 (9th level)

Number of Performers – 9

Instruments – Chant (epic), chant (high), chant (martial) and chant (musical)

History – When the gods sang the world into creation their voices blended together to seal bonds of the forces of uncreation. This odd song counters those

seals, unleashing the powers of absolute negation on the universe. The gods scattered this composition, knowing that they could not unmake it but afraid that it would someday fall into the wrong hands.

Effect – This composition unleashes the raw destructive powers of the universe. Every time it is successfully performed a major natural catastrophe strikes the world. If it is performed seven times in succession the world is unmade.

Widows’ Tears

Complexity – 10 (1st level)

Number of Performers – 1

Instruments – Flute

History – Grandmaster Caldwell’s first original composition for the flute, Widows’ Tears tries to evoke the quiet sobs of a wife who just learned of her husband’s death. Its haunting, plaintive themes linger in the heart and mind long after the music fades.

Effect – Everyone within 60 ft. must make a Will save (DC 11 + performer’s Cha modifier). Those that fail suffer a –2 morale penalty to hit and damage for the first 1d4 rounds of the first combat they enter within the next 24 hours.

Winds of Summer

Complexity – 16 (4th level)

Number of Performers – 6

Instruments – martial chant, flute, lute

History – The great composer Almasi penned this masterpiece during a month long winter storm. Unable to cope with the cold wet winds blowing in off the sea, the master dreamed of warmth and summer. His composition reflects that intense desire. Legend holds that Almasi forced his most skilled performers to go out into the snow to play this particular composition for the first time.

Effects – For one hour per effective caster level of the performance a 60 ft. radius around the performers becomes a balmy summer day. A stiff wind blows though the area carrying with it the scent of ripening grain and green forests. The prevailing conditions (night, winter, etc.) return as soon as the duration elapses. Undead caught within the area of effect suffer as though exposed to direct sunlight.

Composition Creation Time

The creation time for compositions is deliberately longer than that for other magic items. Since a bard can theoretically create composition able to cast a 9th level effect at 3rd level, we wanted there to be a practical limit on the number of attempts the bard could make.

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Bardic knowledge comprises one of the three special defining abilities of the bard class. This ability represents the bard's vast store of stories, legends, and rumours. It also implies a wide range of intellectual and social abilities that have many uses. The ability to remember small details, construct patterns, and piece together information from disparate sources has many applications beyond simply answering questions.

COMMON USAGE

Common usages for the bardic knowledge ability use it much like a reference library. The bard sorts through and compiles a large amount of information to come up with an educated guess about a particular topic. In practice this allows a bard to answer specific questions very quickly, often without any practical foundation for knowing the information.

Questions fall into five distinct categories. The bard's difficulty for answering the question depends on the obscurity of the information. Additional time does not help the bard when he uses bardic knowledge; intuition plays as much a part in the answer as research.

Categories of Knowledge

Bardic knowledge falls into five separate categories:

Arcane Knowledge: representing the bard's understanding of the magical world. This knowledge includes not only knowledge of spells and rituals, but also of various kinds of magical effects, creatures and situations that the bard might encounter.

Historical Knowledge: representing the bard's vast reservoir of information regarding the events, people and places that hold importance in particular world's history.

Item Knowledge: representing the bard's ability to identify the purpose, place of origin and potential abilities of a specific item. This knowledge comes from a wide exposure to many cultures, a keen eye for details and a vast pool of myths and legends that the bard can compare the item in question with.

Local Knowledge: representing the bard's knowledge of local customs, geography and laws. This knowledge neatly fits under the category of 'road wisdom'; things the bard needs to know to avoid being lynched accidentally while performing.

Social Knowledge: representing the bard's awareness of the social activities in a particular place or item. In part this kind of knowledge represents the bard's ability to store and assemble facts from rumors. It also indicates his ability to find and milk the latest gossip from those who have it.

Each of these categories of knowledge can provide slightly different information to the bard. He might delve into his arcane knowledge when working on a riddle, then go spend a few hours in the local pub finding out who is sleeping with whom up in the elite social set.

CATEGORIES OF OBSCURITY

Unfortunately all information is not equally available. Some pieces of information are common knowledge. Others languish in obscurity. Some information is deliberately hidden. There are five basic levels of obscurity:

Common: the information is freely available to everyone. No effort has been made to hide it, or the information is so ubiquitous that attempting to hide it would be futile. The DC to remember or uncover common knowledge is 10.

Uncommon: many people know the information and at least a few of them will share it. The information





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might only be relevant to a small number of people, or be a minor detail that most people would forget in the passage of time.

Obscure: very few people know the information but no effort has been made to silence them. The information requires specialised study to know, or might only be important to one or two people. In some cases

Occult: the knowledge is hidden, either by the dust of time or by the deliberate and careful efforts of one or more people. The odds of anyone knowing it are slim and there may well be those who watch to ensure that the knowledge does not come to light.

Epic: the knowledge is not just hidden it is buried under layers of misdirection, concealment and deceit. Someone has taken considerable effort to obscure the trail leading to the information, burned the bridges and most likely barred the gates. There might only be one person alive who knows the truth and odds are good that he would never talk about it.

The more obscure the information the more time that it can take to uncover. A bardic knowledge check for a piece of common information might take no more than a few moments of consideration, while an epic piece of information could take as long as a week to uncover fully.

ARCANE KNOWLEDGE

Arcane knowledge deals with the creatures, effects and abilities that separate the real world from the fantastic. A short list of what might be included here includes: mythical beasts, ancient rituals, planer relations, demons, devils, celestials, elementals, unique or obscure spells and the importance of various materials/items to arcane happenings.

Examples of the various kinds of questions that fall into this category are shown in the table below:

Questions about matters of arcane knowledge can also be answered using the Knowledge (arcane), SpellCraft and Knowledge (planes) skills.

HISTORICAL KNOWLEDGE

Historical knowledge deals with facts, rumours and possible connections between events that happened in the past. This goes beyond simple 'fact finding'. Anyone can know facts. Bardic knowledge deals with primary causes, interconnections and the actual reasons that things happened. This allows the bard to infuse his stories and songs with a realism and life that other performers simply cannot match. It also can give him unique insight into why particular events happen in the present day.

Obscurity Level	DC	Example Questions
Common	10	What material components are used for a fireball spell? What is the difference between a demon and a devil? Are fire elementals vulnerable to anything? Should I hug that golem over there?
Uncommon	20	What kinds of spells control overland movement? Is there anything that a specific class of demon is vulnerable to? Do fire and water elementals fight when they encounter one another? How long ago was the enchantment on this castle laid down?
Obscure	25	What was the name of the wizard who discovered the haste spell? What are the true abilities of a unicorn? Are there any naturally occurring portals to the plane of fire?
Occult	30	How many vampires are there in this city anyway? When will the stars align to release the ancient evil dwelling under the mountain? Is there anyone alive who knows the secrets of the Tomb of Autun?
Epic	40	Is this demon lord vulnerable to a specific weapon? Who holds the knowledge of the rite to bring the vampire king back from the grave? Has anyone ascended to godhood in the last decade?

Examples of potential questions that fall into this category include:

Obscurity Level	DC	Example Questions
Common	10	Were the kingdoms of Rache and Kalda at war three years ago? What is the date of the founding of the Kingdom of Rache? What is the name of the founder of the Kingdom?
Uncommon	20	Where was the cavalry deployed during the Battle of Silver Falls? What are the ancestral regalia of the Kings of Rache? When was the last time that the kingdom imported grain?
Obscure	25	How has the value of the silver nit fluctuated over time? When was the family of the Barons of Winchester chartered? What was the reaction of the other crafts when the king chartered a guild of magicians?
Occult	30	During the last war which nobles sided with the king? Who set the strategy for the Battle of Silver Falls? How many people really died at the Battle of Silver Falls?
Epic	40	What is the real origin of the royal family of Rache? Did any divine representatives actually attend the coronation of the first king? What was the real motivating factor behind the foundation of the kingdom?

The Knowledge (history) skill can also be used to discover some of this information.

ITEM KNOWLEDGE

Item knowledge deals with the bard's ability to notice and correlate minute details about the structure, artistic quality and historical significance of various items. It relies on the bard's ability to link seeming disparate information about enchantments, historical crafts, customs, linguistic construction and artistic style to create a unified picture of the origin, potential functions and use of a given item.

Obscurity Level	DC	Example Questions
Common	10	Where did this vase come from? What kingdom made these coins? What is the name of this talking, sparking, floating magical artefact with a bad attitude?
Uncommon	20	Is this one of the swords made by the legendary smith Claran Glyndwr? Are there any indications that this item holds a further enchantment?
Obscure	25	What do items of this sort commonly do? Are there particular markings that indicate an item is imbued with the ability to fly? Given this item's place of origin, what language would the command words be in?
Occult	30	Who created this item? When this item was created, who commissioned it and why? What are the most likely command words for items of this type?
Epic	40	Why are there enchantments on this artefact that do not match the artefact's origins? Is there anyone with a current active interest in this artefact? How many of these items were made in the last century?

This knowledge is unique to bards, although some of it might be available in Spellcraft or Knowledge (arcane).



LOCAL KNOWLEDGE

Local knowledge deals with the bard's awareness of local customs, traditions, mores, norms and geography. This knowledge is the result of long years of travel, careful attention to detail and the empathic gift that all performers share to one degree or another.

Examples of questions that fall into local knowledge include:

Obscurity Level	DC	Example Questions
Common	10	Is it polite to belch at the table in an inn? Where can I find an apothecary? Where in town is the Golden Pot Inn?
Uncommon	20	Why do people go to the Golden Pot Inn? Are there any merchants for rare and exotic items in the city? Where could I find a dwarven window washer?
Obscure	25	What is the local magistrate's favourite food? How much time does it take for city guard to respond to a serious threat? Where do all of the eligible young women pick up water?
Occult	30	How was the Widow Winslet murdered? What secret societies operated in the area in the immediate past? Did the miser on the hill ever really have any gold?
Epic	40	Who is a current member of a secret society? Are there any artefacts hidden in the city? What is the name of the master of the Thieves Guild?

The Knowledge (etiquette), Knowledge (geography) and Knowledge (history) skills can all provide some of the information available to the bard through this knowledge.

SOCIAL KNOWLEDGE

Social knowledge deals with the bard's awareness of and sensitivity to the social climate of the town, city, or nation that he lives in. Bards keep track of fashion, rumours and suspected personal interactions as naturally as they breathe. Failure to do so could result in them singing the wrong song at the wrong time with potentially lethal results.

Examples of questions that fall into social knowledge include:

Obscurity Level	DC	Example Questions
Common	10	Who did the Baroness invite to her party last week? Who did the Baroness not invite to her party last week? Who is the most dangerous man in town?
Uncommon	20	Who did the Baroness speak to at her party? Do the baker and the Baroness know one another? Who does the local moneylender trust?
Obscure	25	Where would one find the local fence during the day? How often does the Circus come through town? Who did the Baroness's advisor speak to during the party?
Occult	30	Has the local magistrate ever taken bribes? How many nights does the baker spend away from home? What one thing will make the midwife break her vow of silence?
Epic	40	Where did the Baroness and the baker bury their stillborn child? Who gave the bribe to the otherwise honest magistrate?

The Knowledge (heraldry), Knowledge (nobles and nobility), Gather Information and Profession (merchant) skills can provide some of the information typically encompassed by this kind of knowledge.

UNCOMMON USAGE

Uncommon usages for the bardic knowledge ability enable the bard to step beyond simple rote repetition of facts. The bard frees his mind of trivial details, allowing his unique mental tools free rein on a specific problem or situation. These uncommon usages involve the bard using his vast knowledge of symbolism, human behaviour, and patterns to uncover otherwise obscured truths.

Decipher Divinations

No epic story seems complete without cryptic prophesies. Every hero hears wise or mad sages proclaim his destiny at least once. The meaning of these proclamations only becomes obvious after the events take place. In the stories, had the hero exhibited just a bit more quickness of wit he might have profited from the foreknowledge.

Bards represent the quick-witted hero who could take advantage of such knowledge. More importantly, unlike the heroes of legend, they possess a deep and broad knowledge of myths, symbolism, and historical events. By applying that knowledge creatively bards can decipher even the most cryptic visions and prophesies into simple yes/no questions.

In order to decipher a divination the bard must compose a single yes/no question. He makes a bardic knowledge check with a DC determined by the Games Master. If he succeeds at the knowledge check then the Games Master answers the question. Leading questions or questions with more than one answer automatically fail.

Typically the DC of a question depends on the level of detail demanded of the answer. General questions have a DC of 10. Questions about specific elements of a prophesy or vision have a DC of 15. Questions requiring positive confirmation of a given course of action have a DC of 20.

Example questions include:

- † Does this prophesy refer to my actions? (General Question, DC 10)
- † Is this a positive or a negative vision? (General Question, DC 10)
- † Does the troll symbolize something or it a literal figure in the vision? (Specific Question, DC 15)
- † How many foes will we face in our final battle? (Specific Question, DC 15)
- † Should we seek out our foes before the final battle? (Action Question, DC 20)
- † Will picking up a wand of light improve our odds of surviving the encounter in the vision? (Action Question, DC 20)

As always with divination the Games Master has the right of final decision on any information revealed to the players.



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Formulate the Question

Sometimes heroes become so confused they do not know which way to go. They spin around and around seeking some clarity of purpose. Sometimes this confusion becomes so great they cease to act at all. They would prefer to stay in place rather than make a mistake.

The creative and intuitive nature of bards makes it unlikely for them to fall into this trap. When everything seems awash with confusion and doubt they excel. Where more linear thinkers fall pray to logic snares bards dance freely forward.

When bards cannot see any clear way forward they may make a bardic knowledge check (DC 20). On a success the Games Master passes them one question about their current circumstances designed to lead the bard out of his quandary. The question should contain enough information for the bard to formulate a reasonable answer to it, and should relate to events that the bard has direct knowledge of.

Inspiration

Every person finds something noble and uplifting in the stories of heroes. No matter how base and degraded their souls some deed or symbol from the past holds hope for them. They themselves might not even know it, but the light of that hope shines in their hearts.

Bards' empathic understanding of other people coupled with his knowledge of myth, allows them to harness that hope. By lacing their words with symbols and

references to what the listener holds dear they give them unusual impact. Given enough time they can inspire even the hardest hearts.

Any time a bard can take a round to study someone before speaking to them he can make a bardic knowledge check (DC 20). If he succeeds he accurately guesses the symbols and words important to the target. He gains a +2 circumstance on any Bluff, Disguise, Diplomacy, or Innuendo skill check targeting that person. If he fails then he guesses wrong, inflicting a -2 circumstance penalty on any Bluff, Disguise, Diplomacy, or Innuendo skill checks targeting that person. A bard may only use this ability on a specific target once and must live with the consequences of success or failure.

Intuition

For many heroes luck and pluck play as much a part of their success as strength of arm or spell. These fiery individuals fight the good fight, relying on wits to see them through. Their seemingly never-ending stream of luck makes them the envy of others. When pressed, most say that luck is simply the advantage seized by those who see it first.

Bards have the knack of seeing and seizing that advantage other's call luck. Becoming skilled at performance requires exactly the same kind of mental agility that enables a skilled warrior to react to the changing tides of battle. Without it bards who sing for their supper would stave to death long before they died in battle.



When a bard finds himself in a conflict and is unsure of exactly what to do next he can take a standard action and make a bardic knowledge check (DC 25). If he succeeds he can accurately assess the results of up to three non-combat actions that he might take. He gains a +1 circumstance bonus to those actions based on his foreknowledge of the result.

Notice Hidden Currents

When people interact they bring with them a tremendous amount of baggage. Cultural mores, personal history, and racial preferences all play a large role in the results of any interchange. Sometimes these factors play more of a role than anything being said or done by anyone in a given interaction.

Bards' training in musical intonation, as well as their knowledge of behaviour, allows them to guess at influences that they do not have direct knowledge of. By watching the interplay of two or more people they can gather information that the targets might even be unaware of themselves.

After watching two or more people interact for a minute the bard may make a bardic knowledge check (DC 20). If he succeeds he gains one piece of information about the history of the two people not immediately obvious to the casual observer. For example, a successful check might reveal the reason that two people hate one another or that two courtiers once carried on an illicit love affair.

Remember Details

Empires rise and fall on the most trivial of details. Knowledge of details like colour, weight, positioning, and distance can spell the difference between success and failure in many occupations.

Bard's trained memory serves them well in this regard. During apprenticeship they memorize more information than most people will ever know. This gathering of information goes on though out his life as his repertoire grows and changes.

By taking a standard action and making a bardic knowledge check (DC 20) a bard can remember the exact details of any specific incident in his life. A bard may only make this knowledge check once per incident. Success indicates that he remembers minor details and specific wordings. Failure indicates that he remembers general details and intentions but not specific information.

EXTRAORDINARY USAGE

Extraordinary usages of the bardic knowledge ability involve bringing the bard's magical talents into synergy with his mental skills. The bard casts aside the limits of his senses. He instead views the world as a constant interplay of symbols, stereotypes, and stories, infinitely told and retold by the powers that be. Allowing his

creativity free play he then intuits truths that would otherwise go unnoticed.

Decipher Meanings

Adventures regularly come across inscriptions they cannot interpret. Some of these are simply in languages no one knows. Others are symbolic representations. A few actually function as maps or scrolls, useful only to those who know the key.

For the most part adventurers rely on the Decipher Script skill to understand such inscriptions. Unfortunately the Decipher Script skill takes more time than most people can spare. Obscure inscriptions may well contain information vital to the immediate peril faced by the expedition. Failure to decode that information could lead to failure.

Bards' vast knowledge of symbols and language allows them to 'read' such inscriptions quickly. By making a successful bardic knowledge check (DC 25) the bard intuits the meaning of a specific inscription or other visual representation. This meaning provides a general sense of the content of the piece as well as any immediately pertinent details.

Predict Actions

Whether they realize it or not people act in patterns. They move, think, fight, and die engaged in a long repetition of acts. Sometimes these patterns stand out clearly. Other times the pattern of life becomes obscured under the random forces exerted by the world.

Though their studies of stories bards come to understand the pattern of life and death. They see how individuals repeat not only their own lives, but the lives of their forefathers as well. By applying this insight to actions as they unfold the bard gains knowledge of what is to come.

By making a successful bardic knowledge check (DC 25) a bard may accurately predict the actions of one intelligent target within range. Making this bardic knowledge check counts as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The bard gains clear knowledge of the target's choice of actions for the next round. The bard may choose to assist or oppose the target at his discretion.

Read Omens

Just as mortal men follow patterns so to do the events of the natural world. Comets flash though the night



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sky. Shooting stars strike fear in the hearts of mortal men. The sun rises red in the east. These events speak in a language that learned men understand.

By recognizing these omens bards gain information about the world around them. They see the interconnections between seemingly natural events and the conscious deeds of men. This awareness allows them to know things that others miss.

Once per day a bard may make a bardic knowledge check (DC 25) to interpret the omens of the day. A successful check means that he glens a single, cryptic phrase about the events unfolding during the day. The event he sees omens for may or may not directly relate to events affecting him.

Recognise Stories

The unwinding of a man's life often looks and feels like one long story. Many people notice this fact. A few even laugh about it, giving each other nick names from stories that closely mimic their own.

Bards recognize the truth. The old stories and legends have such power precisely because they mirror the everyday lives of men. By matching a man to his story bards can accurately predict the kinds of trials and triumphs he will face.

By speaking to a person about their life a bard may get a feeling for what kind of story they most closely mirror. The bard may further refine this knowledge by making a bardic knowledge check (DC 25). If he succeeds he can exactly match a person's life to a specific song or epic. This gives him a general outline for how the person's life might unfold.

These predictions do not force a person along a particular path. Once he knows which story he most closely resembles a person may choose to deliberately stray from the path.

Restore Information

The passage of time destroys information. Memories fade. Inscriptions weather. Important symbols change meaning. The intention behind a specific message or prophesy eventually vanishes into obscurity.

Bards wield the correct tools to lift this information out what scattered remnants remain. They understand history, legends, and linguistics. Many have a wide background in language. Most also have an intuitive understanding of arcane powers that helps them to subtly shift information about. Finally they understand patterns, enabling them to fill in the blanks if they can get enough of the pieces together.

When dealing with an incomplete message or inscription, a bard may make a bardic knowledge check (DC 30) to determine the contents of the missing pieces. Success fills in the gaps with something close to the original meaning. Failure confuses the picture, either providing the bard with false information or pointing to several different meanings at once.



MYSTERIES OF MUSIC

The class defining ability of a bard is his music. With it, he can charm, counter various forms of sonic attacks and assist their friends.

But music can do more than that. Indeed, there are legends of bards who can sing down the sun with their music. Stories abound of bards who shatter stones with their voices, riddle their way out of the den of a dragon, or charm the waves with their voice.

The keys to unlock these magical abilities hide within the mysteries of music. These mysteries are passed on from one generation to the next, each fragment a part of a greater lore from a forgotten age.

WHAT ARE MYSTERIES?

No one remembers where the mysteries come from. They seem timeless, products of a forgotten past that had mastered music beyond the understanding of the present day.

Each mystery contains within it four songs; one for each of the great elements that make up the world. These songs combine magic and music in ways that seem impossible to those without sufficient knowledge. Within each mystery the songs build one upon the other -- it is not possible to learn the second song without mastering the first.

Each mystery focuses on a single instrument or mode of performance. The patterns of power inherit in the mystery cannot be performed in another way; they must be expressed through a particular medium. Attempting to perform a mystery in a different method (say jesting with a harp) results in automatic failure.

HOW DO YOU LEARN A MYSTERY?

Learning a mystery requires that the bard find a teacher. That teacher must be willing to pass on the secrets that he knows, and will often demand that the student perform a task to prove his worth.

Mechanically the bard must select the mystery he wishes to learn as a Feat. Each mystery counts as a separate feat. The bard may select as many mysteries as he chooses, so long as he expends a feat on each of them.

The bard's Perform skill rank determines the number of songs within the mystery that the bard can use. Specifically:

- 1st Song – Perform Rank 3
- 2nd Song – Perform Rank 6
- 3rd Song – Perform Rank 9
- 4th Song – Perform Rank 12

Note that the bard must have the mode of the Mystery of Music feat among his modes of performance in his Perform skill. In other words, the bard cannot select Mystery of Music (storytelling) if he does not have Perform (storytelling).

The only exception to this general rule is the Mystery of Song. Its first song is available at Perform rank 9, the 2nd at Perform rank 12, the 3rd at Perform rank 15 and the last at Perform rank 18.

HOW DO YOU USE A MYSTERY?

Each use of a mystery counts as one of the bard's bardic music attempts per day. The effects generated





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by the mysteries are bardic music in their purest and truest sense.

Anytime that a bardic mystery allows for a saving throw the DC of the save is equal to the bard's Perform skill check. This DC can be modified by feats or special circumstances.

Mysteries of music cannot affect a deaf creature. Any spell that creates silence can disrupt the performance of a mystery.

Unless otherwise stated invoking a mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The effect of the mystery continues for as long as the bard continues his performance. Unless otherwise noted sustaining a mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

When someone enters the area of effect of an active mystery, that mystery does not affect him until a full round has passed. Exceptions to this rule are noted in the mystery descriptions.

Most mysteries are mind-affecting abilities and therefore cannot affect constructs, undead and other such things. The few exceptions to this rule are noted in the mystery description.

Unless stated otherwise mysteries are spell like abilities.

Rules Summary: Mysteries of Music

1. Characters with the bardic music ability may select a specific Mystery of Music feat
2. The character's perform skill rank governs the number of songs available from a specific mystery
3. The character must choose a Mystery of Music mode for a mode of performance included in his Perform skill
4. Using and sustaining a mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity
5. The bard's Perform skill check determines the DC to resist the mystery
6. Deaf or silenced creatures cannot be affected by a mystery
7. Mysteries are (unless otherwise noted) mind-influencing effects

LONG TERM PLAY

Many mysteries last for 'as long as the bard continues playing'. This gives bards the ability to create long-term bonuses, or inflict long-term penalties, at the cost of actions.

The bard's ability to maintain these bonuses can run up against the limits of human endurance. Every hour that the bard plays he must make a Concentration skill check with a DC equal to 4 multiplied by the number of hours he has played. For example, if a bard has played for 5 hours the DC of his Concentration skill check is 20.

THE MYSTERIES OF MUSIC

The following mysteries of music are explained in greater detail in the remainder of this chapter:

- † *Acting* – hiding and projecting emotions
- † *Chant (Epic)* – chants of lore and ancient legend that inspire and protect
- † *Chant (High)* – chants that open access to heaven and hell
- † *Chant (Musical)* – simple chants that anyone can join the bard in and gain benefits
- † *Chants (Martial)* – chants that set the pace of work and battle
- † *Chimes* – pure notes that cause discomfort in impure beings
- † *Court Dance* – dance that is about flirtation and manipulation
- † *Drum* – rhythms that effect earth and stone
- † *Flute* – sounds that effect wind and weather
- † *Great Drum* – sounds that reach into the spirit world
- † *Great Harp* – music that soothes and calms
- † *Harp* – music that effects the undead
- † *Horn* – notes that convey information, meaning and need
- † *Jesting* – confusion and distraction
- † *Lute* – songs to charm and control animals
- † *Mandolin* – songs that breed romance
- † *Panpipe* – songs control other people
- † *Storytelling* – reading and controlling an audience

Each mystery entry takes the following format:

MODE OF MYSTERY

Description: A short description of this mode of performance

Mystery Name (Perform Rank): Mystery name gives the common name of the bardic music ability.

Perform rank is the unmodified rank in the Perform skill required to invoke the song.

Special: Any special rules that govern the use of the mystery are included here.

ACTING

Description: The art of acting contains within it mysteries that allow the performer to accurately portray the person, place, or event that he wishes to show the audience. These mysteries start by stilling the heart of the performer and, eventually, reach out to the audience directly.

The Actor's Mask (Perform 3): An actor must first learn to hide his own thoughts and self in his role. The Actor's mask is a mantra that the actor chants to himself, a chant that guides him into the persona of his character. After a full round of chanting the bard may use his Perform skill check in place of a Will check to resist any active attempts to intrude upon his thoughts. Furthermore it is not possible to detect the bard's alignment while he maintains the mask. The bard may maintain this ability as a free action, but may not use other forms of bardic music while it is active.

The Voice of Shadow (Perform 6): The second mystery of acting allows the bard not only to hide his own thoughts but also to project thoughts and feelings that have nothing to do with what he truly believes. After a full round of chanting the mantra associated with this mystery the bard may use his Perform skill to oppose any Sense Motive skill check made against him. Additionally if someone scanning the bard's thoughts must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check (made when the bard first starts this effect) or hear 'false thoughts' established by the bard for his role. This effect takes a full round to create, and can be maintained as a free action. While maintaining the voice of shadows the bard cannot use another bardic music ability.

Names and Faces (Perform 9): The third mystery of acting allows the bard to 'become' another person as a full round action. This process of transformation is as much internal as it is external; the bard reshapes his thoughts and emotions to emulate another person almost perfectly. Any attempt (magical or otherwise) to detect that the bard is not who he pretends to be has a DC equal to the Perform skill check made by the bard when he first engages this mystery. Using names and faces is a full round action. This ability lasts for one hour, and can be renewed as a free action by using one of the bard's bardic music abilities per day. Names and faces does not allow the bard to use magical items that

he would otherwise not be able to use, although it does provide a +2 synergy bonus to Use Magical Devices to emulate features that are a part of the persona adopted by the bard.

Many Hands, Many Voices (Perform 12): At this level the bard has mastered the mysteries of acting. His ability to project other personas is complete. As a full round action the bard stage a conversation with a person that is not there and everyone who views the interaction must make a Will save with a DC equal to the Perform check of the bard or become absolutely convinced that the second person was not only present, but responded. This conversation can last for one round per level of the bard.

BELLS

Description: Bells are an ancient instrument, typically either hung in order to be played by the wind or rung by hand. They can be made from ceramics, metal, or bone. The most common bells are made of moulded bronze using either sand or wax casting. The pure notes generated by bells are widely regarded to have purifying effects.

Unbreakable Hope (Perform 3): The first mystery allows the bard to tease a single, pure note out of a bell. This note inflames the hearts of the bard's allies, providing them with a +2 morale bonus to all saves against poison, disease, or enchantment. This effect reaches all allies within a 30 ft. radius and lasts for a number of rounds equal to the bard's positive Charisma modifier.

Adder's Bane (Perform 6): The second mystery of the bells allows the bard to create a complex resonance that drives out impurities and poisons. Any unattended poison within a 30 ft. radius of the bard is instantly destroyed. Any poison on or in an object held by another person must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or be destroyed. Creatures with natural or supernatural poison based attacks must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or be unable to use their poison for 2d4 rounds.

Loud and Sweet (Perform 9): Invoking the third mystery of bells requires a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. At the end of that full round action the bard's bell releases a single, mighty note that blasts through magical ensnarement. Anyone within a 60 ft. radius who can hear the note gets an immediate save against any enchantment spell that they may suffer from. This effect can be repeated





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once per round, each attempt using one of the bard's music attempts per day.

Purity of Spirit (Perform 12): The final mystery of the bells requires great fortitude of will and spirit on the part of the bard. Using it the bard may select a single target within 120 ft. That target must be able to hear the bard's performance. For so long as the bard plays the target may use the bard's Perform skill check to rather than his own saving throw to resist all poisons, illusions and enchantment effects. Invoking this mystery is a full round action, and maintaining it is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

CHANT (EPIC)

Description: Epic chant contains within it the stories, legends and myths that make up the cultural identity of pre-literate peoples.

Strength of the Ancestors (Perform 3): The first song of the mystery of epic chants allows the bard to kindle the hearts of his listeners. All of the bard's allies within 30 ft. gain a +4 Con bonus for as long as the bard continues the chant. When the bard stops chanting or the ally leaves the radius of the song the effect lasts for more rounds. The using and maintaining this chant is a standard action.

Songs of the Damned (Perform 6): This song allows the bard to create a fear effect in the weak willed and foolish by reciting the terrible fates that befell those who opposed his people's heroes. Every hostile target of under 4 HD within 30' ft of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or become shaken. Shaken creatures suffer a -2 morale penalty on attack rolls, weapon damage rolls and saving throws. This effect lasts for as long as the bard maintains his chant, and for one round after the chant ends or the target moves out of the area of effect. Creatures can only suffer from the effects of this ability once per day. Maintaining the songs of the damned is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Words of Courage (Perform 9): The third mystery allows the bard to stir courage in the hearts of his listeners, even when they are at their most afraid. For every round that the bard takes a standard action to use this chant his allies with a 60 ft. radius have any fear effects on them reduced by one step. Thus panicked creatures become frightened, frightened creatures become shaken and shaken creatures lose any negative fear effects. The bard's allies need to be able to hear

the chant for it to be effective. If there is an active effect causing fear, the bard's allies may use the bard's Perform skill check rather than their own saving throw result to resist the effect if they so choose.

Walking the Path of Legends (Perform 12): The final mystery of the epic chants allows the bard to call forth the hero that lies in the heart of all mortals. After a full round of singing the bard can grant all of his allies within 30 ft. the ability to operate while they have negative hit points. Additionally all of the bard's allies gain Damage Reduction 2/- for as long as the bard play. Both of these benefits last for five rounds after the bard finishes the song. This is a supernatural mind-affecting ability.

CHANT (HIGH)

Description: Many religious ceremonies use various forms of chants to create a sacred space in which the participants can commune with the divine. These chants, called high chants in this context, bring the world of the celestial beings much closer to the mundane world. In doing so they create a bridge through which divine power flows.

Raising the Voice (Perform 3): The simplest of the high chants allows the bard to create a small sacred space in a 15 ft. radius. Within that space he may select one target with the ability to turn undead. For as long as the bard chants that target receives a +2 holy bonus to his turn undead attempts.

Lift up the Heavens (Perform 6): This chant thins the barriers between the worlds of the mortal and the divine even further. Invoking this chant is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The bard may continue this chant as a free action, but may not use other bardic music abilities while maintaining it. While the bard maintains his chant all summoned celestial creatures within 30 ft. of the bard remain in the mortal realm, regardless of whether or not the duration of the spell that summoned them has elapsed. When the bard stops the chant the summoned creatures return to their home realm (if the duration of the spell that summoned them has elapsed) or remain for the duration of the magic that brought them.

Defenders of the Right (Perform 9): The third mystery of high chant opens a channel between the chanter and the world of the divine. This channel fills the chanter with divine energy, which he can then channel to allow any single target within 120 ft. to make an immediate new saving throw against any long term spell or effect that originates from infernal forces.

At the target's option he may use the bard's Perform skill check rather than his own saving throw result to resist the effect. Using defenders of the right is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Ward of Heaven (Perform 12): The final mystery of high chant gives the bard access to the most ancient and holy of chants. This chant creates a zone of holy power around the chanter, repulsing any infernal being. This zone emanates from the chanter to a radius of 10 ft. Infernal beings may make a Will save with a DC equal to the chanter's Perform skill check to penetrate the barrier. If they fail, they cannot affect those within the ward in any way, even with ranged attacks or spells. The infernal being may attempt to pierce the ward again next round. Invoking and maintaining the ward of heaven is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. A bard must make a Fortitude save (DC 20) every hour that he attempts to maintain the ward. If he fails then he cannot use his bardic music abilities for one day per hour that he maintained the ward.

CHANT (MUSICAL)

Description: Musical chants are simple, repetitive chants that just about anyone can sing. In fact many people find them somewhat difficult not to sing; the melodies possess an infectious quality that makes it almost impossible not to join in. A bard using musical chant leads those around him in the music, he does not make it himself.

Cedars on the Mountain (Perform 3): The first mystery of these chants takes the form of a marching song. Everyone who is within range of the bard's voice, roughly a 120 ft. radius, who joins in the song does not have to make a Constitution check during the first three hours of a forced march. The bard must keep the marching song going during the entire march and cannot use another form of bardic music during that time.

Wind at My Back (Perform 6): The second mystery of the musical chants allows the bard to hurry his companions along. As a standard action the bard may begin chanting a rapid, energetic song. One target per level within a 30 ft. radius of the bard gains the ability to move at 5X normal movement when taking a run action rather than 4X. Characters wearing heavy armour may move at 4X normal movement when taking a run action under the influence of this song rather than 3X as their armour dictates. When a target moves out of the area of effect he retains the enhanced movement rate for 2 rounds. Maintaining this effect is

a free action for the bard, but he cannot use any other bardic music ability while maintaining this song.

Time Enough for Rest (Perform 9): This mystery invigorates a number of targets within a 30 ft. radius equal to the bard's level. Every target gains a +2 morale bonus to all Con, Dex and Str based skill checks, as well as to strait attribute checks. Starting and maintaining this song is a standard action for the bard. This bonus lasts for 5 rounds after the bard stops singing or the target moves out of the area of effect.

Join in the Round (Perform 12): The final mystery of musical chant allows the bard to select a simple chant and interlace it with a subtle magic. This magic makes it so that everyone within 30 ft. of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or join in the chant. This prevents a spell caster from using any spell with a verbal component. Additionally any caster in the area of effect must make a Concentration skill check with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or be unable to cast spells at all. Once a target resists this chant cannot effect them again for the rest of the day. Starting this chant is a standard action, and maintaining it is a free action. The bard cannot use another bardic music ability while maintaining this chant. The effect breaks as soon as the bard ceases to chant, although some of the weaker willed (negative Will save modifier) targets might continue mumbling the chant after the bard finishes.

CHANT (MARTIAL)

Description: Martial chants are repetitive, sometimes monosyllabic chants that a warrior in the middle of battle can chant to retain his focus and clarity. They embolden the heart, enflame the mind, and keep the arm steady in the chaos of war.

In the Company of Brothers (Perform 3): This chant lifts up the hearts of those engaged in battle. After a full round of chanting, all of the bard's allies within a 60' ft. radius may add a +4 bonus to their attack roll rather than a +2 bonus during a charge action. This bonus lasts for one round after the bard finishes his chant.

The Shield Brother's Dance (Perform 6): This chant focuses the bard's allies on keeping one another alive. Every one of the bard's allies within a 30 ft. radius of the bard gains a +2 bonus to their Armour Class as long as there is another ally within a 5 ft. step of them. Starting and maintaining this chant both count as standard actions that do not provoke attacks of opportunity.





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Charge into the Dragon's Maw (Perform 9): The third chant in the mystery of martial chants grants those who join in it the ability to channel fear into positive effects. One target per level of the bard within a 30 ft. radius may convert any negative morale penalty into a positive morale bonus for as long as the bard continue singing. Starting this chant is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Maintaining the chant is a standard action. The conversion effect ceases as soon as the bard stops the chant.

Draw The Sword (Perform 12): The final chant of this mystery allows the bard and his allies to fight to the last man. It gives all of the bard's allies within a 30 ft. radius a +1 morale bonus to all attack rolls, damage rolls and saving throws. When two or more people target the same opponent they gain an additional +1 bonus to their attack and damage rolls. Finally when the bard's allies flank an opponent they gain a further +1 bonus to their attack and damage rolls (total of +3 bonus to attack and damage if flanking, in addition to the typical flanking bonus). Starting this chant is a full round action, and maintaining it is a free action. The effects of this chant last for 5 rounds after the bard finishes it.

COURT DANCE

Description: Court dance is an elaborate style of dance that, at its core, focus on political manipulation and intrigue. The intricate steps of the dances mask the deadly focus and intent that the participants bring. Flirtation, manipulation, power and prestige can all pass between participants so quickly that only the most highly trained eye can keep the measure. To everyone else the steps just seem unusually intricate ways for spoiled nobility to pass their idle hours.

Flowers and Bees (Perform 3): When the bard dances in a group he may invoke the measures of this mystery. He makes a Perform skill check (DC 20). If he succeeds he can control the general pattern of the dance, allowing him to select who will dance with whom. Each time he creates a pairing he must make a Perform check (DC 15) to pull it off. Each dance counts as a single use of the bardic music ability; many court dances contain five to seven dances in a particular evening.

Measure of a Man (Perform 6): The bard may invoke this dance whenever he dances with a particular partner for more than a single round. He makes a Perform skill check, opposed by his partner's Will saving throw. If the bard succeeds then he may learn the skill ranks of any three of the target's skills off the

following list: Bluff, Diplomacy, Disguise, Gather Information, Innuendo, Perform, Pick Pockets, Read Lips and Sense Motive. Each use of this ability counts as a bardic music attempt per day.

The Courtier's Kiss (Perform 9): After the bard dances with a single partner for more than one round he may invoke this mystery. It acts as though the bard cast a *charm person* (as the spell) on his dancing partner. The target may resist by making a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. The charm effect lasts for one hour per level of the bard. Each charm attempt counts as a single use of the bardic music ability for that day. Once a target has resisted the bard cannot attempt to use this mystery on that target again for a full day. This is a spell-like, mind-affecting ability.

Hand in Hand (Perform 12): As a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity the bard may attempt to force any specific target to drop whatever it is doing and dance with him. The target may resist this attempt by making a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If the target fails it must immediately stop what it was doing and dance with the bard until the bard halts the dance or someone attacks it. Maintaining the dance is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Any attack breaks the effect and leaves the target dazed for one round. This is a spell-like, mind-affecting ability.

DRUM

Description: The mystery of the drum teaches music that can be made by any hand sized or single person drum. These drums exist in all cultures and times; they have countless names and methods of play. All find their expression in the constant, blending rhythms that mortals produce when they truly start to understand how percussion works.

The Smoke that Thunders (Perform 3): The first mystery of the drum allows the bard to generate a smooth rhythm that sounds like thunder. Anyone within 30 ft. of the drummer must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Those that fail are dazed for one round. A dazed creature is not flat-footed, but cannot take any actions.

When the Sky Shakes (Perform 6): The second mystery allows the drummer to generate a single, massive stroke that seems to ring the heavens like a bell. Everyone (including the bard) within a 90 ft. radius must make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill roll or be deafened for

2d4 rounds. People can hear the thunderous roar this mystery produces up to two miles away. In addition to the obvious disadvantages deafened creatures have a 20% chance to fail when attempting any spells with verbal components.

Song of the Mountains (Perform 9): The third mystery of the drum allows the bard to generate a rhythm that matches almost perfectly with the natural vibrations of the elements. This sets up a subtle resonance that disturbs and distracts any elemental creature within a 120 ft. radius. Such creatures must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's performance roll or be flat-footed for as long as the bard maintains his song. Starting the Song of the Mountain is a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining the song is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Earth and Water (Perform 12): The final mystery of the drum allows the bard to generate a rhythm that the entire world responds to. Trees sway, the earth trembles and the clouds dance as the bard plays. In practical terms this means that the bard can select one target within 120 ft. and increase the DC of any druid spell that the target casts by his positive Charisma modifier. Additionally the target gains a +1 morale level bonus to all druid spells that he casts. Invoking this mystery takes a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, and maintaining it takes a standard action.

FLUTE

Description: The mysteries of the flute allow the musician to use any kind of flute (long or short, wooden or metal) to access its effects. These mysteries enable the bard to use music that shapes the air, whistles up storms and draws birds down from the trees. Flutes are known for the haunting quality of their music, although they possess as much range of tone and usage as any other instrument.

Wind in the Trees (Perform 3): The first mystery of the flute allows the bard to create a whistling wind. This wind whips around the bard and everyone within a 10 ft. radius, reducing the accuracy of ranged attacks. All ranged attacks into the area of effect have a penalty to their attack roll equal to the bard's positive Charisma modifier.

Two Birds (Perform 6): The bard may invoke the second mystery of the flute in any outdoors setting. As a full round action the bard plays a tune that brings

down birds from the sky. The bard may then select one target per three levels within a 60 ft. radius. Each target must make a Reflex save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or be 'flanked' by a group of birds until the bard finishes the song. Maintaining this song is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Night among Willows (Perform 9): The third mystery of the flute allows the bard to manipulate winds. As a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity the bard may change the direction of any existing wind by up to 180 degrees. This ability allows the bard to effectively counterspell any wind based magic, as well as spells based on weather or weather like effects (i.e. *call lightning*, *lightning bolt* and *gust of wind*).

The Dance of Silence (Perform 12): The greatest mystery of the flute allows the musician to play the flute without generating sound at all. As a full round action the bard can play his flute to generate any of the standard 'bardic music' effects without making a sound. This ability allows the bard to play even in areas that have a magical silence effect. Using this ability counts as two uses of the bardic music ability: one for the dance of silence and one for the bardic music ability used.

GREAT DRUM

Description: The great drum is one of the most ancient of instruments, a simple man sized device that appears in the earliest descriptions of music. Great drums come in many shapes and sizes, but more than one person can play the great drum at once. In some cultures as many as seven people play the same drum, creating unique music that changes each time a new drummer enters the fray. Only one of these drummers must be a bard who knows this mystery to create the effects. Traditionally the sound of the great drum drives away evil spirits.

Thunder of the Soul (Perform 3): The first mystery of the great drum allows the bard to unleash the thunder in the souls of those around him. Everyone within a 120 ft. radius of the drum gains a +2 deflection bonus to their Armour Class against incorporeal opponents. Both the acts of activating and maintaining the mystery are full round actions that provoke attacks of opportunity. The +2 Armour Class bonus is lost immediately upon the drummer completing the song or when the target leaves the area of effect.





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The Passage of Flame (Perform 6): The second mystery of the great drum harms evil spirits. Every round that any incorporeal being is within 240 ft. of the drum it must make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to the Perform skill check of the drummer. Each time it fails it takes 2d4 subdual damage that ignores damage resistance. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. A bard may maintain this mystery as a full round action every round for a number of rounds equal to his positive Constitution modifier.

The Rhythm of the Heart (Perform 9): The third mystery of the great drum allows the drummer to drive away evil spirits. Every round that the drummer drums all incorporeal beings within 480 ft. of the drum must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Each round that the creature fails it is pushed back 100 ft., until it reaches the edge of the circle. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The bard may maintain this mystery as a standard action for as long as he likes, taking 1d6 subdual damage every ten rounds.

The Coming of Thunder (Perform 12): The final mystery of the great drum opens up the world of spirits to those who listen to it. The pounding rhythm of the drum breaks down the barriers between this world and the next. All incorporeal creatures within 480 ft of the drum must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Those that fail lose their incorporeal ability for 2d8 rounds. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. This mystery cannot be maintained, but it can be attempted multiple times.

GREAT HARP

Description: The Great Harp is a massive instrument, standing nearly man high. These intricate devices are difficult to construct, and even more difficult to move once they are put in place. The great harp is a noble's instrument. Common folk cannot afford them. A very few commoners might hear a great harp played at a festival or by a travelling performance troupe once or twice in their lives.

The Mountain Song (Perform 3): The first mystery of the great harp is a soothing melody that deeps the rest of all within a 60 ft. radius. After one hour of listening to this song everyone within the area of effect can get a full night's sleep and heal as though they had a day of complete rest. If this song is used

on those currently undergoing complete rest (say in an infirmary) the target's healing rate is doubled.

Hawks and Doves (Perform 6): The second mystery of the great harp allows the bard to soothe even the most out of control emotions with his performance. Everyone within a 60 ft. of the harpist must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Performance roll. Those that fail lose all morale bonuses or penalties to any of their stats. This reduction lasts until the bard ceases playing or the target moves out of the area of effect. This song does not prevent hostile actions, nor is it broken by any actions taken in the area of effect. This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Entry to the Heart (Perform 9): The third mystery of the great harp creates music of such pure beauty that it steals the breath and heart of the listeners. After a full round of playing, everyone within a 60 ft. radius of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Performance skill check. Everyone who fails the roll is stunned for 1d4 rounds. This is a supernatural, mind-affecting ability. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. This mystery may not be maintained.

The River's Lament (Perform 12): The final mystery of the great harp taps into the sorrow and power that lies in the hearts of all mortal creatures. It channels this sorrow into a great surge of energy, a positive denial of the tragedy at the heart of all mortal endeavours. After a full round of listening to the song all of the bard's allies within 60 ft. receive a +3 competence bonus on all of their skill rolls for a number of hours equal to the bard's positive charisma modifier. This mystery may not be maintained.

HARP

Description: The harp is one of the oldest instruments. It has more strings than a mandolin, but is small enough for a single person to carry. It's rich tones and subtle power makes it perfect for a travelling musician who wishes to play for both kings and paupers. Harps find use in all kinds of music, and can be found nearly anywhere that the bard cares to look. Traditionally they serve as a reminder of the joys of life, although their range makes it difficult to pin down the mode of their music.

Herald the Dawn (Perform 3): The first mystery of the harp taps into the unquenchable thirst for life that lies in the heart of all beings. Any undead creature

within a 30 ft. radius of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or release a moan of anguish at all that it has lost. This moan positively identifies undead creatures and cannot be mistaken for anything else. Invoking this mystery is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. This mystery is a supernatural ability.

Sunlight on the Grass (Perform 6): The second mystery of the harp binds the powers of life around the bard into a shield. After taking a full round action to invoke this mystery every undead within a 10 ft. radius of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's performance roll. If the undead fails it immediately attempts to leave the bard's immediate area. Any undead attempting to make a range attack or cast a spell on the bard (but not on anyone within the area of effect) must make a similar Will save. If it fails it cannot execute the attack. This protection lasts for as long as the bard plays, and vanishes instantly if the bard falters for any reason. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The bard may not use any other bardic music abilities while maintaining this mystery. It is a supernatural ability.

Joy and Hope (Perform 9): The third mystery of the harp weaves strands of music and hope around the heart of the undead. The bard may select a number of undead targets within a 30 ft. radius equal to his positive Charisma modifier. Each target must make a Will save every round with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Each round that the target fails it is held until its initiative point in the next round, at which time it can make another saving throw. When the target throws off the effect it has an entire round to act, until it's next initiative point at which time it must make another saving throw. Invoking and maintaining this mystery is a standard action. The bard may not use another form of bardic music while invoking or maintaining this mystery. It is a supernatural ability.

The Light of Truth (Perform 12): The fourth mystery of the harp shatters the barriers between the undead and the death they left behind. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Every round thereafter the bard may choose to maintain this song as a standard action. Every undead within a 30 ft. radius of the bard takes 3d6 sonic damage per round that the bard maintains this song (Fortitude save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check for half damage). This is a supernatural ability.

HORN

Description: Horns range in size from small hand held instruments to ten-foot long tubes. They can be ornate or quite plain; the simplest horns are little more than seashells or animal horns. All can produce notes of varying lengths and tempos. Traditionally horns are used for communication across long distances or pitched battles.

Note of the Morning (Perform 3): The first mystery of the horn allows the bard to send simple messages over long distances. As a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity the bard can compose a four word message and blow his horn. Everyone within one mile who can hear the horn can understand the message that the bard is attempting to send. Each message sent counts as one use of the bardic music ability.

Note of the Noonday Sun (Perform 6): The second mystery of the horn allows the bard to send a complex message (no more than thirty words in length) to a number of specific targets equal to his level within a one-mile radius. Composing and sending this message requires a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. As soon as the target hears the sound of the horn he understand the message the bard wishes to deliver.

Note of the Evening (Perform 9): The third mystery of the horn allows the bard to awaken a number of





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targets equal to his level that are all within a 30 ft. radius. This effect dispels any dazed, held, paralysed, sleep, or stunned conditions on the targets. If these effects are the result of a magical attack then the bard must make a dispel check (similar to the check made with the dispel magic spell) but he may use his Perform skill rank in place of his character level. Invoking this mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Note of Midnight Come (Perform 12): The final mystery of the horn allows the bard to create a wave of pure sound that washes outward. Everyone of Medium size or less in a 30 ft. cone directly in front of the bard must make a Fortitude save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or be blown away. Being blown away are knocked down and rolled 1d4X10 feet, sustaining 1d4 points of subdual damage per 10 ft.

JESTING

Description: The art of jesting encompasses satire, low comedy, linguistic puns and situational humour. Mastering it requires long hours of study as well as a willingness to get in front of audiences and fail. A jester's skill becomes more focused each time he practices, as he learns to blend his performance in with the expectations of the crowd.

Words not Spoken (Perform 3): The first mystery of jesting teaches the bard to pay attention to the subtle interactions that surround him. After taking a full round action to interact with a group of people the bard may make a Perform skill check (DC 20). If he succeeds he gains clear insight into the leadership patterns and social relationships that exist within the group he is dealing with. Anyone in the group may make a Sense Motive skill check with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result to realise that the bard has assessed the group. This is an extraordinary language dependent ability.

Barb of the Jester (Perform 6): The second mystery of jesting teaches the bard how to manipulate the emotions of another person. By taking a full round to taunt a particular target, the bard can insight that target to a frothing range. The target gains +2 to his attack and damage rolls, but is -2 on his Armour Class. An enraged target must attack the nearest creature. The target remains enraged as long as the bard continues taunting him, plus an additional for a number of rounds equal to the bard's positive Charisma modifier. The bard may continue taunting as a free action, but cannot use other forms of bardic music while so engaged. This is an extraordinary language dependent ability.

Two Steps Back, One Forward (Perform 9): The third mystery allows the bard to unleash a torrent of verbal abuse that astounds those who listen to it. The bard selects a number of targets equal to his level within a 40 ft. radius. Each of those targets must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result or be checked (unable to move, but able to act) that round. Invoking and maintaining this mystery is a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. This is a spell like, language dependent ability.

What Dreams May Come (Perform 12): The final mystery of jesting allows the bard to confuse a number of targets within a 40 ft. radius equal to his level. By creating a bewildering maze of verbal jabs, puns and taunts he can cause any creature that understands what he is saying to lose focus. Each target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result or become confused for 2d4 rounds. Confused creatures act in a random fashion, attacking friend and foe alike, wandering about aimlessly, or just standing about in a daze.

LUTE

Description: A lute is a small, four to eight stringed instrument that resembles a half of a pear. Unlike a mandolin the lute has a deeply back bent neck, with the tuning keys on the angled part of the neck. It is the forerunner of both the mandolin and the guitar. Traditionally the lute is used to charm other creatures, including animals, spirits and the even other humans.

Lay Them Down (Perform 3): The first mystery of the lute allows the bard to pacify a number of animals or beasts whose Hit Dice do not exceed the bard's level multiplied by his positive Charisma modifier who are within a 30 ft. radius. Each animal or beast targeted by this mystery may make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result to resist the effect. If they fail they become sleepy and lay themselves down at the bard's feat. Any attack on any of the controlled creatures will instantly break the effect for all. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this song is a standard action. The animals remain pacified for a number of rounds equal to the bard's level after the bard stops maintaining this song.

Draw Them Out (Perform 6): The second mystery of the lute allows the bard to draw a number of creatures to him. Every full round that the bard plays he draws 1 Hit Dice of animals or beast to him, up to a maximum Hit Dice equal to his level multiplied by

his positive Charisma modifier. These animals must be native to the area that the bard is playing in. The maximum Hit Dice any of these creatures is equal to the bard's level. These creatures will stay with the bard for one hour after he completes his song and will obey simple commands assuming that those commands do not put them at risk. Any violence on the part of the bard or his allies towards the drawn creatures breaks this effect.

Lift Them Up (Perform 9): The third mystery of the lute allows the bard to fortify the spirits of his animal friends. Any animal or beast within a 60 ft. radius gains a +4 morale bonus to their Strength and Constitution. Additionally they will fight for the bard if he so directs, even going so far as to lay down their own lives in his defence. Invoking this mystery is a full round action. Maintaining this mystery is a standard action. The effects of this mystery last for 5 rounds after the bard finishes playing.

The Riddle of Man (Perform 12): The fourth mystery of the lute allows the bard to summon to draw a number of humanoids to him. Every full round that the bard plays he draws 1 Hit Dice of humanoids to him, up to a maximum Hit Dice equal to his level multiplied by his positive Charisma modifier. These humanoids come from the area around the bard. Each individual target may make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result to resist the effect. The bard may not draw a humanoid to him that has Hit Dice higher than his level. The drawn humanoids are not charmed in any way, although they cannot harm the bard while he invokes this mystery. Any violence towards any of the targets immediately breaks this effect.

MANDOLIN

Description: The mandolin is a pear shape stringed instrument with a straight neck. It is a direct descendent of the lute, and a progenitor of the guitar. The mandolin is famous for its bright sound and its romantic effects on people.

Lover's Touch (Perform 3): The first mystery of the mandolin allows the bard to enflame hidden passions between two people. The bard may select two targets (one male, one female) within a 30 ft. radius. If both targets listen to the music for 10 rounds they must both make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result. If both targets fail they fall madly in love for a 24-hour period. If one target fails and the other succeeds then the target that failed falls

in love and the one that succeeds is free to act as he chooses.

Lover's Quarrel (Perform 6): The second mystery of the mandolin allows the bard to cause any two targets that have a Helpful attitude towards one another to become Hostile. The bard may select two targets within a 30 ft. radius. Both targets may make a Will saving throw with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result. Failure causes the target to become Hostile towards the other target. This hostility lasts for as long as the bard plays, and for five rounds afterwards. Creatures that are Hostile towards one another do not necessarily attack one another, although they do behave badly.

Lover's Bond (Perform 9): The third mystery of the mandolin allows the bard to cause loyalty to rise up in the hearts of two people. The bard may select two targets within a 30 ft. radius. Both targets may make a Will saving throw with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result. If both targets fail they behave towards one another as though they had *charm person* spells cast on them by the opposite party. This effect lasts for a number of hours equal to the bard's level. Invoking this mystery takes 10 full rounds of performance.

Lover's Folly (Perform 12): The final mystery of the mandolin allows the bard to cause jealousy to rise up between two people. The bard may select two targets within a 30 ft. radius. Both targets may make a Will saving throw with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result. If both targets fail they fall into bitter dispute about real or imagined slights. The two targets may or may not start acting hostile towards one another immediately, but they will fight bitterly for a number of weeks equal to the bard's level. Invoking this mystery takes 10 full rounds of performance.

Special: The bard may not select himself as one of the targets for the music of the mandolin.

PANPIPE

Description: A panpipe is an ancient instrument, composed of reeds or other hollow tubes of graduated lengths. These instruments are typically associated with the fey folk; their mysteries and powers spring from that tradition.

The Dance of Ages (Perform 3): The first mystery allows the bard to touch the hearts of his listeners, bringing them joy. Everyone within 30 ft. of the bard when he invokes this mystery gains a +2 morale bonus





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to saving throws against negative emotion effects (fear, despair, doubt, confusion, etc.). Invoking this mystery is a full round action. Maintaining this mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Individuals retain the bonus for as long as the bard continues to play, and for an additional 5 rounds after they either move out of the area of effect or the bard finishes his performance.

Dance Until Sunset (Perform 6): The second mystery of the panpipe allows the bard to infuse his music with the joy of the day. Every one within a 30 ft. radius of the bard must immediately make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result. If they fail, their attitude to the bard and everyone within the area of effect is set to a minimum of Friendly. This mystery does not affect creatures that are in combat. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The effect of this mystery lingers for 5 rounds after the bard stops playing.

Dance Until Dawn (Perform 9): The third mystery of the panpipe allows the bard to make people extend the hours of their celebrations. By invoking this mystery and playing the bard can make everyone in within a 60 ft. area who is not Hostile and who fails a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result to engage in light entertainment (dancing, singing, drinking, etc.) until the bard stops playing. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity, and maintaining it requires the bard's complete concentration. If the bard is using this song in conjunction with the Perform skill to earn coin, he can multiply his daily income by his positive Charisma modifier.

The Final Measure (Perform 12): The final mystery of the panpipe allows the bard to call forth the joy in the soul of even the most miserly and wretched of beings. The bard may target a number of intelligent creatures within a 60 ft. radius equal to his level. After playing for a full round these targets must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result. If the target fails his attitude immediately becomes Helpful unless he was under attack before the mystery took effect. This change in attitude lasts as long as the bard continues playing.

STORYTELLING

Description: The art of storytelling involves the teller and the audience in the unfolding of events both real and imaginary. Storytellers tend to laugh when asked if their stories are 'real'. Reality in a story is

something quite different from what most people think it is. Stories are real if they touch the heart, if they tell of a truth that cannot be denied. Whether the events ever happened is irrelevant.

The Heart of the Story (Perform 3): The first mystery of storytelling allows the bard to look into the hearts of his audience. By engaging in patter for a full round with someone the bard may gain insight into their character. If the target fails to make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result the bard learns about one thing that the target either hopes for or fears. The bard can then weave that hope or fear into his story, giving himself a +4 circumstance bonus to his Perform skill check to determine how much money he makes that night.

The Mocking Bird (Perform 6): The second mystery of storytelling allows the bard to shape cruel barbs that cut into the target's heart. The bard may take a full round action to target one intelligent creature within 30 ft. If the target fails a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check it falls into deep depression. The target can only move at one-half its normal speed. Additionally, the target has a -1 morale penalty on all actions that it attempts, including attack and damage rolls. This effect lasts as long as the bard continues to mock the target, and for 5 rounds after the mocking finishes. The bard may maintain this mystery as a free action, but cannot use other forms of bardic music while doing so.

The Breath of Life (Perform 9): The third mystery of storytelling allows the bard to weave a story so powerful that key targets who listen to it feel as if the events of the story unfold around them. The bard may target a number of people equal to his level within a 60 ft. radius. After a full round the target's may make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check result. Those that fail are considered flat-footed, as they struggle to clearly differentiate what is really happening from what they think is happening. This effect lasts for as long as the bard tells his story, and for 5 rounds thereafter. The bard may maintain this mystery as a free action, although he cannot use other forms of bardic music while doing so.

Fables of the Soul (Perform 12): The fourth mystery of storytelling allows the bard to hold up a mirror and force a target to look into his own soul. The bard may select one target of evil alignment within 30 ft. After a full round of storytelling that target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check results. If it fails it is paralysed with remorse and doubt. If the creature is attacked or harmed in any

way during the story the effect is instantly negated. If the bard continues the story for a full day the creature must make a second Will save or be converted to good alignment.

CULTURAL INSTRUMENTS AND SITUATIONS

Many mysteries cover a general type of instrument. Examples of this kind of general mystery include the bell, drum and flute. These mysteries function equally well with any of the myriad of forms these primary instruments take though out the world.

When deciding which mystery a specific instrument uses the following rules of thumb apply:

1. Drums of all kinds may use the mystery of either the drum or great drum
2. Most wind instruments use the mystery of either the flute or the horn
3. Most string instruments use the mystery of either the lute or the mandolin
4. Any string instrument with a large number of strings can use the mystery of the harp

Each specific instrument can manifest a single mystery. For example a mid-sized drum cannot manifest both the mystery of the drum and the mystery of the great drum.

When in doubt the Games Master may choose to allow or disallow the use of any mystery with a given instrument. Alternately the Games Master may allow the character to adapt a mystery to a specific instrument by changing one or more of the special abilities.

When using a performance related mystery like court dance or jesting in an unfamiliar social setting the character suffers a -2 circumstance penalty to his rolls. The character can negate this penalty by spending one day and making a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15). If he succeeds he learns enough about local customs to adapt his usual modes of expression.

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- † *Bagpipes* – wailing music beloved by the fey folk
- † *Chant (Black)* – chants that call up infernal powers

- † *Dwarven Chant* – chants invoking the chthonic powers
- † *Elvish Song* – songs of lore and wisdom
- † *Folk Dance* – dances insuring fertility and growth
- † *Gnomish Punning* – complex word games and riddles that confuse and delight
- † *Halfling Acrobatics* – complex tricks of hand and body that trick the eye
- † *Jew's Harp* – lively music that gathers and holds attention
- † *Musical Bow* – music that focuses the energy of nature
- † *Orcish Drums* – simple rhythms that enflame the soul
- † *Qin* – music that focuses the mind on the task at hand
- † *Ritual Dance* – dances that focus arcane energies
- † *Tambura* – droning music that bolsters and supports other musicians
- † *Zither* – sacred music that bridges the gap between the mundane and the divine

Bagpipes

Description: The bagpipes resemble a stiff-legged octopus. Long stiff pipes protrude from a cloth or leather covered bag. Their wailing tones touch deep into the primal emotions of the listeners. The fey folk in particular love the music of this instrument and bless those who use it.

A Friend of the Folk (Perform 3): The first mystery of the bagpipes allows the bard to invoke the ancient compact between fey and mortals. All fey folk within 60 ft. of the character must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or become friendly to the character after a full round of listening to this mystery. This mystery does not affect creatures attacked by the character or his companions. It also will not halt hostilities once they begin. This effect lingers for one day after the bard finishes the song.

Iron and Oak (Perform 6): The second mystery of the bagpipes reveals the power of the fey. After a full round of playing this mystery all invisible fey must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Failure causes them to become visible immediately. Additionally any character under the influence of a fey spell or curse must make a Will save or begin to sing along with the bagpipes.

Nine Charms (Perform 9): When the fey folk first taught mortals to pipe they also taught the pipers nine





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magical charms. Although the actual charms are lost to time, the power of those charms still remains in the third mystery of the bagpipes. By invoking this mystery the bard channels the power of the fey folk into himself. This power shields his mind from outside influence, allowing him to use his Perform skill check in place of any Will saving throw. Furthermore he becomes immune to spells requiring a Will save cast by creatures with the fey descriptor.

The Speaker in the Holly (Perform 12): The fourth mystery of the bagpipes calls forth the ancient fey spirits. Performing this mystery is a full round action. This mystery only works when the bard is in or near a place holy to the fey folk or one of the places where they once dwelled. After invoking the mystery the bard may ask a number of questions equal to his positive Charisma modifier. The spirits of the area will answer these questions as best they can.

Chant (Black)

Description: These fell chants snarl with the twisted words of infernal tongues. The chants themselves seem almost poisonous, sickening the soul of good folk. They have the opposite effect on the spirits of those already lost to darkness. Black chant finds use in infernal rituals, dark rites, and in the halls of people whose hearts can no longer withstand the bright light of day.

Rise all Tortured Souls (Perform 3): The first mystery of black chant mimics the rhythm of infernal heartbeats. Every undead or infernal creature within 30 ft. of the bard gains +1 hit points per hit dice. They also receive a +1 evil bonus to attack and damage rolls. Invoking this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this mystery counts as a free action. The bard may not invoke any other bardic music ability while maintaining this chant.

Words of the Damned (Perform 6): The second mystery of black chant channels the screams of damned souls into a heart rending shriek. Any good creature within 30 ft. of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Creatures that fail lose 2 hit points per hit dice for 2d4 rounds. Invoking this chant counts as a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. This chant cannot be maintained. Creatures reduced to -10 or lower hit points by this ability die instantly.

The Evil Within (Perform 9): The third mystery of black chant allows the bard to foster the seeds of evil within all mortal hearts. The bard selects one target

within a 30 ft. radius. That target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If he fails then his alignment temporarily changes from good to evil as long as the bard maintains this chant. A good aligned target may make a second Will saving throw before taking an evil action to resist the compulsion. Characters with the *divine grace* special ability are immune to this mystery. Invoking *the evil within* counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this mystery counts as a free action. The bard may not invoke any other bardic music ability while maintaining this chant.

Song of the Dying Sun (Perform 12): The final mystery of black chant infuses the souls of the damned with infernal strength. All undead and infernal creatures within 30 ft. of the bard become immune to damage from sunlight. Any restrictions they might ordinarily suffer from sunlight are lifted as well. The creatures only retain this immunity so long as they stay within 30 ft. of the bard. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity.

Dwarven Chant

Description: Long ago the dwarven people created chants that express their unique relationship with metal and stone. These deep-throated chants echo through their underground halls. To most ears they carry a deep resonance that shakes the bones and stirs the blood. Other races can benefit from these chants as well.

Oath of Iron (Perform 3): The first mystery of dwarven chant invokes the enduring character of the dwarven spirit. Any ally within 30 ft. who can hear this chant can ignore fatigue or exhaustion effects for as long as the bard continues chanting. Invoking this mystery is a standard action. Maintaining this mystery counts as a free action. The bard may not invoke any other bardic music ability while maintaining this chant. The effects of the chant last for 5 rounds after the bard stops chanting or the ally passes out of the area of effect.

Oath of Stone (Perform 6): The second mystery of dwarven chant invokes the stable nature of the dwarven will. The bard may select one target within 30 ft. affected by a spell concealing or altering its true shape. That target gets a second save against the effect if the spell effected it against its will. A target under a voluntary spell (like *alter self*) may make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check to maintain the spell. If he fails then the spell vanishes.

Invoking this mystery counts as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Oath of Silver (Perform 9): The third mystery of dwarven chant invokes the determination of the dwarven people. Any friendly creature within 30 ft. of the bard gains the ability to move even if paralysed, checked, or otherwise held in place. The held/paralysed creature may move 5 ft. as a full round action. Additionally the character cannot be subjected to a *coup de grace* attack. Invoking this mystery is a standard action. Maintaining this mystery counts as a free action. The bard may not invoke any other bardic music ability while maintaining this chant. The effects of the chant last for 5 rounds after the bard stops chanting or the ally passes out of the area of effect.

Oath of Gold (Perform 12): The final mystery of dwarven chant invokes the incorruptible spirit of the dwarven people. The bard may select one target within 30 ft. That target cannot be turned aside from his chosen course of action by spell or diplomacy until the bard finishes his chant. The target automatically succeeds at any saving throw or skill check required to resist mind-influencing abilities that would delay his activities. Invoking this mystery is a standard action. Maintaining this mystery counts as a free action. The bard may not invoke any other bardic music ability while maintaining this chant. The effects of the chant last for 5 rounds after the bard stops chanting or the ally passes out of the area of effect.

Elven Song

Description: The lyrical songs of the elven people express their intimate connection with the powers of the stars and moon. They weave stories of lands long lost to the march of time. These intricate songs tug at the hearts of other mortals, expressing such sadness and pathos that even the most hardened heart weeps.

When the Stars Walked the Land (Perform 3): The first mystery of elven song speaks of ancient times and forgotten magic. The bard and all of his allies within 30 ft. receive a +2 competence bonus to all Spellcraft skill checks. Additionally the bard can immediately identify any spell he could cast, regardless of whether he knows the spell or not. Thus a 7th level bard can automatically identify any spell on the bard spell lists up to 3rd level. Invoking this song counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this song counts as a free action but the bard cannot use another form of bardic music while doing so.

Gone to Dust, Gone to Ashes (Perform 6): The second mystery of elven song speaks of the unending sorrow of infinite years. The bard may select a number of targets within a 30 ft. radius equal to his bard level. Each of those targets must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. The effect of failure depends on the target's alignment: good characters weep dazing them for 1d4 rounds, neutral characters bow their heads in awe blinding them for 1d4 rounds and evil characters cower before the awesome glory of the world for 1d4 rounds. Invoking this mystery counts as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The Long Defeat (Perform 9): The third mystery of elven song speaks of the world's descent from the high ages of old to its present fallen state. All good creatures within 30 ft. of the bard gain a +1 bonus to their saving throws, as well as a +1 bonus to all rolls and skill checks to resist or attack evil creatures. All evil creatures within 30 ft. must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Those that fail suffer a -1 penalty to all rolls and skill checks to resist or attack good creatures. Those that succeed gain a +1 morale bonus to all attack and damage rolls. Invoking this mystery counts a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this song counts as a free action but the bard cannot use another form of bardic music while doing so.

Call out the Oldest Names (Perform 12): The final mystery of elven song recounts the long litany of the immortal spirits who gave up their existence to fight the darkness. All creatures of good alignment within 30 ft. of the bard receive a +2 competence bonus to all saving throws, attack and damage rolls, and skill checks. Furthermore all good elves within 30 ft. gain Spell Resistance with a value equal to 10 + the bard's positive Cha modifier. Invoking this mystery counts a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this song counts as a free action but the bard cannot use another form of bardic music while doing so.

Folk Dance

Description: Folk dances around the world focus on both entertainment and the expression of the relationship between men and women. These dances span the gambit of emotions, but most contain some element of flirtation. In many cultures the upper class looks down on 'folk dance' as a barbaric activity. Bards familiar with these steps often conceal their knowledge from their noble patrons, rather than offend their delicate sensibilities.





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Catch Your Partner (Perform 3): The first and simplest of the mysteries of folk dance allows the bard to support other dancers. Everyone within 30 ft. of the bard gains a +2 competence bonus to all Balance, Perform (dance), or Tumble skill checks so long as the bard continues singing. The effects of this mystery linger for 3 rounds after the bard finishes. Invoking this mystery is a standard action, while maintaining it is a free action.

Five and Seven (Perform 6): The second mystery of folk dance allows the bard to get a crowd to dance against their will. Establishing the measure of the dance requires a full round action. At the end of that round everyone not engaged in combat within a 30 ft. radius must make a Will save with DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or begin dancing. The dance lasts for as long as the bard takes a full round action to call out the measure. If any of the effected targets suffer an attack while under the effect of this ability all of the targets get a second saving throw at +5.

Walking the Long Road (Perform 9): The third mystery of folk dance invokes the fertility of the land. After invoking this mystery and dancing for one hour all of the participants gain a +4 circumstance bonus to their Profession (farmer), Profession (fisher), and Profession (miner) skill checks for the next season. Furthermore they receive a +2 circumstance bonus to resist diseases and age related attribute loss checks for the next twenty-four hours. Finally couples attempting to have a child immediately after the dance automatically conceive.

From Dusk Until Dawn (Perform 12): The final mystery of folk dance channels the spirit of fertility and growth into the dancers. After a full hour of dancing all of the dancers heal 1d4 points of temporary ability damage or 1 point of permanent ability damage. Any dancer possessing a negative level receives a +4 bonus on his save to determine if the negative level becomes permanent.

Gnomish Punning

Description: The gnomes place great value on the ability to play with words. They long ago mastered riddles, puns, and long nonsense phrases that tickle the fancy of the listener. These intricate word games delight them. They also confound the listener tricking him into revealing far more about himself than he intended.

Word without an Ending (Perform 3): The first mystery of gnomish punning teaches the bard to construct incredibly long seemingly random strings of syllables. When the bard starts the word he targets one character within 30 ft. When he finishes the target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Performance skill check. If the target fails then the bard may determine the target's alignment by his reaction to the word. Invoking this mystery counts as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

What You Wanted to Say (Perform 6): The second mystery of gnomish punning teaches the bard how to lead people to speak thoughts as they pass through their mind, unfiltered by conscious choice. Anytime the bard engages in conversation with a target he may invoke this mystery as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If he fails then the bard leads the conversation so that the target truthfully answers a number of questions equal to the bard's positive Charisma modifier. If he succeeds then he may make a Listen check with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check to detect the bardic music attempt. Maintaining this mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Your Heart Lies to You (Perform 9): The third mystery of gnomish punning allows the bard to stir up conflicting emotions in a target's heart. The bard must select a single target within 30 ft. That target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If the target succeeds then it becomes enraged and gains a +1 bonus to its attack and damage rolls. If it fails the target is dazed by the constant swirl of emotions within its heart. The target remains dazed so long as the bard maintains this mystery. If the target is attacked it gains a new Will save for each attack with a bonus to that save equal to the amount of damage that it took. Invoking and maintaining this mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Words Sharper than Swords (Perform 12): The final mystery of gnomish punning teaches the bard to speak the truth even when he does not know it. The bard must select a single intelligent target within 30 ft. That target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Every round after the first the bard may make a bardic knowledge check (DC 15) to reveal one fact about that target. Invoking this mystery counts as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this mystery counts

as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the bard fails a bardic knowledge check he automatically ceases to maintain the mystery.

Halfling Acrobatics

Description: The halfling people's natural grace and exuberance lends itself to acrobatic dance steps that other races watch with amazement. Never one's to miss an opportunity the enterprising halflings quickly learned to use dance to their own advantage.

Four becomes Three (Perform 3): The first mystery of halfling acrobatics teaches the bard the subtle art of disappearing from a crowd. By using his bardic music ability the bard may choose to substitute his Perform skill for his Hide skill when attempting to slip out of a crowd unseen. Invoking this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Step Lively and Fast (Perform 6): The second mystery of halfling acrobatics allows the bard to move quite quickly when tumbling. By making a Tumble skill check (DC 20) the halfling increases his movement rate by +20 ft. for that round only. This additional movement may be taken in any direction, including straight up or down. Invoking this mystery counts as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Kiss and Tell (Perform 9): The third mystery of halfling acrobatics allows the bard to move and act at the same time. By making a Tumble skill check (DC 25) the bard can divide his movement into two segments separated by a standard action. Thus he can move, perform a standard action, and move again if he so chooses. Invoking this mystery counts as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The Humming Bird Waltz (Perform 12): The final mystery of halfling acrobatics allows the bard to step so lightly that he seems to fly across the floor. By making a Tumble check (DC 25) the bard can ignore terrain modifiers, walk on water, or pass without leaving a trace for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma modifier. He does not set off any pressure plate or trip wire dependent traps while using this ability. Invoking this mystery counts as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Jew's Harp

Description: This extremely simple instrument consists of a harp shaped mouthpiece with a split reed

in the centre. Some are made of bamboo but metal and bone are also common materials. The jew's harp does not produce a very loud sound therefore it is mostly a solo instrument.

The Unending Cascade (Perform 3): The first mystery of the jew's harp allows the bard to play a long cascade of notes that blend many popular songs together. By taking a full round action to build up the cascade the bard grants himself a +4 circumstance bonus to his next Perform check to determine how much money he makes when performing for coin.

Two Pennies for the Bridge (Perform 6): The second mystery of the jew's harp teaches the bard how to make an improvisation sound like the listener's favourite song. If he can convince the target to listen to the song for a full round the target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If the target fails he accepts the song as payment for goods or services, with a value equal to what the bard would have made using his Perform skill to generate income.

The Faintest of Sounds (Perform 9): The third mystery of the jew's harp allows the bard to improvise a song that invokes memory of other music. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. After the full round anyone within 30 ft. of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Performance roll. Failure causes the targets to sing a scrap of verse called up by the music, immediately spoiling any conversation or spell with verbal components.

Two Songs One Voice (Perform 12): The final mystery of the jew's harp allows the musician to blend together two bardic music abilities from the *Core Rulebook I*. Using this ability counts as three uses of the bardic music ability for that day. Invoking or maintaining this mystery counts as a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The two musical effects last as long as the bard chooses to maintain this ability.

Musical Bow

Description: A musical bow consists of a single wooden shaft with a taunt string attached to either end. Feathers, carvings, or beads may decorate the shaft of the bow. Gut, twine, or even vine may form the string. Tradition claims that the musical bow represents the oldest form of instrument, potentially even predating the drum and the flute. The performer plays the bow by plucking or sliding a carved stick along the string.





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Catch Your Partner (Perform 3): The first and simplest of the mysteries of folk dance allows the bard to support other dancers. Everyone within 30 ft. of the bard gains a +2 competence bonus to all Balance, Perform (dance), or Tumble skill checks so long as the bard continues singing. The effects of this mystery linger for 3 rounds after the bard finishes. Invoking this mystery is a standard action, while maintaining it is a free action.

Five and Seven (Perform 6): The second mystery of folk dance allows the bard to get a crowd to dance against their will. Establishing the measure of the dance requires a full round action. At the end of that round everyone not engaged in combat within a 30 ft. radius must make a Will save with DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check or begin dancing. The dance lasts for as long as the bard takes a full round action to call out the measure. If any of the effected targets suffer an attack while under the effect of this ability all of the targets get a second saving throw at +5.

Walking the Long Road (Perform 9): The third mystery of folk dance invokes the fertility of the land. After invoking this mystery and dancing for one hour all of the participants gain a +4 circumstance bonus to their Profession (farmer), Profession (fisher), and Profession (miner) skill checks for the next season. Furthermore they receive a +2 circumstance bonus to resist diseases and age related attribute loss checks for the next twenty-four hours. Finally couples attempting to have a child immediately after the dance automatically conceive.

From Dusk Until Dawn (Perform 12): The final mystery of folk dance channels the spirit of fertility and growth into the dancers. After a full hour of dancing all of the dancers heal 1d4 points of temporary ability damage or 1 point of permanent ability damage. Any dancer possessing a negative level receives a +4 bonus on his save to determine if the negative level becomes permanent.

Gnomish Punning

Description: The gnomes place great value on the ability to play with words. They long ago mastered riddles, puns, and long nonsense phrases that tickle the fancy of the listener. These intricate word games delight them. They also confound the listener tricking him into revealing far more about himself than he intended.

Word without an Ending (Perform 3): The first mystery of gnomish punning teaches the bard to construct incredibly long seemingly random strings of syllables. When the bard starts the word he targets one character within 30 ft. When he finishes the target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Performance skill check. If the target fails then the bard may determine the target's alignment by his reaction to the word. Invoking this mystery counts as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

What You Wanted to Say (Perform 6): The second mystery of gnomish punning teaches the bard how to lead people to speak thoughts as they pass though their mind, unfiltered by conscious choice. Anytime the bard engages in conversation with a target he may invoke this mystery as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If he fails then the bard leads the conversation so that the target truthfully answers a number of questions equal to the bard's positive Charisma modifier. If he succeeds then he may make a Listen check with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check to detect the bardic music attempt. Maintaining this mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Your Heart Lies to You (Perform 9): The third mystery of gnomish punning allows the bard to stir up conflicting emotions in a target's heart. The bard must select a single target within 30 ft. That target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If the target succeeds then it becomes enraged and gains a +1 bonus to its attack and damage rolls. If it fails the target is dazed by the constant swirl of emotions within its heart. The target remains dazed so long as the bard maintains this mystery. If the target is attacked it gains a new Will save for each attack with a bonus to that save equal to the amount of damage that it took. Invoking and maintaining this mystery is a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Words Sharper than Swords (Perform 12): The final mystery of gnomish punning teaches the bard to speak the truth even when he does not know it. The bard must select a single intelligent target within 30 ft. That target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. Every round after the first the bard may make bardic knowledge check (DC 15) to reveal one fact about that target. Invoking this mystery counts as a full round action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. Maintaining this mystery counts

as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. If the bard fails a bardic knowledge check he automatically ceases to maintain the mystery.

Halfling Acrobatics

Description: The halfling people's natural grace and exuberance lends itself to acrobatic dance steps that other races watch with amazement. Never one's to miss an opportunity the enterprising halflings quickly learned to use dance to their own advantage.

Four becomes Three (Perform 3): The first mystery of halfling acrobatics teaches the bard the subtle art of disappearing from a crowd. By using his bardic music ability the bard may choose to substitute his Perform skill for his Hide skill when attempting to slip out of a crowd unseen. Invoking this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Step Lively and Fast (Perform 6): The second mystery of halfling acrobatics allows the bard to move quite quickly when tumbling. By making a Tumble skill check (DC 20) the halfling increases his movement rate by +20 ft. for that round only. This additional movement may be taken in any direction, including straight up or down. Invoking this mystery counts as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Kiss and Tell (Perform 9): The third mystery of halfling acrobatics allows the bard to move and act at the same time. By making a Tumble skill check (DC 25) the bard can divide his movement into two segments separated by a standard action. Thus he can move, perform a standard action, and move again if he so chooses. Invoking this mystery counts as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The Humming Bird Waltz (Perform 12): The final mystery of halfling acrobatics allows the bard to step so lightly that he seems to fly across the floor. By making a Tumble check (DC 25) the bard can ignore terrain modifiers, walk on water, or pass without leaving a trace for a number of rounds equal to his Charisma modifier. He does not set off any pressure plate or trip wire dependent traps while using this ability. Invoking this mystery counts as a free action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Jew's Harp

Description: This extremely simple instrument consists of a harp shaped mouthpiece with a split reed

in the centre. Some are made of bamboo but metal and bone are also common materials. The jew's harp does not produce a very loud sound therefore it is mostly a solo instrument.

The Unending Cascade (Perform 3): The first mystery of the jew's harp allows the bard to play a long cascade of notes that blend many popular songs together. By taking a full round action to build up the cascade the bard grants himself a +4 circumstance bonus to his next Perform check to determine how much money he makes when performing for coin.

Two Pennies for the Bridge (Perform 6): The second mystery of the jew's harp teaches the bard how to make an improvisation sound like the listener's favourite song. If he can convince the target to listen to the song for a full round the target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If the target fails he accepts the song as payment for goods or services, with a value equal to what the bard would have made using his Perform skill to generate income.

The Faintest of Sounds (Perform 9): The third mystery of the jew's harp allows the bard to improvise a song that invokes memory of other music. Invoking this mystery is a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. After the full round anyone within 30 ft. of the bard must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Performance roll. Failure causes the targets to sing a scrap of verse called up by the music, immediately spoiling any conversation or spell with verbal components.

Two Songs One Voice (Perform 12): The final mystery of the jew's harp allows the musician to blend together two bardic music abilities from the *Core Rulebook I*. Using this ability counts as three uses of the bardic music ability for that day. Invoking or maintaining this mystery counts as a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The two musical effects last as long as the bard chooses to maintain this ability.

Musical Bow

Description: A musical bow consists of a single wooden shaft with a taunt string attached to either end. Feathers, carvings, or beads may decorate the shaft of the bow. Gut, twine, or even vine may form the string. Tradition claims that the musical bow represents the oldest form of instrument, potentially even predating the drum and the flute. The performer plays the bow by plucking or sliding a carved stick along the string.





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The Song of Life (Perform 3): The first mystery of the musical bow strengthens the spirits of life around the bard. All summoned animals, magical beasts, or plants within a 30 ft. radius of the bard gain +1 hit point per hit dice and a +2 bonus to any save to resist being banished or dispelled. This effect lasts for 3 rounds after the bard stops maintaining it.

The Song of Death (Perform 6): The second mystery of the musical bow strengthens the powers of death and decay around the bard. All undead within a 30 ft. radius of the bard gain the Fast Healing 2 ability for the duration of the song. Invoking and maintaining this ability counts as a full round action that provokes an attack of opportunity. Undead brought to zero or fewer hit points while within the area of effect no longer heal.

The Song of the First Times (Perform 9): The third mystery of the musical bow strengthens elemental spirits around the bard. All elemental creatures within a 30 ft. radius of the bard receive a +4 bonus to Strength and Constitution for the duration of the song. Invoking this mystery is a full round action. Maintaining this mystery is a standard action. The effect of this mystery last for 5 rounds after the bard finishes.

The Song of Storm (Perform 12): The final mystery of the musical bow strengthens the wild spirits of chaos. When the bard begins this song he creates a 'bonus pool' equal to his bard level. So long as he maintains this song he can spend some or all of this bonus pool to increase any dice roll made by a chaotic creature within 30 ft. by an equal amount. The bard may choose how much, if any, of the pool to spend on a roll after the creature rolls. Invoking and maintaining this song is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The bard must end the song when the bonus pool reaches zero.

Orcish Drums

Description: The wild pounding of orcish war drums stirs up the hearts of evil creatures. Scholars debate whether this surge comes from the drums, the painful sacrifices that accompany the music, or the bard's own subtle magic. Whatever the cause, orcish drums displays a distinct and disheartening effect on creatures for whose malice is only exceeded by their lust for blood.

Eat the Storm (Perform 3): The first mystery of orcish drums drives evil creatures that hear it into battle. All evil creatures within 120 ft. of the bard gain +10 ft. to their base movement rate and a +2 to their

AC against ranged attacks. Invoking and maintaining this mystery is a standard action that provokes an attack of opportunity. The effect lingers for 3 rounds after the creature moves out of the area of effect.

Red Roar of Rage (Perform 6): The second mystery of orcish drums fuels the incredible rage in the orcish heart. Character's using the rage ability within 120 ft. of the bard can continue to rage as long as the bard maintains this mystery. Rounds within the area of effect do not count against the number of rounds that the character can rage. As soon as the character leaves the area of effect or the bard ceases to use this mystery the character begins to count rounds against his normal duration. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action.

Glory in Dying (Perform 9): The third mystery of orcish drums inspires individuals to fight harder as their brother's fall in battle. This effect extends in a 120 ft. radius around the bard. For every ally within that radius thrown down in battle (reduced to 0 or fewer hit points) each of the bard's allies gains +2 hit points and +4 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls for their next attack. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action.

Drink the Heart's Blood (Perform 12): The final mystery of orcish drums inspires warriors to frenzy in battle. All evil creatures within 120 ft. of the bard can operate normally in negative hit points although they die if they reach -10. Additionally each time they damage to a good creature the targets gain a cumulative +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls. This bonus increments on the damage roll, not on the number of target's damaged by any specific attack. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Qin

Description: This instrument consists of a long enamelled box topped with seven silver strings. The qin and its cousins symbolise the noble arts and scholarly pursuit in many oriental counts. These instruments can produce a wide range of tones and harmonics.

The Scholar's Road (Perform 3): The first mystery of the qin calms the mind and aids recall. After spending a full round invoking this mystery the bard may take 10 on a single Knowledge skill check using a Knowledge skill he possesses. He may not take 10

on any Knowledge skill he does not possess, nor may he use this mystery to attempt to answer a question he previously failed to answer.

The Song of Rites (Perform 6): The second mystery of the qin focuses the mind and spirit. After spending a full round invoking this mystery as a standard action the bard gains a re-roll on any bardic knowledge check regarding a piece of information that relates to a Knowledge skill he possesses. The bard may use this mystery to re-roll a failed check or to attempt to gain more information from a successful roll. If the bard succeed in the first roll he retains the information he gained, even if the second roll fails.

Each Thing in its Place (Perform 9): The third mystery of the qin allows the mind to recall the past with perfect clarity. After spending a full round action invoking this mystery the bard can recall with perfect detail any experience from his own past. This includes remembering the exact wording of conversations, *minor environmental factors that might otherwise have slipped by the character*, and similar details. Each use of this ability allows the bard to remember one specific incident or conversation.

Wisdom of the Sage (Perform 12): The fourth mystery of the qin grants the mind perfect foresight. After spending a full round action invoking this ability the bard can accurately predict the outcome of any single action he might take within the next day. This ability does not account for random factors or for the influence of factors unknown to the bard.

Ritual Dance

Description: Ritual dance consists of specific movements, steps, and rhythms that interact with the arcane forces of the world. Although the motions themselves do not directly cast spells they do increase the flow of arcane energy around the dancer. Cults and other magical organisations often use ritual dance to increase their power. It has a wild and dangerous appearance, leading strict moralists to believe it is of demonic origin.

Stir the Blood (Perform 3): The first mystery of ritual dance increases the power of arcane spells cast by the bard's allies. The bard and his allies within a 30 ft. radius may increase the DC to resist any arcane spell they cast by +1 for the duration of the effect. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The effect of this mystery lingers for 3 rounds after the bard stops maintaining it.

Wisdom of the Bones (Perform 6): The second mystery of ritual dance calls forth the universal knowledge locked in all things. The bard and his allies within a 30 ft. radius gain a +1 bonus to their effective casting level when casting or countering divination spells. Furthermore an effected character gains a +2 to his Intelligence check to avoid Int/Cha decreases resulting from casting a *contact other planes* spell. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Touching the Inner Light (Perform 9): The third mystery of ritual dance allows the bard to share his inner power. While maintaining this mystery the bard may 'lend' his metamagic feats to other characters. When one of his allies within a 30 ft. radius casts a spell the bard may expend a spell slot with a level equal to the total number of spell levels added by the metamagic feat. By doing so he applies his own metamagic feat to the spell cast by his ally. The bard may do this as a free action once per round. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Wear Down the Mountain (Perform 12): The final mystery of ritual dance allows the bard to wear away the barriers between the arcane and the real. For every round that the bard invokes this mystery as a full round action every arcane spell effect within a 30 ft. radius gains +1 round to its duration. This ability does not affect spells with an instant or permanent duration. The bard's physical endurance and determination represent the only limit to his ability to extend the duration of a spell.

Tambura

Description: The tambura is a long necked stringed instrument with a small gourd or resonating box at one end and tuning pegs on the other. It produces a variety of droning sounds used in the support of other musical instruments. Most tambura players sit behind the primary player, using their instrument to lend subtlety and depth to the other's performance.

Woven Strips of Sound (Perform 3): The first mystery of the tambura allows the bard to support other's music. When the bard invokes this mystery he selects one other bard within 30 ft. As long as he





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maintains this mystery the target bard gains a +2 bonus to his Perform skill checks to execute bardic music. Furthermore the target's bardic music numeric effects increase by +1. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Passageway to the Heart (Perform 6): The second mystery of the tambura allows the bard to extend the duration of another's music. When the bard invokes this mystery he selects one bard within 30 ft. who is currently using bardic music. The tambura player takes over that song, allowing it to linger as long as he maintains this mystery. The target bard can move out of range, cease singing, or perform any other action normally. The song's effects remain but it cannot effect new targets that enter into the area around the tambura player. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Bypassing the Ears (Perform 9): The third mystery of the tambura allows the bard to manipulate the range of another's music. When the bard invokes this mystery he selects one bard within 30 ft. as his target. For as long as he maintains this mystery he may increase or decrease the range of any bardic music performed by the target bard by 30 ft. If the target bard wishes to resist the mystery he must attempt a countersong. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Matching the Beating Drum (Perform 12): The final mystery of the tambura allows the bard to lead another bard's performance. When the bard invokes this mystery he selects one bard within 30 ft. The target must make a Will save with a DC equal to the bard's Perform skill check. If he fails then he immediately invokes a mystery or standard bardic music ability of the tambura player's choice. The target maintains this song as long as the bard maintains this mystery. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Zither

Description: A stringed instrument without a neck or yoke but with strings fastened from end to end. Zithers have anywhere between four and forty strings. Their bodies range from boxes to sticks, although flat boxes are most common. Many cultures use the zither to

create sacred music, invoking the blessings of the gods through play and prayer.

Counting the Measures (Perform 3): The first mystery of the zither allows the bard to blur the lines between the sacred and the profane. The bard and his allies within a 30 ft. radius may increase the DC to resist any divine spell they cast by +1 for the duration of the effect. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity. The effect of this mystery lingers for 3 rounds after the bard stops maintaining it.

The Steps to Heaven and Hell (Perform 6): The second mystery of the zither invokes the divine essence within the hearts of all mortals. The bard and his allies within 30 ft. gain a +2 to their saves against hostile divine magic. They also simultaneously gain a +1 to the numeric effects of any beneficial divine spell affecting them for the duration of the mystery. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

The Patron's Blessing (Perform 9): The third mystery of the zither lifts the target's soul closer to his divine patron. The bard selects one target within 30 ft. So long as the bard maintains this mystery that target gains +1 effective level when casting divine spells. Furthermore the target may invoke his patron's blessing once during the effect, allowing him to use any metamagic feat he possesses on a previously prepared domain spell. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Guide the Hands and Heart (Perform 12): The final mystery of the zither manifests the power of the gods in the world. Every time one of the bard's allies within 30 ft. casts a divine spell the bard may make a Perform check with a DC equal to 5 multiplied by the spell's level. If the bard succeeds then he may spend one of bardic music attempts per day in place of his allies divine spell, allowing the ally to cast the spell yet retain it in memory. If the bard fails then he uses one of his bardic music attempts then both the spell and the bardic music attempt are lost. The bard may take this action as a free action at any time, but can only use this ability once per round. Invoking and maintaining this mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity.

Special: A character with a good alignment may not support divine spells cast by evil characters. Similarly a character with an evil alignment may not support divine spells cast by good characters. A neutral character may support characters of any alignment.

BARD SPELLS

Bardic magic bridges the gap between traditional arcane magic (that of sorcerers and wizards) and the divine (that of clerics and druids). Although sourced in arcane power, bards can use their powers to heal and even deal with some minor elemental effects.

The following is a list of spells that helps to further blur the distinction between arcane and divine magic.

NEW BARD SPELLS

1st Level

Secrets of the Heart – allows the bard to determine the name of the target.

Silver Voice – grants a +10 circumstance bonus to a single Bluff check.

The First Seal – gives another person a +10 circumstance bonus to Sense Motive checks targeting the bard.

Wind Borne Songs – doubles the area of effect of the bard's next bardic music attempt.

2nd Level

Golden Voice – grants a +10 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy rolls for a short duration.

The Second Seal – confuses a single target with waves of doubt, fear and resentment.

Whispers of the Mind – allows the bard to force the target to say a few sentences.

3rd Level

Iron Voice – causes the bard's voice to be clearly heard over a considerable distance.

Eye of the Heart – sense beings that breath

Song of the Tempest – quadruples the area of effect of the bard's next bardic music attempt.

The Third Seal – the bard can target two willing beings and let them hear one another's thoughts.

4th Level

Steel Voice – causes the bard's voice to inspire awe and fear.

The Fourth Seal – creates a zone of empathy around the bard that allows for greater artistic expression.

5th Level

Thunder's Song – gives an eight-fold increase in range to vocal bardic music.

The Fifth Seal – generates an overwhelming wave of empathic connection.

6th Level

Mountain Voice – the bard's voice drowns out all other sounds around him.

NEW SPELLS

Eye of the Heart

Divination

Level: Brd 3

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels

Duration: 1 hour/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

You gain the ability to automatically sense the location of any being that breathes within the area of effect. You also gain a +4 bonus to all Listen skill checks for the duration of the spell. This ability pierces invisibility, the Hide skill and the Move Silently skill. It does not tell you what someone is doing, but it does tell you where he or she is and where he or she moves.

You lose cannot detect beings if you suffer from the deafened condition or if the target is in an area affected by a magical silence of some kind.

Golden Voice

Enchantment (Language-Dependent, Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 2

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels

Target: All intelligent creatures within the area of effect

Duration: 5 rounds/level

Saving Throw: Will (negates)

Spell Resistance: Yes

This enchantment causes your voice to change, becoming richer and more powerful. Everyone within the area of effect can clearly hear your voice so long as there is not an active obstruction. Furthermore you gain a +10 bonus on all Diplomacy or Bluff skill checks that target anyone in the area who fail a Will save.

In order for this spell to grant a bonus you must be able to speak to your targets. If you attack any creature within the area of effect the spell breaks. Finally the



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creature must be able to understand you for you to gain the skill bonus.

Iron Voice

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 400 ft. +100 ft./level radius

Target: Self

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

This spell causes your voice to rise above the common sounds and clamours. For a number of rounds equal to your level everyone within the area of effect can clearly hear your voice. They will hear you as if you were shouting from a few feet away. Anyone in a magical zone of silence (like that created by the *silence* spell) cannot hear your voice.

This effect does not extend the range of sonic based effects, or of the bardic music ability.

Mountain Voice

Transmutation

Level: Brd 6

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 400 ft.+100 ft./level radius

Target: Self

Duration: 1 round/level

Saving Throw: None

Spell Resistance: No

Your voice becomes loud enough to shake mountains. When you speak your voice thunders over the area of effect. Normal conversation is impossible. All Listen checks have +10 to the DC, as your voice covers over anything less loud than a thunderclap. Magically silenced areas may resist this magic, but have a chance (as if targeted with a *dispel magic* spell) of failing.

Secrets of the Heart

Divination

Level: Brd 1

Components: V, S

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Medium (100 ft.+ 10 ft./level)

Target: 1 target

Duration: Instant

Saving Throw: Will (see below)

Spell Resistance: No

You gain instant knowledge of the true name of a single, intelligent creature within the area of effect. This spell works immediately on any creature not attempting to conceal its identity.

A target using mundane means to conceal his identity may make a Will save to resist this spell. If he succeeds then the bard learns the false name of the target's choice. If he fails then the bard learns his true name. Mundane means include the Bluff and Disguise skills, getting people to lie for you and forged papers..

A target using magical mean to conceal his identity may make a Will save to resist this spell. If he succeeds then the bard learns the false name of the target's choice. If he fails then the bard learns his true name. Additionally the bard knows that a magical spell has interfered with his divination attempt. Magical means include but are not limited to innate shapechanging abilities, *alter self*, *change self*, *polymorph other* and *polymorph self*.

The target is not alerted to the divination attempt whether he succeeds or fails his save.

Silver Voice

Enchantment

Level: Brd 1

Components: V

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One target



Duration: Instant
Saving Throw: Will (half)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your words seem very persuasive to a single target. After casting this spell you can target one creature in the area. If you immediately make a Bluff skill check against that creature you gain a +10 circumstance bonus to your skill check. The target may make a Will save to resist the effect. If it succeeds then you only get a +5 circumstance bonus to your Bluff skill check.

Song of the Tempest

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3
Components: V, S, F (optional)
Casting Time: 1 action
Target: Self
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The *song of the tempest* quadruples (4X) the area of effect of your next bardic music effect. This quadrupling stacks normally with any other extending effect; so another doubling increases the area of effect by 5X, and so on. It is not possible to stack multiple *song of the tempest* spells, although this spell does stack with *wind borne songs* and *thunder's song*. The maximum possible range extension using all three songs is 13X the usual area of effect.

The extended range drops as soon as the *song of the tempest* ends, even if the bard is maintaining his bardic music.

If the performance mode that the bard uses requires an instrument, that instrument must be a masterwork tool to use this effect.

Steel Voice (4th)

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 4
Components:
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft.+100 ft./level)
Target: 1 target/ 3 levels
Duration: 5 rounds/level
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your voice becomes as hard as steel, carrying with it the promise of death and worse to those who oppose you. Each target must make a Will save or suffer from

a negative level for the duration of the spell. This negative level is a fear effect and therefore does not affect beings that are immune to fear.

Each negative level that a target suffers inflicts the following penalties: -1 competence penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks and effective level for determining the power, duration, DC and other details of spells or special abilities). Additionally a spellcaster loses one spell or spell slot from his highest available level. Negative levels stack.

A being targeted by this spell does not have to roll to get rid of the negative levels. They vanish instantly after the duration of the spell has elapsed.

The Fifth Seal (5th)

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 5
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One target
Duration: Instant
Saving Throw: Will (negates, see below)
Spell Resistance: Yes

You can create a sudden empathic bond between yourself and one target. That target feels an overwhelming surge of alien emotions. If they fail to make a Will save then they take 1d8 per level (maximum 15d8) subdual damage. If they succeed they are dazed for 1d4 rounds by the battering wave of emotion.

This is a mind-affecting spell.

The focus of this spell is any masterwork musical instrument.

The First Seal (1st)

Divination

Level: Brd 1, Wiz/Sor 1
Components: V, F
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One target
Duration: One skill check
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You open an empathic channel between yourself and another person. This channel gives them a +10 circumstance bonus to any roll to Sense Motive on you.



Duration: Instant
Saving Throw: Will (half)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your words seem very persuasive to a single target. After casting this spell you can target one creature in the area. If you immediately make a Bluff skill check against that creature you gain a +10 circumstance bonus to your skill check. The target may make a Will save to resist the effect. If it succeeds then you only get a +5 circumstance bonus to your Bluff skill check.

Song of the Tempest

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3
Components: V, S, F (optional)
Casting Time: 1 action
Target: Self
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The *song of the tempest* quadruples (4X) the area of effect of your next bardic music effect. This quadrupling stacks normally with any other extending effect; so another doubling increases the area of effect by 5X, and so on. It is not possible to stack multiple *song of the tempest* spells, although this spell does stack with *wind borne songs* and *thunder's song*. The maximum possible range extension using all three songs is 13X the usual area of effect.

The extended range drops as soon as the *song of the tempest* ends, even if the bard is maintaining his bardic music.

If the performance mode that the bard uses requires an instrument, that instrument must be a masterwork tool to use this effect.

Steel Voice (4th)

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 4
Components:
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft.+100 ft./level)
Target: 1 target/ 3 levels
Duration: 5 rounds/level
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your voice becomes as hard as steel, carrying with it the promise of death and worse to those who oppose you. Each target must make a Will save or suffer from

a negative level for the duration of the spell. This negative level is a fear effect and therefore does not affect beings that are immune to fear.

Each negative level that a target suffers inflicts the following penalties: -1 competence penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks and effective level for determining the power, duration, DC and other details of spells or special abilities). Additionally a spellcaster loses one spell or spell slot from his highest available level. Negative levels stack.

A being targeted by this spell does not have to roll to get rid of the negative levels. They vanish instantly after the duration of the spell has elapsed.

The Fifth Seal (5th)

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 5
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One target
Duration: Instant
Saving Throw: Will (negates, see below)
Spell Resistance: Yes

You can create a sudden empathic bond between yourself and one target. That target feels an overwhelming surge of alien emotions. If they fail to make a Will save then they take 1d8 per level (maximum 15d8) subdual damage. If they succeed they are dazed for 1d4 rounds by the battering wave of emotion.

This is a mind-affecting spell.

The focus of this spell is any masterwork musical instrument.

The First Seal (1st)

Divination

Level: Brd 1, Wiz/Sor 1
Components: V, F
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One target
Duration: One skill check
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You open an empathic channel between yourself and another person. This channel gives them a +10 circumstance bonus to any roll to Sense Motive on you.



Duration: Instant
Saving Throw: Will (half)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your words seem very persuasive to a single target. After casting this spell you can target one creature in the area. If you immediately make a Bluff skill check against that creature you gain a +10 circumstance bonus to your skill check. The target may make a Will save to resist the effect. If it succeeds then you only get a +5 circumstance bonus to your Bluff skill check.

Song of the Tempest

Transmutation

Level: Brd 3
Components: V, S, F (optional)
Casting Time: 1 action
Target: Self
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The *song of the tempest* quadruples (4X) the area of effect of your next bardic music effect. This quadrupling stacks normally with any other extending effect; so another doubling increases the area of effect by 5X, and so on. It is not possible to stack multiple *song of the tempest* spells, although this spell does stack with *wind borne songs* and *thunder's song*. The maximum possible range extension using all three songs is 13X the usual area of effect.

The extended range drops as soon as the *song of the tempest* ends, even if the bard is maintaining his bardic music.

If the performance mode that the bard uses requires an instrument, that instrument must be a masterwork tool to use this effect.

Steel Voice (4th)

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 4
Components:
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Long (400 ft.+100 ft./level)
Target: 1 target/ 3 levels
Duration: 5 rounds/level
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes

Your voice becomes as hard as steel, carrying with it the promise of death and worse to those who oppose you. Each target must make a Will save or suffer from

a negative level for the duration of the spell. This negative level is a fear effect and therefore does not affect beings that are immune to fear.

Each negative level that a target suffers inflicts the following penalties: -1 competence penalty on attack rolls, saving throws, skill checks, ability checks and effective level for determining the power, duration, DC and other details of spells or special abilities). Additionally a spellcaster loses one spell or spell slot from his highest available level. Negative levels stack.

A being targeted by this spell does not have to roll to get rid of the negative levels. They vanish instantly after the duration of the spell has elapsed.

The Fifth Seal (5th)

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 5
Components: V, S, F
Casting Time: 1 full round
Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One target
Duration: Instant
Saving Throw: Will (negates, see below)
Spell Resistance: Yes

You can create a sudden empathic bond between yourself and one target. That target feels an overwhelming surge of alien emotions. If they fail to make a Will save then they take 1d8 per level (maximum 15d8) subdual damage. If they succeed they are dazed for 1d4 rounds by the battering wave of emotion.

This is a mind-affecting spell.

The focus of this spell is any masterwork musical instrument.

The First Seal (1st)

Divination

Level: Brd 1, Wiz/Sor 1
Components: V, F
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)
Target: One target
Duration: One skill check
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes (harmless)

You open an empathic channel between yourself and another person. This channel gives them a +10 circumstance bonus to any roll to Sense Motive on you.



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Additionally you receive a +10 circumstance bonus to any Diplomacy skill check to convince the target that you really do feel what you feel. Note that it is very difficult to lie while under the influence of this spell.

The focus for this spell is any masterwork instrument.

The Fourth Seal

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 4

Components: V, F

Casting Time: 1 action

Area: 30 ft. emanation

Target: One target/level

Duration: 5 rounds/level

Saving Throw: Will (negates)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a zone in which everyone possesses heightened empathic abilities. Everyone within the zone who fails their save gains a +4 modifier to their Sense Motive skill checks against anyone in the zone. Additionally individuals in the zone are at a -4 modifier on their ability to resist any mind affecting spell or ability so long as they remain in the zone.

The focus for this spell is any masterwork instrument.

The Second Seal

Enchantment (Compulsion, Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 2

Components: V, F

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft.+5 ft./2 levels)

Target: One target

Duration: Concentration

Saving Throw: Will (negates)

Spell Resistance: Yes

You create a bond between you and your target, forcing your darkest and least positive emotions onto it. The target may make a Will save to negate the effect. If the target fails it becomes confused (as the spell of that name) until you stop concentrating on it.

The focus for this spell is any masterwork instrument.

The Third Seal

Enchantment (Mind-Affecting)

Level: Brd 3

Components: V, F

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: Close (25 ft. + 5 ft./2 levels)

Target: Two targets within range



Duration: Concentration
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes

You can create a telepathic bond between two targets in range. For as long as you concentrate each target can hear the other's thoughts. In addition to making lying and bluffing much more difficult (+10 to all Bluff DC's, or +10 to an opposed Sense Motive skill check) the two parties can instantly react to the other's actions (+2 to their AC if they are attacked by the person they are linked with). Furthermore they can communicate no matter how much chaos and confusion lies between them.

A mind-affecting spell that affects one target also affects the other.

Unwilling targets are allowed a Will save to negate the effect. Once the link is established the bard can maintain it without regard for the target's wishes.

The focus for this spell is any masterwork instrument.

Thunder's Song

Transmutation
Level: Brd 5
Components: V, S, F (optional)
Casting Time: 1 action
Target: Self
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

The *thunder's song* octuples (8X) the area of effect of your next bardic music effect. This octupling stacks normally with any other extending effect; so another doubling increases the area of effect by 9X and so on. It is not possible to stack multiple *thunder's song* spells, although this spell does stack with *wind borne songs* and *song of the tempest*. The maximum possible range extension using all three songs is 13X the usual area of effect.

The extended range drops as soon as *thunder's song* ends, even if the bard is maintaining his bardic music.

If the performance mode that the bard uses requires an instrument, that instrument must be a masterwork tool to use this effect.

Whispers of the Mind

Enchantment (Compulsion, Mind-Affecting)
Level: Brd 2

Components: V, S
Casting Time: 1 action
Range: Medium (100 ft. + 10 ft./level)
Target: One target
Duration: Concentration (no longer than 1 round/level)
Saving Throw: Will (negates)
Spell Resistance: Yes

You can hijack a target's voice causing them to speak the words of your choosing. This does not give you control of their actions. Each round you can make them utter one statement of your choosing. The target may make a Will save to negate the effect.

The target may make a Spellcraft skill check (DC 20) to determine that his utterances originate from a compulsion spell. Anyone using a *detect magic* spell will see that the bard and the target both have some kind of magical effect around them.

This spell lasts for as long as the bard concentrates. However the bard cannot maintain this spell for more than one round per caster level.

Wind Borne Songs

Transmutation
Level: Brd 1
Components: V, S, F (optional)
Casting Time: 1 action
Target: Self
Duration: 1 round/level
Saving Throw: None
Spell Resistance: No

Wind borne songs doubles (2X) the area of effect of your next bardic music effect. This doubling stacks normally with any other extending effect; so another doubling increases the area of effect by 3X and so on. It is not possible to stack multiple *thunder's song* spells, although this spell does stack with *song of the tempest* and *thunder's song*. The maximum possible range extension using all three songs is 13X the usual area of effect.

The extended range drops as soon as *wind borne songs* ends, even if the bard is maintaining his bardic music.

If the performance mode that the bard uses requires an instrument, that instrument must be a masterwork tool to use this effect.



BARDIC DUELS

There is something about mastering the art of performance that inspires great confidence in a bard. That confidence leads them to constantly wish to test themselves against one another. They do this in many ways – some poetic and some decidedly lethal.

Over long centuries bards codified a complex set of rules around this behaviour. The intent of these rules is to minimise the damage that competing master bards can inflict, both on themselves and on others. Additionally having set rules allows for clear winners and losers; otherwise individuals with egos the size of most bards would have trouble admitting defeat.

Not all bards follow the duelling tradition. Those that do not are quickly noted, as they often cannot be trusted to follow the rules of civilised conduct towards other bards.

FORMAT AND RULES OF CONDUCT

There are five accepted formats for duels between bards:

- † *Duel of Magic* – more than just a test of power, duels of magic tax the ingenuity, performance talent and magic of all participating bards.
- † *Duel of Performance* – a contest of skill between two or more bards. These contests typically feature more than one musical style.
- † *Duel of Riddles* – creating and answering riddles requires more than just knowledge; it requires wit, daring and more than a little nerve.
- † *Duel of Rites* – this most elaborate of contests uses other people as the pieces in a complex game of wits between two bards.
- † *Duel of Steel* – this elaborate contest blends combat, repartee and wit into a fast paced duel that ends with the humiliation of one of the contestants.

Each duel has its own rules and regulations. However, the following rules apply to all duels:

No interference is allowed – once a duel has begun no one is allowed to help the participants. They rise and fall on their own abilities. Any interference brings an immediate halt to the duel.

Collusion is strictly prohibited – the participants in a duel may not ‘arrange’ for a winner. They must try with all of their might to win. A staged contest may be a good performance, but it is not a true duel.

The winner must be gracious – failure to treat the loser with respect will always result in the winner gaining a reputation for uncivilised conduct.

The loser must cede the prize – the prize goes to the winner, and the loser no longer has any claim to it. This is one of the most fundamental rules of the duel. The loser must accept his lose, otherwise the entire system falls apart.

No challenge from a civilised bard may be refused – the tradition of duelling insists that no honourable challenge may be refused. In practice, this means that if the challenger has followed all of the rules of duelling, and has never been known to cheat, he may challenge any bard he meets and expect that his opponent will accept.

A bard who violates these rules quickly finds himself unable to interact with or resolve disputed with other bards. Although a few loners could not care less about such things most bards enjoy the company of their fellows. Becoming an outcast ranks fairly low on their list of priorities, right along with being eaten by a dragon or roasted alive over a low fire.

STAKES

At the heart of every duel lays a point of contention or a prize. Whatever it is, the duellists must agree to it up front. This thing can be a social situation, a point of order, a physical prize, or some rare piece of information. Examples might include:

- † A magical sword.
- † A heirloom, such as a favoured piece of jewellery with a mysterious history.
- † The hand of a young woman in marriage.
- † A musician’s position in a tavern.
- † The right of a particular person to live.

Stakes typically come from a third party (in the case of a prize). However, the stake may be a point of contention between two bards. In the later case the bards use the duel to decide the outcome of their

disagreement. Failure to accept the results of the outcome can lead to heavy social penalties.

Typically only one thing can be at stake in a single contest. Multiple stakes can create confusion about who really 'won' a given contest, generating animosity and anger among all of the participants.

BASE MECHANICS

All duels take place within a set format. Although some of the details of these formats vary from duel to duel, the actual mechanics tend to remain the same.

Duels traditionally have three 'contests'. Each contest is judged on many factors, and the participant with the highest total score wins that contest. The individual who has the highest total margin of victory wins the duel.

The factors by which a contest is judged vary from contest to contest. Generally however the following rules apply:

- † High Complexity (high DC for skill target numbers) actions are worth more points than low complexity actions.
- † Inappropriate activities (those that do not fit with the mood or tone of the duel) lower points.
- † Particularly clever demonstrations or selections gain points.

Each duel type has its own set of strategies and tactics. The goal of each is to prove that superiority of a particular bard over another, not just in terms of power but also in terms of skill, wit, knowledge and charm.

In the rare event of a tie an additional contest occurs. This contest is outside of the normal boundaries of the duel; pretty much anything goes.

Both onlookers and the participants judge the outcome of the contests. Indeed, the judgement of the audience is an integral part of the duel. All bards are performers. The only way to judge the impact of a performance is to watch the audience to see how it moves them.

DUEL DESCRIPTIONS

The purpose of the duel system is to create conflict situations other than combat in which bards can excel. These contests use a variety of skills that the bard

possesses, and give players a great deal of creative leeway in creating the situation.

It is entirely possible for the bard's player and the Games Master to simply sit and roll dice to determine the outcome. In the spirit of the system, however, players that describe appropriate and interesting effects gain a +2 circumstance bonus (or higher, if the Games Master is impressed) their duel rolls.

DUEL OF MAGIC

A duel of magic occurs when two bards (or two other magicians) agree to contest between themselves using spells. These spells are typically not damaging; the intent is to show the magician's understanding of magic, his artistic ability and his willingness to sacrifice himself for his art. Any fool can toss energy around to destroy things. Only an artist can create.

Duels of magic have the most rigid structure of all of the duels. This prevents the participants from abusing their magical powers. It also ensures that the duel is not always won by the magician with the most power; luck, skill and daring all play a part in success.

The factors that affect a contest of magic are: blend with performance, complexity, spell level and timing.

Blend with performance measures how well the bard integrates his magical spell with his overall performance. Just casting the spell without any blending subtracts one point. Slipping the spell casting in without anyone noticing (Perform DC 10) is worth no points. Including the spell casting as part of the performance (Perform DC 15) gathers the bard one bonus point. Executing the spell at the most dramatically appropriate time in the performance (Perform DC 20) gives the bard two additional bonus points. Failure on one of the skill rolls results in a two-point penalty, as the bard jars the audience with his magic.

Complexity deals with the artistic complexity (not the magical complexity) of the effect of the spell. The image created by a *silent image* spell could be more artistically rich than that created by a *major image* spell. To determine how well the bard does use the bard's Search skill. For every 5 DC of the bard's Search DC check, he gains 1 point if he succeeds. If he fails the search DC check he gains no points at all.

A bard scores one point for every spell level of the magic used. Stronger spells produce much richer,





BARDIC DUELS

more vibrant effects, allowing the bard much greater range for his creativity.

Timing represents the bard's ability to measure his audience's reaction to his performance. Simply executing the performance neither gains nor loses any points for the bard. Timing the performance so that it fits in reasonably well with the way that the crowd reacts (Sense Motive DC 15) is worth two points. Timing the performance with the rise and fall of the audience's mood (Sense Motive DC 25) is worth three points. Failing a timing check subtracts one point from the bard's total score.

The three contests in a duel of magic are:

- † *Contest of Beauty* – this contest focuses around creating a beautiful illusion of some kind. The bard's performance frames the image, giving it context and meaning. The complexity points for this contest are doubled.
- † *Contest of Control* – this contest focuses on how well the bard can control the emotions of the crowd through his illusions. The timing points for this contest are doubled.
- † *Contest of Skill* – this contest focuses on the ability of the bard to blend his magic into his performance. The blend points for this contest are doubled.

If, somehow, the bards tie at the end of the duel a fourth contest occurs. This contest pits the bards directly against one another, without any modifiers for points. The raw results are added to the total, and the winner declared.

DUEL OF PERFORMANCE

A duel of performance pits one bard's musical talents against another's. These contests are judged not just by the artistry of the piece, but by how well the bard can judge and control the mood of his audience. Perfect music that is not appropriate is actually less valuable than better timed, well thought out performances.

Duels of performance have the least rigid structure of all the various kinds of duels. This is deliberate; strategy and careful planning play just as much a part of these duels as raw performance skill. Careful manoeuvring can allow a considerably less skilled

performer at least a fighting chance against a more talented musician.

The factors that affect a duel of performance are: audacity, breath, complexity and timing.

Audacity measures the daring and courage of the performer. An audacious performance includes some element of personal risk. If the piece or the subject matter are against the law, the performer gains one point. If the piece is particularly difficult (DC 30 or higher) then the performer gains one additional point. If the second performer uses the same mode as the first and successfully hits a DC 10 points higher than the first performer he gains a four-point bonus rather than the usual two-point penalty.

Breath measures how much skill the performer brings to the table. Each time the performer switches modes he gains one point.

Complexity deals with the artistic skill used in the piece. The bard receives one point for every 5 points of the DC he attempts. Additionally for every 10 points by which his Perform skill check exceeds the DC he receives an additional point.

Timing represents the bard's ability to measure his audience's reaction to his performance. Simply executing the performance neither gains nor loses any points for the bard. Timing the performance so that it fits in reasonably well with the way that the crowd reacts (Sense Motive DC 15) is worth two points. Timing the performance with the rise and fall of the audience's mood (Sense Motive DC 25) is worth three points. Failing a timing check subtracts one point from the bard's total score.

Unlike the other duels the three rounds of a duel of performance are not set in stone. Instead the challenged bard may select the musical tone he attempts, and the challenger then responds. This continues until both parties have chosen and played three different pieces.

The tone that each bard chooses is based in part upon the mode that the previous bard used. The following table provides a reference for determining what performance tones work well together:

Duel of Performance Tones

Leads with/ Follows with	Bawdy	Comedic	Epic	Lyric	Serene	Tragic
Bawdy	-2	-1	0	0	+1	+2
Comedic	-1	-2	+1	-1	+2	+1
Epic	0	+1	-2	+2	-1	0
Lyric	0	-1	+2	-2	+1	0
Serene	+1	+2	-1	+1	-2	-1
Tragic	+2	+1	0	0	-1	-2

For example, Julian (the challenged bard) leads with a comedic tone. His challenger responds with an epic tone, knowing that Julian is not overly skilled in epics and gaining +1 point by doing so. Julian could then attempt to go with a lyric tone (+2) or even try to overcome his challenger in the epic tone by setting his DC 10 points higher than that attempted by his opponent.

DUEL OF RIDDLES

The duel of riddles pits one bard's wit against another's. These contests are as much stratagem and planning as they are wisdom and linguistic ability. They focus on the creation of complex riddles and leading the opponent astray. Even a highly skilled riddle-master can fail to answer a simple riddle if it is hidden well enough.

Duels of riddles have a fairly rigid format. Each participant may frame as many riddles as they wish. The challenged party may ask the first riddle. Scoring is very simple: each riddle that you ask and the opponent fails to answer is worth one point. The first person to gain three points wins the match.

Answering a riddle can be done either by the player, or by using either bardic knowledge or an appropriate Knowledge skill check. The DC of the skill check is determined by four factors: breath, depth, poetics and veracity. The person framing the riddle sets the DC, and the person answering it makes the skill check.

The base DC for any riddle is 10.

Breath represents the expanse of knowledge covered by the riddle. The topic of the riddle should fall into one of the following categories: Arcane, Item, Historical, Local, Social, Mundane. The first question of a duel of riddles is not modified by breath, but it sets the tone for the next question. For every subsequent question

the bard may add +1 to the DC. For example, if your opponent framed a riddle with an Arcane topic (say, the contents of a particular plane) you could respond with a mundane riddle (say the contents of your pockets) and add +5 to the DC of your riddle.

Depth represents the knowledge needed to answer the riddle. When framing the riddle the bard may make a bardic knowledge or Knowledge skill check. For every 5 points of his skill check result he may add +1 to the DC of the riddle. The higher the skill check result, the more obscure the riddle's answer becomes.

Poetics represents the bard's ability to frame a riddle in an interesting and distracting manner. If properly done this framing can obscure even the most simple of subjects. As with depth, the bard may make a Perform skill check. For every 5 points of the skill check result he may add +1 to the DC of the riddle. The higher his skill check result the more poetic and complex the riddle becomes.

Veracity is the single hardest factor to judge in a riddle contest. In effect it allows the bard to add +2 to the DC of any riddle he frames that is based on his personal experience. This means, for example, that if the bard has actually encountered a dragon he can add +2 to the DC of any riddle he frames that has 'dragon' as its answer. This represents the ability of a person to take details from real life and weave them into the tapestry of the riddle.

The duel of riddles has a reputation for being a death match. The stakes are often quite high; life or death, someone's soul, or their future. In part this is because people are willing to stake quite a bit on their own intelligence and wit. However, the majority of this duel style's deadly reputation comes from the willingness of powerful beings (dragons, demon princes and the like) to accept these challenges from relatively weak



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mortals. Playing such odds can gather huge stakes for the mortal winner. Equally the consequences of losing can be terrible beyond belief.

DUEL OF RITES

The duel of rites pits the social skills of two bards into a battle using other people as pawns in the game. These duels focus on 'proving' that one bard is better at manipulation than the others. Like all duels the stakes must be decided upon before the duel begins; incidental damage to bystanders is a secondary concern that is also addressed at this time.

A duel of rites has three contests:

- † *Contest of Embarrassment* - involves the bard selecting a target and talking him into a compromising situation. This situation can be anything of the bard's devising. The more socially damaging the situation is, the more points that the bard scores for the event.
- † *Contest of Seduction* - involves creating a feeling of romantic involvement between the bard and a person of the opposite sex. No physical relationship is required. However, the bard must secure proof of the other person's attachment.
- † *Contest of Praise* - involves showering glory and recognition for someone who does not deserve it. This contest most typically seeks to elevate some poor nebbish into a position of honour and praise. The competing bards may select the same target, or may work on different subjects for the duration of the duel.

The bard that accumulates the most 'points' over the three contests wins the duel. Bards gain and lose points based on their targets, how well they do and whether or not they actually succeed. All three contests are timed; the bard has no more than a seven-day per contest, or twenty-one days in total to complete his conquests.

The three factors that a bard judges his skills by are: daring, difficulty and style.

Daring represents the danger that the bard subjects himself to in order to carry out his conquest. An unprotected target that carries no risk what so ever costs the two points. A target that puts the bard in some jeopardy (a merchant's jealously guarded daughter, the bumbling nephew of a minor noble) is worth no points. A dangerous target (the wife of a powerful noble, a sinister plotter who prefers to remain in the shadows) would garner the bard an additional two points.



Difficulty represents the complexity of the situation. For every 5 points of the DC the bard gains one victory point. The Games Master assigns the DC based on his assessment of the situation and the complexity of the task the bard appoints himself. Each of the different duels relies on a different skill:

- † *Embarrassment* – Diplomacy
- † *Seduction* – Bluff
- † *Praise* – Gather Information or Diplomacy

Failure results in zero points.

Style represents the grace and class that the bard displays while carrying out his mission. Style is difficult to judge. Generally, a bard who carries off his mission without being noticed gains one point. A bard who carries off his mission without anyone realising that something happened gets an additional point. A bard who brags about his accomplishments or is caught loses a point. The Games Master may award an additional point if the bard describes his efforts in a particularly entertaining and elegant fashion.

Duels of rites are some of the most difficult to carry out. They involve massive amounts of planning, work and careful attention to detail. For some bards playing out the duel is far more entertaining than winning could ever be. These bards become somewhat infamous in the bardic community, as they constantly challenge other bards offering up trivial stakes so that they can feel the thrill of manipulating other people.

DUEL OF STEEL

A duel of steel involves an armed conflict between two bards. Ostensibly this is the simplest kind of duel. The two bards square off, draw their swords and have at until one acknowledges defeat. The truth is far different. The duel of steel encompasses more than just the bard's mastery of the combat arts. It includes his sense of style, his ability to time his actions to his opponents and the flair with which he can carry off the fight. In fact, it is entirely possible for a bard to win the duel and lose the physical fight if he can lose with enough style.

A duel of steel is fought in five combat rounds. The first round is the formal challenge. The middle three represent a series of exchanges between the two bards.

The last is the finale the last chance the two contestants have to demonstrate their superior ability.

Each round of the fight is judged on three factors: combat ability, prediction and style.

Combat ability measures how well each participant can fight. Each hit that the bard scores that round is worth one point. The execution of a special combat manoeuvre (disarm, trip, bull rush, etc.) is worth two points.

Prediction is a measure of how well the bard can determine what his opponent is going to do. At the end of each round each participant may make a Sense Motive skill check opposed by the other contestant's Bluff skill check. If the Sense Motive skill check result is higher than the opponent's Bluff skill check result then the bard knows what the other person intends to do next round and gains one point. If the Sense Motive skill check result is ten points lower than the Bluff skill check result then the bard guesses wrong and loses two points.

Style is measured differently for the three separate phases. During the formal challenge the bard is expected to introduce himself and slander the opponent. During the fight the bard is expected to move with grace and skill, as well as taunting his opponent mercilessly. In the last round of the duel the bard must come up with a barb so devastating that the opponent cannot reasonably be expected to hold his head high after the match.

In all three cases, the bard makes a Diplomacy skill check at the beginning of each round. For every 5 points of the DC the bard gains 1 point if he succeeds. Failure generates zero points. During the three exchanges and the finale the bard gains a +2 circumstance bonus to his roll if he succeed in his Sense Motive check in the round before.

Duels of steel are not about killing the other person. They are opportunities for the bard to show off his grace, style and wit. If either contestant is unconscious or dying at the end of the fight then the bard that is still standing loses seven points.



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Bards do not just wander around aimlessly looking for work. Some have established spots in a marketplace. Others are members of large theatre companies with their own stages. Many work with travelling bands that pass, for years on end, along the same route.

Each of these venues lends themselves to different kinds of performers and audiences. Both go where they can find the kind of activity that they crave. This gives each venue a distinct role in society, as well as a distinct sort of bardic organisation associated with it.

DEFINITION OF A VENUE

A venue is any place where a bard sets up a performance. In the strictest sense a venue merely represents a location. Any street corner or rain barrel can server as a venue for a performance.

Many venues possess considerably more substance than a street corner or a rain barrel. Some serve solely as a home for artists presenting their skills to the public. Others nestle in the hearts of noble palaces where bards can contend for the favour of the court using their skills.

One of the great truisms of bardic life is that all of the good venues already have a bard in them. This

statement is not entirely true of course. A bard can always attempt to create a venue for his own music. Only the great venues, the ones where a man can make his fortune and his glory, already have bards in residence.

VENUE CHARACTERISTIC

No matter what form the venue takes it shares characteristics with other venues. These characteristics allow the bard to judge whether it will be a good place to perform, whether his particular style suits the venue, and what kind of individuals are drawn to the place (both audiences and performers).

Each venue can be rated on the following characteristics:

- † *Acoustics* – how well the venue controls and enhances sound
- † *Availability* – how long the venue lasts
- † *Fame* – how well other people know the venue
- † *Location* – how accessible the venue is to the correct kind of traffic
- † *Resources* – how many resources the venue has available.

Each characteristic has a value from zero to four. The higher the characteristic value the greater the bonuses that the venue provides to bards who perform there.

Acoustics Values

Value	Description	Effect
0	The venue has either poor acoustics or is acoustically neutral	None
1	The venue has decent acoustics for most kinds of performances	+1 circumstance bonus to Perform skill checks
2	The venue has excellent acoustics for most kinds of performances	+2 circumstance bonus to Perform skill checks
3	The venue has tremendous acoustics, capable of enhancing a poor performance or making a great one	+2 circumstance bonus to Perform skill checks. The performer may make an unmodified Perform skill check (DC 20) before the performance to improve this bonus to a +3 circumstance bonus by taking advantage of the superior acoustics. Failure results in the circumstance bonus being reduced to +1.
4	The venue has nearly legendary acoustics, which is both a blessing and a curse.	+2 circumstance bonus to Perform skill checks. The performer may make an unmodified Perform skill check (DC 20) before the performance to improve this bonus to a +4 circumstance bonus by taking advantage of the acoustics. Failure results in a -2 circumstance penalty as the acoustics amplify and project every hesitation and mistake.

Availability Values

Value	Description	Effect
0	The venue is only open for a few days each year. These days may be consecutive (a week or two) or may be scattered though out the year.	The venue can only support 1 to 5 performances every year. Getting access to it requires special assistance or a Diplomacy skill check (DC 30)
1	The venue is only open for a single season.	The venue can support 25 to 40 performances every year. Getting access to it requires assistance or a Diplomacy skill check (DC 25)
2	The venue is open for most of two seasons.	The venue can support 50 to 80 performances every year. Getting access to it requires assistance or a Diplomacy skill check (DC 20)
3	The venue is open for most of three seasons, and may only shut down due to weather or other outside problems.	The venue can support 75 to 120 performances every year. Getting access to it requires assistance or a Diplomacy skill check (DC 15)
4	The venue is open and available all year long. The only times is it is not available is when it is closed for maintenance or due to bad weather.	The venue can support 100 to 200 performances every year. Getting access to it requires assistance or a Diplomacy skill check (DC 10)

Each of the five characteristics provides a different advantage.

Acoustics measures how a particular venue lends itself to musical or auditory performance. The higher the acoustics value the higher the circumstance bonus to any Perform skill checks made in the venue. Generally:

Availability measures the open time of a given venue during any given year. Given that each venue can only support a number of performances equal to the number of days that it is actually open, the shorter the venue's availability the more hotly contested access to it will be.

Fame Values

Value	Description	Effect
0	No one knows about the venue (a new theatre)	-2 penalty to the all Perform skill checks to generate income at this venue.
1	The venue is known to host performers (taverns, local parks,)	No bonus or penalty
2	The venue is reasonably well known for its performers	+1 bonus to all Perform skill checks to generate income in this venue.
3	The venue is well enough known that people travel to see performances in it.	+2 bonus to all Perform skill checks to generate income in this venue. If the character's unmodified Perform skill check result is under 15 then the character gains a -1 penalty to all Perform skill checks for the next month because of the bad publicity he gains for failing to live up to the crowds expectations.
4	The venue is justly famous for its performances. People travel from far away lands to see performances put on in the venue.	+4 bonus to all Perform skill checks to generate income in this venue. If the character's unmodified Perform skill check result is under 20 then the character gains a -2 penalty to his Perform skill checks for the next year because of the bad publicity generated by his failure to live up to the crowd's expectations.



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Location Values

Value	Description	Effect
0	The venue is far away from anyone or anything important (remote fairs, village inns)	Neutral
1	The venue's location places it on the outskirts of the centres of power and privilege (a town festival or a theatre in a small city).	+1 dice to the amount of coin that you earn from a Perform skill check.
2	The venue's location places it near the centres of power and privilege (a city festival or a theatre in a good sized city)	+1 dice to the amount of coin that you earn from a Perform skill check. 10% chance per performance of being noticed by a wealthy or powerful patron.
3	The venue's location places it very close to the centres of power and privilege (a national festival or a theatre in the royal city)	+1 dice to the amount of coin that you earn from a Perform skill check. 20% chance per performance of being noticed by a wealthy or powerful patron.
4	The venue's location places it squarely in the middle of the centres of power and privilege (a troupe hosted in the royal court, a choir in the greatest temple in the realm)	+1 dice to the amount of coin that you earn from a Perform skill check. 30% chance per performance of being noticed by a wealthy or powerful patron.

Fame measures how much the general public knows about the venue. The truly famous venues can attract attention from far away countries or even other planes. A venue without a reputation not only carries less prestige but also can impose penalties on the bard's ability to generate income.

Location measures the accessibility of the venue to those crowds who have access to considerable amounts of coin, influence and power. The higher the location value the more likely it is that the crowd will contain individuals who rate highly in all three categories.

Resources measure how much the venue can afford to spend on upkeep and maintenance of its performers. Many famous venues are quite poor, while royal courts can afford to keep its lapdogs in considerable style.

VENUE ATTRIBUTES

In addition to the five characteristics (acoustics, availability, fame, location and resources) venues may have unique attributes that distinguish them. Each attribute grants a bonus or a penalty to the performers who attempt to use the venue.

Some of these attributes include:

- † *Ancient* – the venue is old beyond knowledge. A powerful enough performance (DC 30) will summon up the ghosts of the past.
- † *Blessed by the Fey* – those who play here gain a bonus to their enchantment and charm effects.

† *Blessed by the Gods* – those who play here gain a bonus to their morale boosting effects.

† *Fortified (level)* – the venue has protection from mundane forces.

† *Gateway to Heaven* – a powerful enough performance (DC 30) can open a gateway to a celestial plane.

† *Gateway to Hell* – a powerful enough performance (DC 30) can open a gateway to an infernal plane.

† *Guardian (level)* – the venue has a guardian who challenges all who would harm the venue a duel.

† *Infamous* – the venue is connected to the underworld rather than the legitimate authorities.

† *Library of Lore (type)* – the venue has extensive collections of knowledge.

† *Staffed* – the venue has a permanent staff of some sort.

† *Warded (level)* – the venue has protection from magical forces.

More detailed information about the above attributes can be found below.

Resources Values

Value	Description	Effect
0	The venue has no resources with which to support performers (village festival, street corner performance)	Neutral
1	The venue has minimal resources with which to support performers (a village inn, a larger regional festival)	The performer does not have to pay for two poor meals a day and poor lodging for himself. His companions get no such assistance unless they are also performers.
2	The venue has reasonable levels of resources with which to support performers (a city inn, a national festival, a prosperous theatre)	The performer earns 6 sp per day with which to pay for food and lodging. This is in addition to whatever he can earn through his performances.
3	The venue has considerable resources with which to support performers (a noble house, an ancient and wealthy bardic college)	The performer earns 1 gp per day with which to pay for food and lodging. This is in addition to whatever he can earn through his performances. Additionally the venue may have a few instruments available should the bard have need of them.
4	The venue has extravagant resources available to it (a royal theatre company, the choir in the major temple of the realm).	The performer earns 3 gp per day. This is in addition to whatever he can earn through his performances. Additionally the venue maintains a number of masterwork instruments that the performer can use for performances that take place in the venue.

Ancient: An ancient venue has existed since time out of mind. No one can remember when it was founded. No one can imagine a time when it did not host performances. Ancient venues typically show the marks of long occupation, sometimes by many races. When a performer performs particularly well he can summon up the ghosts of the past. Whenever the performer's Perform skill check exceeds 30 2d4 harmless ghosts appear for the duration of the performance. The performer can call up a specific ghost from the venue's past by making a Perform skill check (DC 35).

Blessed by the Fey: The venue was blessed by the fey sometime in the past. Now any musician who plays in the venue gains a +2 holy bonus to the DC to resist any mind-affecting or compulsion effect that he casts during his performance. If the musician rolls under a 20 on any Perform skill check within the venue he offends the fey folk with his music. He gains a -2 penalty to all skill checks dealing with the fey for one year and has a 10% chance of being subject to a curse (as the *bestow curse* spell) of some sort. The curse can be removed either by performing an epic performance in the venue (Perform skill check DC 30) or by the means of a *remove curse* spell.

Blessed by the Gods: The venue was blessed by the celestial powers sometime in the past. Now any musician who plays in the venue gains a +1 holy bonus to any healing or morale boosting effect that he invokes. This bonus adds either directly to the bonus

granted (as in the case of the bardic music *inspire courage* ability) or to each dice rolled in the case of those abilities that generate damage. If a performer of evil alignment plays in the venue he must make a Will save (DC 20) or be struck senseless by holy power that infuses the place. If the evil performer fails his saving throw he is outlined in white light and stunned for 1d 4 rounds.

Fortified (level): The venue has considerable mundane protections, including thick walls, strong doors and a fireproof construction. Every level of the fortified attribute increased the hardness of the walls, doors and other structural components by one point. The fortified attribute has five levels. The first three (Fortified 1, 2 and 3) represent superior construction techniques. The last two (Fortified 4, 5) represent superior construction techniques combined with magical support.

Gateway to Heaven: The venue rests on a planer nexus leading to one of the celestial planes. By making a Perform skill check (DC 30) a performer with the bardic music ability can open a gate from the venue into that celestial plane. Like all gates this passage is bi-directional. Beings may pass along it in either direction. If the performer knows the name of a being in the plane that the gateway opens to he can speak that name and the being will appear within 2d4 rounds. Additionally the music that opened the gate has a 10% chance each round of attracting the attention of a random being on the other side of the gate. The





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gate remains open for 1 round per level of the bard who opened it, regardless of whether or not the bard continues playing.

Gateway to Hell: The venue rests on a planer nexus leading to one of the infernal planes. By making a Perform skill check (DC 30) a performer with the bardic music ability can open a gate from the venue into that celestial plane. Like all gates this passage is bi-directional. Beings may pass along it in either direction. If the performer knows the name of a being in the plane that the gateway opens to he can speak that name and the being will appear within 1d4 rounds. Additionally the music that opened the gate has a 30% chance each round of attracting the attention of a random being on the other side of the gate. The gate remains open for 1 round per level of the bard who opened it, regardless of whether or not the bard continues playing.

Guardian (level): The venue has a guardian of some sort, one who might or might not be mortal. This guardian acts as a bard of the appropriate level (1 to 20). The guardian challenges anyone who wishes to play in the venue to a duel, and acts to protect the venue in times of danger or war. Most guardians are ghosts of famous bards who protect a venue that they particularly loved in life. A few are complex constructs or magical spirits who are bound to a specific term of service. Rarely a venue will have a tradition of guardianship, with the guardian being the latest individual to best the previous guardian.

Infamous: The venue is famous in the underworld. In effect this attribute reverses the Location characteristic. For an infamous venue Location measures how close the venue is to the centre of the thieves culture, the revolutionaries and the dark forces that want to tear down the world. Infamous venues are more lucrative than their regular cousins. Any perform skill check result used to generate income automatically rolls the highest possible result (10 on a d10, for example). However, if the bard rolls a natural 1 on his Perform skill check his life is forfeit. Assassins will plague him until he either makes redress or dies.

Library of Lore (type): A venue that has a library of lore adds a +2 bonus to the appropriate bardic knowledge rolls undertaken by performers who use the venue. The types of bardic knowledge are arcane, historical, item, local and social. A library is not always a collection of books. It can also represent access to the local gossip network, long oral traditions within the venue, or a wise old expert who works at the venue and doesn't mind sharing his knowledge.

Staffed: Many venues are maintained entirely by the performers. However, a staffed venue has a small (2 to 4 person) team of 1st level experts who work in the building, create whatever sets are required, and attempt to keep the structure from falling down. These experts will not fight for anyone in the venue, but will clean up a mess if one is made. Generally the experts avoid confrontation with the performers whenever possible.

Warded (level): A warded venue has magical protections that help to defend the venue and anyone inside it. Everyone within the venue's precincts gains a +1 bonus per level to all of their saving throws against magical spells. Warded has five levels (1 to 5), which each level providing progressively more protection.

TYPES OF VENUES

Venues come in a vast variety of types. Each type represents several different classes of venues, each unique in its own right. The types are:

- † *Borrowed* – venues are either rented or literally borrowed from another group. These venues are not typically very well laid out for performances but may well be very close to important places.
- † *Court* - venues are located in the noble courts or places of governance of the realm.
- † *Owned* – venues are dedicated facilities designed for and utilised by performers.
- † *Public* – venues are either specially designated facilities for performing or are areas that are open to most legitimate forms of public use (like street corners).
- † *Religious* – venues are primarily dedicated places of worship for one or more gods. Their use as a performance venue either directly relates to that worship or functions as part of larger, organized campaign to create public interest.
- † *Travelling* – venues typical move from place to place. Without a fixed location they rely more on availability and a repeated pattern to ensure that they can make ends meet.

Bards may find themselves dealing with many different kinds of venues over the course of their careers. Each venue has its own interest, and secrets. Bards on the run may find that a travelling venue exactly suits their

needs, while those looking for stability may well end up borrowing a venue for a few months or years.

Each venue entry contains not only a description of the type, but a listing of various kinds of venues that might fit into it. Additionally each entry contains a discussion of the kinds of organisations that might grow up around a venue, their traditions and entrance requirements. Finally each entry has a few 'example' venues that show what can be done with the venue system.

BORROWED VENUES

A borrowed venue's most prominent feature is that it was never intended for performance purposes. The owner of the venue may tolerate performances, or he may require something beyond simply services rendered.

Borrowed venues do not typically have long term arrangements with any one performer. The borrowed venue is therefore insecure by nature. The performer may have to defend his position against a rival at any time. These defences can be as subtle as simply snubbing another performer to as dangerous as an outright duel.

The loss of a borrowed venue varies from being an annoyance to being deadly. During the spring and summer in most lands a person can survive fairly easily off of the land, or by moving from town to town. During the late fall and winter though travel becomes dangerous. Being thrown out of a comfortable berth to wander the icy landscape in search of shelter has killed more than one minstrel.

Facilities

Borrowed venues were not constructed for performances. Any advantages they might have are purely coincidental to their primary purpose.

Typical borrowed venues include: farmhouses, inns, the halls of minor nobles and guild houses for rich guilds.

Organisations

Unlike the other types borrowed venues do not typically grow organisations. Each performer struggles to find a place. Others are potential rivals, to be removed from the game if at all possible. Newcomers especially get treated with suspicion, doubt and prejudice until they demonstrate their worth.

Venue Characteristics and Attributes

The typical value ranges for the five characteristics of borrowed venues are:

- † *Acoustics* - 0 to 1
- † *Availability* - 0 to 4
- † *Fame* - 0 to 1
- † *Location* - 0 to 4 (typically only 3 or 4 when the venue is infamous)
- † *Resources* - 0 to 2

Borrowed venues may have any attribute, but will not typically have more than two.

Example Venues

Georan Farmstead

Acoustics: 1
Availability: 2
Fame: 0
Location: 0
Resources: 1
Attributes: Library of Lore (historical)

Located in the far backcountry, the Georan Farmstead is a collection of buildings that houses four families. They are reasonably open to strangers, and try their best to welcome travellers. During hard times or bad years they are less welcoming, as they have less food to share. Old grandfather Georan knows quite a bit about legends and travelled widely in his youth. Given that he his half-elven that was quite a while ago. He is a good source for first hand accounts of events that happened in the one hundred years or so.

The Three Eyed Jack

Acoustics: 0
Availability: 4
Fame: 1
Location: 4
Resources: 2
Attributes: Infamous, Staffed

Located in the most rundown portion of the capital city, the Three Eyed Jack gives a new meaning to the concept of the seedy bar. It is not just that the place attracts the worst villains in the land. Nor is it that more foul deeds originated from its dark corners than from the pits of Hell. No, the final cap on the Three Eyed Jacks reputation as the worst inn in the land comes from the food, which ranges from inedible to actively poisonous. Why exactly the most powerful criminals in the land congregate where they could actually be killed by the service is anyone's guess.



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Performers come and go from the Three Eyed Jack rather rapidly though, so there is almost always a spot open for the needy, the greedy, or the foolish.

Borrowed Venue Summary

Capacity: One performer at a time

Typical Venues: Tavern, Farmhouse

Organisations: None

Characteristics Ranges: Acoustics (0-1), Availability (0-4), Fame (0-1), Location (0-4), Resources (0-2)

Typical Attributes: Any (no more than two)

COURT VENUES

A court venue resides in the manor, castle, or palace of the local government. Located close to the seat of power, here performers work to entertain the nobles of

the land. They ply their talents in elaborate displays designed to delight, confuse and amuse.

Gaining access to a court venue requires either an invitation or a duel with someone who has one. Access to the facilities of a court is highly coveted. Bards do not part with such luxury lightly.

Facilities

Court venues typically possess superior acoustics and facilities. Most were constructed solely for the purpose of entertainment; they show all of the care and style that the wealthy can put into such thing. Many courts have more than one physical venue within them. Typically performances occur in the great hall where feasts occur, in a number of small chambers for more intimate performances, and potentially out in the gardens during the long warm days of summer.

Organisations

Three types of organisations grow from court venues. These organisations represent different responses to the pressures of the court. Each seeks to protect itself and its members from the whims of the powerful. One seeks solidarity in the confines of the court, one seeks fame and the other seeks control.

Collegiums

The first, and probably most famous, of the organisations that spring from court venues are the so-called 'Bardic Collegiums'. These active organisations use the resources of their venue to seek out other bards for training. Collegiums fall under the control of the oldest and most powerful bards in the organisation. Typically collegiums seek out young bards, or people with bardic talent, so that they can guide them on the path of music and magic.

Average collegiums have between twenty and fifty members, ranging in level from 1st to 20th. Each high level member has direct responsibility for one or more of the lower level members. These



high levels act as mentors and guides to their lower level students, helping them to grow into skilled bards.

Collegiums strive to create a sense of solidarity and purpose among their members. By ensuring that many bards have the same experiences and knowledge they provide all of their members with allies in the long hard struggles of the court. Collegiums also send their members on missions for various power centres in the court, thereby gathering favour and influence.

Cabals

The second type of organisation that springs forth from court venues focuses exclusively on power and influence. These organisations have a variety of names, but most simply call them 'cabals'. Their goal is fairly simple: to control the court using their beauty, charisma and magic. These groups seek out power for power's sake. The only true safety for them comes from holding all of the cards.

Cabals rarely advertise their presence to outsiders. The casual observer may well miss them entirely in the throngs of the court. They have a loose organisation, typically lead by the most magically powerful and charismatic of their number. Candidates for admission are brought to the court and allowed to participate in the power games for a period of time. Those that do well, who show the proper ruthlessness and determination are eventually invited to join the organisation.

An average cabal has between two and twenty members ranging from 10th level to 20th level. Cabals generally treat all of their members as equals. Given the goals of the organisation though the entire situation becomes highly politically charged very quickly. Cabal's frequently plot against their own members more than they do against outsiders.

Many cabals are quite secretive. They rely on misdirection, enchantment and subtle persuasion to control the court. Being revealed could spell their downfall. A few operate within collegiums or orchestras, camouflaging themselves other bards. Music becomes for these bards a screen behind which to hide their other activities.

Orchestras

The third type of organisation in court venues focuses on music and musical expression. These organisations typically take the name of their venue, appending orchestra to the end of the state or palace in which they reside. Their goal is simply to exist creating music

that delights and entertains their audiences. Music is a reward in and of itself for the members of an orchestra. Fame, wealth and prestige are all welcome attendants on that primary reward.

Orchestras are highly public organisations. With membership ranging in the hundreds they would have difficulty hiding. Gaining entrance into an orchestra typically requires defeating one of the currently active members in a duel of performance, with the 'chair' as the stake. A new challenger will usually duel for one of the lesser seats in the orchestra.

The leader of an orchestra is typically a high level bard with exceptional musical talents. He manages the others through force of personality and control of the budget. Below him are a variety of 'chairs', organized in a hierarchy of skill. Holding and protecting his chair is the individual member's own business. Duels to advance within an orchestra are common, with the predictable result of orchestras being chaotic and somewhat uncomfortable organisations to be part of. The number of chairs is directly related to the amount of money that the orchestra has in whatever endowment was given to them by their sponsor.

The typical orchestra has between twenty and one hundred fifty members. The composition of an orchestra can be remarkably stable; once the initial power struggles are over only the introduction of a new member or a sudden increase in skill from one of the performers can seriously disrupt it.

Orchestras work by providing their members with a refuge from the politics of the court. So long as the member does not do something spectacularly stupid the orchestra ensures that he will always have a place to run to. Of course, should the member call down the wrath of the court upon himself then the orchestra may have no other choice but to turn him out.

Venue Characteristics and Attributes

The typical value ranges for the five characteristics of court venues are:

- † *Acoustics* - 2 to 4
- † *Availability* - 0 to 2
- † *Fame* - 2 to 4
- † *Location* - 2 to 4
- † *Resources* - 3 to 4

Court venues may have any attribute, but will not typically have any that require mystical or magical effects.





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Example Venues

The following examples demonstrate the range of court venues.

Court of Tildare

Acoustics: 4

Availability: 2

Fame: 4

Location: 4

Resources: 3

Attributes: Library of Lore (Arcane), Library of Lore (Items)

Organisations: Tildare Orchestra, The Tildare Collegiums

The court of the Emperor Tildare constantly pulses with the sound of music. He employs nearly three hundred musicians, entertainers and bards to keep his court amused. The emperor also enjoys concerts and musical 'outing's' lasting for days on end. Since his ascension to the throne ten years ago he has poured gold and treasure into the artistic community in the form of his orchestra and his new collegiums.

The Tildare orchestra contains almost two hundred seats for various performers. Its conductor is an old and fierce bard named Gaston (CN, Brd 18) who refuses to cede his place to a younger musician. No one has yet managed to unseat him, although some of the highest chairs try on almost a weekly basis. There is a fairly constant turn over in the lower echelons of the orchestra as new bards stream in from the countryside looking for their part of the bounty.

The emperor's bounty also extends into the collegiums. Founded almost two hundred years ago, they had fallen into disrepute over the last century. With a renewed purpose (and purse) the collegiums are now actively recruiting from the younger generation. The emperor has commanded that within the next decade at least half of the population must be able to read; the collegiums are therefore training bards to be teachers as well as poets. The collegiums are governed by a group of older bards who contend among themselves for access to this new bounty.

Duke Wickliff's Faire

Acoustics: 2

Availability: 0

Fame: 4

Location: 3

Resources: 2

Attributes: None

Organizations: Wickliff's Cabal

Bards gather from many kingdoms to compete for the opportunity to play at Duke Wickliff's Faire. Over the past two decades this week long musical festival has become one of the most famous and desired venues in the world. The Duke spares no expense providing the finest wines, the most exotic goods and the most incredible performances ever seen. There are even rumours that the gods themselves come down, uninvited, to sample the wares and listen to the festival music.

Underneath the veneer of the festival lies a sinister purpose. The festival is actually the recruiting ground of a cabal that desires to take over the world. It is slowly spreading its tendrils into many courts, using the finest performers and bards in the world as its agents. Using their superior diplomatic and magical talents these agents strive to subvert the governments that they work for. Once the Duke has enough agents in place he will topple the kingdoms around him and assume absolute command of the largest empire ever created.

Court Venue Summary

Capacity: Very large (2 to 200 performers at a time)

Typical Venues: Dinning Halls, Performance Halls, Music Chambers, Gardens

Organisations: Collegiums, Cabals, Orchestras

Characteristics Ranges: Acoustics (2-4), Availability (0-2), Fame (2-4), Location (2-4), Resources (3-4)

Typical Attributes: Any, but not typically mystical or magical

OWNED VENUES

Owned venues can be found in cities of any size. These venues are uniformly owned and operated by performers, for the sole purpose of performance. Owned venues are unique in that they exist only for the purpose of entertaining the masses. Even those that have 'educational' aspects are focused on providing entertainment as a way of generating enough revenue to continue operations.

Facilities

The facilities of an owned venue are specifically designed for performance. This does not mean that the facilities are useful for anything else unfortunately. Many highly successful performers in owned venues find themselves sleeping in slums, in the common rooms of inns, or even in the streets. A few venues have some small rooms for their performers, but these

are typically reserved for the most important and successful members.

Owned venues typically comprise of single stage and the facilities to maintain that stage. They also have facilities that deliberately focus the audience's attention on the performance. This is a radical change from other venues. For the most part the performance is secondary in other venues to the activities that are supposed to be taking place.

Organisations

By their very nature owned venues support organisations. They have to. Without an organisation to present performances they would quickly fall into ruin and disrepair. These organisations typically fall into two types: co-operatives and troupes.

Co-operatives

A co-operative is a group of performers who each contribute (more or less equally) to the success of the venue and the organisation. They focus on staging entertaining productions that draw in enough coin to keep the venue from closing. Most co-operatives select fanciful names that they believe reflects the purity of their art. Others more pragmatically name themselves after their venue, a noble patron, or a local landmark.

Co-operatives tend to be public organisations.

Although most people couldn't name a co-operative member they can tell someone where the co-operative is, where its members go to relax, and how many performers participate. Interested outsiders also know the co-operative's performance schedule.

What outsiders do not know is the constant turbulence that grips every co-operative. The entire group makes decisions. As such a clear majority of the co-operative must agree to any change, production, or recommendation brought before it. This system creates a highly politically charged atmosphere where favours are traded on a regular basis. Power within the organisation shifts rapidly. One day a member may control the entire organisation, the next he can find himself on the verge of being thrown out.

A typical co-operative has between fifteen and thirty members. The absolute number may vary from day to day. Some members are permanent members, who work daily on the co-operatives activities. Others travel about, or simply do not put in an appearance for days, weeks, or even years.

Gaining entrance to co-operative is as simple as showing up at the right place and time. Co-operatives are notorious for allowing anyone interested in helping out with a performance to join. Actually advancing in such a diffuse organisation is as much a matter of luck and personality as it is of skill. The members duel with one another constantly, attempting to prove their superiority and skills.

Co-operatives attempt to stage a number of performances each year. The more performances they stage, the more income they can generate, and therefore the more resources they have with which to stage more productions.

Troupes

A troupe is in many ways similar to a co-operative. Troupes are composed of groups of performers who work hard to stage productions that will earn revenue. Unlike co-operatives, however, a troupe has a guiding force behind it. That force can drive the troupe to produce amazing productions that a co-operative can only dream about.

Although the activities of a troupe are highly public, their inner workings are not. Troupes tend to be very insular. They live and work within the confines of their venue, venturing out only for the things that they absolutely must have. A few members of the troupe may be social with the surrounding community.

All troupes have a single focal point, a powerful charismatic leader who inspires them to action. This leader is typically many levels higher than his followers and commands them with an almost imperial air.

Troupes typically have between five and twenty members. Most of these members are low-level (2nd to 5th) level bards or experts. The leader may be of any level, and must be at least 5 levels higher than the next highest-level member of the troupe.

Gaining entrance to a troupe can be difficult. The venue has limited funds with which to support a troupe. Assuming that a position opens there will be gruelling auditions, fierce competition and occasionally even outright murder. In the end the troupe leader makes the final decision based as much on his assessment of his charge's personality as any talent they may display.

Venue Characteristics and Attributes

The typical value ranges for the five characteristics of owned venues are:





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- † *Acoustics* - 1 to 4
- † *Availability* - 0 to 4
- † *Fame* - 0 to 4
- † *Location* - 0 to 2
- † *Resources* - 0 to 2

Owned venues may have any attribute, but the resources of the owner usually limit them to one or two attributes at most.

Example Venues

The following examples demonstrate the range of owned venues.

The Orb

Acoustics: 2

Availability: 2

Fame: 1

Location: 2

Resources: 2

Attributes: Fortified (3)

Organisations: The Orb Players

In the war-ravaged city of Olo the Orb Theatre stands mute testimony to the power of art. Part fortress, part safe house and part theatre, the Orb alone has resisted the tides of carnage that swept over the city in the past decade. Its high walls and massive iron-gate are famous for their ability to withstand siege, not for the productions that take place behind them.

The Orb players are troupe of bards numbering between seven and twelve members at any given time. Lead by Havlaric Landsborn (male Half-elf Ftr7/Brd9) the troupe practices both martial techniques and the performing arts. He treats his troupe like a military force, focused specifically on defending the theatre and those who shelter within it.

The Orb puts on about seven shows a year, depending on circumstances. Most of these productions take place in the winter months, when Olo's enemies nurse their wounds and prepare for another seasons of siege.

The Stage of Attersbury

Acoustics: 4

Availability: 0

Fame: 4

Location: 0

Resources: 0

Attributes: Ancient

Organisations: The Keepers of the Stage

Long before men came to the world an ancient race set a bluestone stage on the plains of Attersbury. When men came and built a town around it they took the great flat stone and used it for executions, festivals and anything else they could imagine. Yet the old magic still flowed though the stones. Eventually the town of Attersbury used the stage for its original purpose; to perform plays for a yearly festival. When the magic of the stage swells during the long nights of autumn the town slowly shuts down in preparations for a weeklong celebration of the harvest and life.

Players come from all over the world to play on the great stage. Of all the candidates only a few are chosen, one a night for seven nights. The organisation called the Keepers of the Stage, a loose co-operative of residents and former performers, decides who is allowed to perform and who is not. Many performers have applied for decades without success.

The stage is an old and magical thing. When a truly great performance occurs the ghost of its past can be seen in among the audience. The ghosts typically just watch. Sometimes they rouse to anger, fear, or even joy if the performance contains the spark of true genius (Perform DC 35).

Owned Venue Summary

Capacity: Anywhere from one to twenty performers and fifty to four hundred audience members

Typical Venues: Theatre, Amphitheater, Studio

Organisations: Co-operatives, Troupes

Characteristics Ranges: *Acoustics* (1-4), *Availability* (0-4), *Fame* (0-4), *Location* (0-2), *Resources* (0-2)

Typical Attributes: Any (no more than two)

PUBLIC VENUES

Public venues are anywhere that the forces of law and order cannot prevent a single performer or even a group of performers from playing. These places might be legitimate venues for performances or may simply be too difficult to patrol regularly.

Many 'public' venues require that the performer obtain a performance license or permit from the local government. Permits do two things. They reduce the number of people who can use the public venues thereby preventing overcrowding. Two they allow the local government to keep a close eye on the 'shady' population of performers.

Facilities

Public performance facilities do not possess advanced acoustics or facilities. Street corners, public parks and alleyways just lack a certain structural appeal. About the best that one can hope for is to find a place that doesn't sound too bad.

Public venues also lack anything resembling accommodations. On the other hand they are cheap and readily available, unlike the more established venues.

Organisations

Public venues do not generally spawn bardic organisations. They do sometimes attract the attention of various organisations, and sometimes are used as training grounds for other venues.

Occasionally a 'free bard' organisation will develop around a set of public venues. These organisations occur when a large number of bards compete for limited public space. They are not really organisations in a formal sense. Rather a free bard organisation is a loose alliance of bard who agree on to how they will divide limited resources among themselves.

During the formation period of a free bard organisation the members fight duels constantly to determine who has the highest standing. Once this initial period of turmoil ends the bards maintain a relatively civil demeanour towards one another.

When a new bard enters the area controlled by the organisation, there is an inevitable period of turmoil as challenges fly back and forth. The new bard may or may not be involved with the conflict at all; he may only know that something has happened when a street corner opens up for busking.

If the newcomer stays for more than a single month it is likely that one of the organisation's members will approach him to discuss his intentions. If the newcomer wishes to stay then the free bards will undergo yet another round of duels and reorganisation to make room for the newcomer.

Venue Characteristics and Attributes

The typical value ranges for the five characteristics of public venues are:

- † *Acoustics* - 0 to 1
- † *Availability* - 0 to 4
- † *Fame* - 0 to 1
- † *Location* - 0 to 1

† *Resources* - 0

Public venues may only have one attribute.

Example Venues

The following examples demonstrate the range of public venues.

Old Bert's Corner

Acoustics: 1
Availability: 4
Fame: 1
Location: 0
Resources: 0
Attributes: Guardian (15)

On a quiet street just off the Ironworkers Row there sits a little old man on a street corner playing a fiddle. He will let anyone play with him, assuming that they can best in a performance duel. Old Bert doesn't mind playing with anyone better than him.

Unfortunately, Old Bert (human ghost male, CG Brd 15) died about three hundred years ago. He hasn't really stopped playing long enough to notice though. The locals treat him like any other performer. They throw silver coins into the battered old hat that he sets out before him every day, and the hat disappears every evening.

Old Bert has been known to rouse himself on occasion to protect the performers who play with him, or to defend the innocent who seek shelter on his corner. Mostly though he just plays, enjoying the beauty of his music and the joy of meeting new bards.

Sylvan Rock

Acoustics: 1
Availability: 2
Fame: 1
Location: 0
Resources: 0
Attributes: Blessed by the Fey

Located on a small common green, the Sylvan Rock doesn't look like anything special. Its grey surface doesn't reflect the light in any particular way. No magic radiates from it. It gets wet in the rain, and dries out under the sun.

Yet the Sylvan rock is more than just an easy place to sit while enjoying the small green space of the green. Long ago, before there was a city or a green the Fey





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folk danced upon it. A slight hint of their magic and majesty still lingers on. To this day the greatest mortal performers can attract their attention if they play well enough.

Public Venue Summary

Capacity: One to five performers at a time

Typical Venues: street corner, market square, alley mouth, public park, fair grounds

Organisations: Free Bards

Characteristics Ranges: Acoustics (0-1), Availability (0-4), Fame (0-1), Location (0-4), Resources (0-2)

Typical Attributes: Any (no more than two)

RELIGIOUS VENUES

A religious venue is a temple or shrine that hosts some form of music as part of its religious services. The size and wealth of the venue effect how large a troupe they can support. Rich venues often have musical groups as large as courtly orchestras. Poor venues may only have a few volunteer musicians who help out on high holy days.

Special Note: Perform Skill Checks

Due to their nature a player may not use his Perform skill check to generate coin for himself in a religious venue. All coin generated by the roll goes directly to the venue.

Facilities

Since performance plays a major part in most religious ceremonies almost all religious venues have some level of thought put into their acoustics. Many shrines and temples bear a superficial resemblance to a theater. The sacred space where the priesthood enacts rituals is set off from an audience that participates in the ritual either by watching or by proscribed acts at appropriate times.

Organisations

Religious venues support two types of organisations: choirs and choruses. These organisations focuses on different aspects of the relationship between music, magic and religious expression.

Choir

Choirs are an organized group of musicians who work for a religious venue. They are responsible for creating and performing music that enhances the day-to-day

rituals of the venue. Some number of the choir's members work every day within the venue.

Choirs rarely take any measures to conceal their activities or membership. As part of the active arm of their religious organisation most choirs seek publicity as a matter of course. In addition to their daily liturgical duties they participate in local festivals, hold concerts and sometimes perform non-performance activities to demonstrate their cohesion and ability.

Those choirs that come from secret or forbidden religions do hide their membership. These cults represent an atypical case.

Gaining membership in a choir requires demonstrated loyalty to the religious institution that supports the organisation. The exact criteria for acceptance vary from organisation to organisation. Many require nothing more than a simple profession of faith; the sincerity of this profession depends on the professor. Some possess more strict guidelines. They may require quests, fearsome oaths, or even *geas* of one sort or another. As a general rule the more resources that a religious venue devotes to the choir the stricter the criteria.

Membership in a choir can be a full time vocation or a part time activity. Full time choir members work ceaselessly on their music. They also often have other duties within the religious organisation. Part time members support the organisation, perform with the choir as required, and typically have other means of support.

Choirs support from ten to one hundred and fifty members. Small choirs tend to be all part time members with perhaps one full time member. Larger choirs may have as many as thirty full time members and one hundred and twenty members at large.

The leadership structure of the choir comes from the religious venue itself. Whoever receives command from the religious leader holds all authority. Whatever delegation takes place within the choir, the head priest of the venue always retains final authority.

Choruses

Choruses differ from choirs in a number of ways, all of which stem from a single core difference. Where choirs focus on the creation of liturgical music and assisting their temple during rituals, choruses focus on the creation and presentation of mystery plays.

Mystery plays take instances from the mythology of the religion and put them into performance form. These plays both elucidate and entertain. They may or may not contain secrets of the religion. If such secrets exist within the performance then the performers take pains to make sure that they are only legible to the initiated.

Most choruses only put on two or three performances per year. These performances take place during local festivals of considerable importance or during high holy days for their own religion. They can require elaborate staging. A single performance can cost the venue thousands of gold pieces, without any hope of recouping the cost.

Due to their different focus choruses do not typically support any full time members. Membership is strictly part time. Also, due to the sensitivity of the material, choruses do not allow anyone who has not proven their faith to perform with them. They may hire outside help in cases where they do not have adequate skills of their own. These paid positions last only as long as those skills are required for the performance.

Most choruses have between thirty and one hundred members. These members do not receive pay for their services.

Like choirs, choruses take their leadership from the religious organisation they serve. What power struggles occur deal with what mythical incident will be dramatised that year, not with the allocation of funds or with real influence within the religious organisation.

Venue Characteristics and Attributes

The typical value ranges for the five characteristics of religious venues are:

- † *Acoustics* - 1 to 4
- † *Availability* - 1 to 4
- † *Fame* - 0 to 4
- † *Location* - 0 to 4
- † *Resources* - 1 to 4

Religious venues may have any attribute, but will not typically have more than two.

Example Venues

The following examples demonstrate the range of religious venues.

The Temple of the Sun

- Acoustics*: 2
- Availability*: 3
- Fame*: 2
- Location*: 2
- Resources*: 1

Attributes: Blessed by the Gods, Gateway to Heaven
Organisations: The Singers of the Sun, The Hand of the Raven

The Temple of the Sun sits on the highest of the nine hills of Rajor. Its butter-coloured stone walls rise high above the city. Tall towers topped with crystal spires reflect the glory of the heavens down into the cobblestone streets of the decadent city.

Every day the Temple conducts dawn, noon and dusk rituals that mark the passing of the sun. Each ritual involves a choir of seven members, each singing a proscribed part. According to the rules of the order each of the three rituals must have a different choir, so the twenty-one full time members of the choir form the core of the greater choir of the Temple. The Singers of the Sun (as this choir calls itself) spends its time either preparing for services or performing community service.

Additionally the Temple supports a chorus called the Hand of the Raven. The Hand puts on four plays a year, during the four high holy days of the state religion. Each play focuses on a different virtue supported by the Temple: chastity, modesty, frugality and honesty. The Hand has nearly two hundred members, lead by a single priest from the Temple.

The Temple itself provides a fine venue for performances by the choir. Even the local nobility occasionally takes the time to visit the Temple, especially on high holy days.

The Blood Pool

- Acoustics*: 4
- Availability*: 1
- Fame*: 0
- Location*: 4
- Resources*: 4

Attributes: Gateway to Hell, Warded (4)
Organisations: The Blood Choir

Long ago a dark god died in battle. Just before the end he tore his heart from his chest and threw it far away into the world so that his evil would live on. His bloody heart found a cave for its resting place. There





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it drew to itself mortals interested in the power of lust, magic and greed.

Those mortals called by the Heart find themselves drawn to an ancient cave. Within the cave they face challenges that strip away their morality. Those that survive join the Blood Choir, a semi-vampiric organisation that drinks the blood found in the Heart. Once a month they return to the Heart and sing to it of the day that the dark god will arise again and claim his place among the powers of the world.

Membership in the Blood Choir cannot be sought out by those not initiated in the cult. Anyone who survives the trials has their alignment changed to chaotic evil.

Religious Venue Summary

Capacity: One to one hundred fifty performers, ten to one thousand audience

Typical Venues: Temple, Shrine, Market Place

Organisations: Choir, Chorus

Characteristics Ranges: Acoustics (1-4), Availability (1-4), Fame (0-4), Location (0-4), Resources (1-4)

Typical Attributes: Any (no more than two)

Special Note: All coin earned in a venue due to Perform skill checks goes to the venue not the performer

TRAVELLING VENUES

The category of travelling venues encompasses any venue that moves from place to place. This can include travelling carnivals, circuses and roaming theatre companies that perform out of their wagons. Many of these 'travelling' venues are actually groups of performers that travel from one public venue to another, making their living off of the settlements along their path.

Facilities

Facilities for travelling venues basically take two forms. The first is public facilities: fair grounds, parks and similar places that are large enough to host the organisation and it's equipment. The second is the equipment that the organisation brings with it.

Public facilities follow the rules for public facilities listed above.

Most travelling venues have a wide and complex array of accessories that they carry with them. These include but are not limited to: tents, paddocks, travelling stages, animal cages and wagons.

Organisations

The heart of the travelling venue lies in the organisations that support them. Travelling venues have no other purpose than to assist the performers in their efforts to make a living doing something that they love. In fact, most don't exist except for those few transitory hours when the organisation performs.

There are two kinds of organisations that use travelling venues: circuses and companies.

Circuses

Circuses maintain a variety of acts, usually involving acrobats, clowns and trained animals. During performances the circus tries to keep between two and four acts running at any one time, in order to provide the audience with a varied experience.

A circus travels from place to place, taking with it all of its equipment and performers. A circus can manage a fairly considerable amount of material: hundreds of animals, dozens of tents, wagons for the performers and a large staff of people who maintain it all.

Being a performer in a circus requires a special flair. The nature of a circus requires that the performers be unusually flamboyant. They must be able to attract and hold a crowd's attention no matter what else is happening around them. In keeping with this all performers in a circus must have Charisma 13+.

Circuses travel the same route time and time again. Each one travels a different path. The length of the route varies from organisation to organisation. Some circuses pass though the same towns year after year. Others have a route that lasts for two, three, or even five years before they pass the same town again.

When a circus settles down in a place it typically runs two separate entertainments. During the day it has a carnival, where the various performers put on shows and provide amusements to the watchers. In the evening there is a large staged performance, either inside a tent or in some other constructed venue. Entrance to the carnival is usually free (although some of the amusements might not be) but entrance to the circus proper is not.

Circuses have a deceptively large membership. Most have between seven and thirty acts, each act with four to ten people. For every performer there is at least one support person. A very large circus can resemble a small city.



Joining a circus as a performer requires the character to convince the single leader that the act the character represents is worth presenting. The Games Master can use the Bluff DC based on the Availability characteristic of the venue to determine the ease of this task.

Joining the circus in a menial capacity presents no challenge what so ever. Circuses always need extra hands to help with the incredible amount of work that housing and moving that many performers requires. Although the pay is only a single meal a day and a place to sleep no one asks any questions of those who 'run away with the circus' in this fashion.

The internal politics of a circus are terrible, although the leader of the circus never faces any real challenges. The leader (called a ring master) controls the purse and therefore the organisation. Beyond that though nearly anything goes. Given that the acts that perform the most and draw the most income are paid the most, competition for performance space can be quite fierce. Duels of performance or steel are quite common, sometimes with lethal outcomes.

Circuses do not always enjoy a peaceful relationship with the settlements along their routes. Although people very much value the entertainment that they bring, they do not trust the foreign ways brought in by the rather eclectic group that works for the circus. Additionally some of the individuals working for the circus may have less than clean pasts in other parts of the world.

Companies

A travelling company is a tightly knit organisation of players that works together to stage complex performances for whoever will watch them. Companies may play before kings one day and beggars the next. Theirs' is a life of constant chaos, punctuated by brief moments of equilibrium during the performances themselves.

Travelling companies rarely stay in place for any significant length of time. Their goal is to put on a few performances in a given venue (borrowed, court, owned, public, or religious) and then move on to the next venue.

Companies present as many performances a year as they can find venues to perform in. Most have a standing repertoire of plays that they can pull out at a moments notice. They match the play to the audience: low comedies for the masses, high tragedy for the great

nobles of the land and complex plays incorporating many elements for the educated middle classes.

A company has between ten and twenty players, each of whom plays a particular role in the productions. One player may be the 'boy' role in all of the plays. Another may take on the role of 'goodwife' or 'harlot'. This continuity of roles allows the performer to move easily from play to play without too much pressure.

Leadership in a travelling company can be difficult. A single performer who lacks the power to command obedience from the others players usually assumes the lead role. He must work with the other players, trading favours and influence to get them to work together for the common good.

Landing a part in a travelling company can be extremely difficult. Companies generally only look for new players when one of their current member either is leaving or has already left the company. This makes actual openings fairly rare. If an opening does exist all of the interested bards must engage in a duel of performance, with the position as the stake.

Venue Characteristics and Attributes

The typical value ranges for the five characteristics of travelling venues are:

- † *Acoustics* - 0 to 1
- † *Availability* - 2 to 4
- † *Fame* - 0 to 2
- † *Location* - 0 to 4 (varies)
- † *Resources* - 1 to 2

Travelling venues may have any attribute, but will not typically have more than two.

Example Venues

The following examples demonstrate the range of travelling venues.

Master Green's Circus

- Acoustics:* 1
- Availability:* 3
- Fame:* 2
- Location:* Variable
- Resources:* 1
- Attributes:* Staffed

Master Green's Circus has wandered the world for nine decades, bringing joy and laughter to a thousand thousand people. They travel several days between



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each performance, as people will travel as much as two days to sit in on a single evening's entertainment.

The Circus has almost thirty acts at any given time, encompassing over two hundred performers. Each night the circus can put on ten acts. The acts that are not part of the 'main event' must make due with whatever they can earn from performing in the carnival before the show.

Joining Master Green's Circus is fairly simple. Acts are always coming and going. Getting into the 'main event' however is considerably more difficult. The performer must convince Master Green (male Elf, CG, Brd 15) to let him perform. Master Green usually gives a new performer one chance in the main event without requiring much persuasion. If the performer's Perform skill check result is less than 25 though he must make a Bluff skill check against a DC of 30 to get another chance.

The King's Players

Acoustics: 0

Availability: 2

Fame: 1

Location: Varies

Resources: 2

Attributes: Infamous

The King's Players are a travelling company of twelve players, lead by Cornelius Snowdon (male half-elf, NE, Brd 9). He and his fellow players travel from city to city, performing plays wherever there is enough space for them to put on a performance.

This activity is a sidelight to their real business. The King's Players possess a well-deserved reputation as some of the most skilled assassins in the kingdom. They make a decent amount of coin as players; they make an obscene amount of coin killing their targets in dramatic and spectacular fashions. Like all assassins they must be careful not to be caught or they could end up dangling from the end of a rope.

Some years ago Cornelius performed a 'service' for the king. In return he received a royal charter for his company and a fairly significant stipend. Among those in the know (Gather Information DC 20) there is a great deal of speculation about exactly who it is that Cornelius killed to get that charter.

The King's Players do not recruit outsiders. However, if someone could impress Cornelius enough he might let them join in for a few legitimate performances. The real business of the company is not open to outsiders who have not proven themselves.

Travelling Venue Summary

Capacity: Seven to ten acts

Typical Venues: Tents, fair grounds, public parks

Organisations: Circuses, Companies

Characteristics Ranges: Acoustics (0-1), Availability (0-4), Fame (0-1), Location (0-4), Resources (0-2)

Typical Attributes: Any (no more than two)

BUILDING A VENUE

Looking at a venue or even performing in one can be a great deal of fun for a bard. It gives him a chance to mingle with other performers, to explore the art of music and to just be himself for a few minutes between adventures.

A venue also serves as a kind of home base for the performer. It becomes his personal domain, where he can relax, work and play.

Constructing a venue can also be quite costly. In many cases all but the most successful bards will need the assistance of a patron to afford the expense. These patrons will assist the bard for any number of reasons. The most common include a desire to further the arts, personal friendship with the bard, or a need to atone for some past misdeed.

Facility Basics

When constructing a venue the bard must determine how much he wishes to spend, both on the building and on improvements to it.

The type of venue the bard intends to build determines the basic facility cost:

Base Facility Cost

Type	Cost
Borrowed	Cannot be built
Court	10,000 gp
Owned	5,000 gp
Public	Cannot be built
Religious	1,000 gp
Travelling	500 gp

It is not possible to purchase either borrowed or public venues.

This cost buys a venue with a all characteristics set to 0. If the bard wishes he may purchase additional Acoustics, Availability and Location as follows

Acoustics Cost

Type	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Court	Base	Base	+15,000 gp	+20,000 gp
Owned	Base	+10,000gp	+15,000 gp	+20,000 gp
Religious	Base	+10,000gp	+15,000 gp	+20,000 gp
Travelling	+5,000 gp	N/A	N/A	N/A

The acoustics cost for a travelling venue represents unusual amounts of equipment and effort spent on creating a suitable travelling stage.

Availability Cost

Type	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Court	+10,000 gp	+20,000 gp	N/A	N/A
Owned	+500 gp	+1000 gp	+5,000 gp	+10,000 gp
Religious	Base	+1000 gp	+5,000 gp	+10,000 gp
Travelling	Base	Base	+2,500 gp	+7,000 gp

Availability cost represents the purchase of materials and other resources to ensure that performances can happen on a more regular basis.

Location Cost

Type	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4
Court	Base	Base	+50,000 gp	+100,000 gp
Owned	+5,000 gp	+15,000 gp	N/A	N/A
Religious	+5,000 gp	+15,000 gp	+50,000 gp	+100,000 gp
Travelling	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

A travelling venue's location changes from day to day.



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Attribute Cost

Attribute	Cost (per level)
Ancient	Quested
Blessed by the Fey	Quested
Blessed by the Gods	Quested
Fortified	+5,000 gp per level
Gateway to Heaven	Quested
Gateway to Hell	Quested
Guardian	+5,000 gp per level or Quested
Infamous	Quested
Library of Lore (type)	+5,000 gp per level
Staffed	+1,000 gp
Warded	+10,000 gp per level

Facility Attributes

Several of the facility attributes can be purchased for gold. Others require that the bard complete some kind of quest, the details of which are left open to the Games Master, in order to gain access to them.

Venue Maintenance

Every year a venue requires one quarter of its initial construction cost as a maintenance cost. Thus, a venue costing 100,000 gp to build will cost 25,000 gp to maintain for a year.

Fame and Resources

It is not possible for a bard to purchase either fame or resources.

Fame is built performance by performance. Every time the bard's Perform skill check on a performance (unmodified by assistance from others) exceeds 35 there is a 5% chance that the venue's Fame attribute will increase by one. This fame increase remains effective for one game year.

When a bard builds a venue he can either choose to pay the performers out of his own pocket or to use the performance income of the troupe (determined by a combined Perform skill check every performance) to pay the various people who depend on the venue for their livelihood.

Leading an Organisation

By selecting the Leadership Feat a bard can attract to him a number of skilled performers who will help him to run his venue. Each month the bard must

make a Diplomacy check (DC 20) to determine if any of his performers leave him. If he fails he loses 1d6 performers and must work out how to replace them.

In some cases a bard may also gain leadership of an organisation through other means. Please check the organisation descriptions for how this might happen.



DESIGNERS NOTES

What to say about bards?

Bards are often criticised for being the 'second best at everything' or for being jacks-of-all-trades. It's true too; bards can do just about everything. None of it as well as a specialist perhaps, but they can do it.

What confuses me is why people complain about that? Bards bring flexibility to the table rather than power. Whatever you need they can do; healer, fighter, rouge, magician. If you want a character to fill in any role, there is no better character than a bard.

In this book we've tried to pull out the 'unique' aspects of the bard class and give them some extra flesh. There's a lot of babbling about new bardic music, and detailed discussions of the uses of the bardic knowledge ability. We've added a bunch of new spells as well to kind of round things off.

All of these new abilities though emphasise in one way or another the bard's reliance on his group. They affect groups of people both positively and negatively. Many open up new avenues for the specialists to work along. Others give the bard new offensive powers at the cost of his entire round. That forces him to work with a group or be killed.

Probably the most difficult section to deal with was the Mysteries of Music. I spent a lot of long nights up studying sources of folklore and mythology trying to work out good effects that both supported the group and made a worthwhile investment for a feat. Frankly I don't know if everything works; there are more effects associated with more modes of music than I ever expected. I'm absolutely certain that someone is going to

read at least one set of mysteries and say 'But that instrument doesn't do that!'

The duels were a lot of fun to write. Each of them went through a number of incarnations before settling into their final form. There were five separate drafts of the duel of steel (originally called the duel of shadows) ranging from a bar brawl to a terror campaign. The final form came from the opening duel in *Cyrano de Bergerac*; wit and elegance play as much a role in that duel as swordplay and that is what I wanted in the final scoring scheme. Only time and about a thousand sessions of gaming will eventually determine if I was successful or not.

Speaking of lack of success at one point there was a separate section for bardic troupes. I eventually got fed up with it though. It kept trying to merge into the Venues chapter. So I let it. The result possesses a good deal more substance than either chapter by themselves. The whole in this case is a great deal stronger than the sum of the parts.

In any event I am pleased with the way that most of this turned out. Some of it will need tweaking to fit into your campaign. Feel free; music and games are both creative endeavours.

Take up your rapiers and your lutes gentlemen. Light shows though the curtain now. The play is about to begin.

Shannon Kalvar





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RULES SUMMARY

Masterwork Instrument Effects

Effect	Craft Modifier	Cost
Beautiful	+3	+200 gp
Expressive	+5	+100 gp
Pure	+3	+150 gp
Resonant	+4	+100 gp
Rich	+5	+50 gp

Rules Summary: Mysteries of Music

1. Characters with the bardic music ability may select a specific Mystery of Music feat
2. The character's perform skill rank governs the number of songs available from a specific mystery
3. The character must choose a Mystery of Music mode for a mode of performance included in his Perform skill
4. Using and sustaining a mystery counts as a standard action that does not provoke an attack of opportunity
5. The bard's Perform skill check determines the DC to resist the mystery
6. Deaf or silenced creatures cannot be affected by a mystery
7. Mysteries are (unless otherwise noted) mind-influencing effects

Mystery List

Mystery of	Types of effects
Acting	Hiding and projecting emotions
Chant (Epic)	Inspire and protect
Chant (High)	Open access to heaven and hell
Chant (Musical)	Simple chants that anyone can join the bard in and gain benefits
Chants (Martial)	Set the pace of work and battle
Chimes	Cause discomfort in impure beings
Court Dance	Flirtation and manipulation
Drum	Earth and stone
Flute	Wind and weather
Great Drum	Reach into the spirit world,
Great Harp	Sooths and calms
Harp	Protection form the undead
Horn	Convey information, meaning, and need
Jesting	Confusion and distraction
Lute	Charm and control animals
Mandolin	Control and create emotions
Panpipe	Charming and enchantment
Storytelling	Read and control an audience



RULES SUMMARY

Exotic Item Costs

Item	Cost	Weight
Bag of glass	10 gp	1 lbs.
Magician's chest	100 gp	25 lbs.
Metronome	10 gp to 200 gp	1 lbs.
Pocket full of sashes	20 gp	2 lbs.
Tuning Fork	5 gp	.5 lbs.
Weapon Case	+50 gp	+1 lbs.

Bardic Feats

Feat	Prerequisites
Antiquarian	Bardic knowledge
Book Learning	Bardic knowledge
Descant	Bardic music, countersong
Dissonance	Bardic music
First Strike	Combat Reflexes, Dex 19+
Geographer	Bardic knowledge
Gossip	Bardic knowledge
Harmony	Bardic music
Healing Surge	Ability to spontaneously cast cure spells
Master of Illusion	Ability to cast 3 rd level illusion spells
Mystery (type)	Bardic music
Occult Knowledge	Bardic knowledge
Shout	Bardic music
Sidewinder	None
Signature Instrument	Bardic music, Mystery (instrument), masterwork instrument
Sudden Silence	Bardic Music, Cha 15+, Signature Instrument, Mystery (instrument)
Swordsman's Dance	Base attack bonus +4, First Strike, Dodge, Mobility, Combat Reflexes
Thunder's Shout	Con 15+

New Bard Spells

1st Level

Secrets of the Heart – allows the bard to determine the name of the target.

Silver Voice – grants a +10 circumstance bonus to a single Bluff check.

The First Seal – gives another person a +10 circumstance bonus to Sense Motive checks targeting the bard.

Wind Borne Songs – doubles the area of effect of the bard's next bardic music attempt.

2nd Level

Golden Voice – grants a +10 circumstance bonus to Diplomacy rolls for a short duration.

The Second Seal - confuses a single target with waves of doubt, fear, and resentment.

Whispers of the Mind – allows the bard to force the target to say a few sentences.

3rd Level

Iron Voice – causes the bard’s voice to be clearly heard over a considerable distance.

Eye of the Heart – sense beings that breath

Song of the Tempest – quadruples the area of effect of the bard’s next bardic music attempt.

The Third Seal – the bard can target two willing beings and let them hear one another’s thoughts.

4th Level

Steel Voice – causes the bard’s voice to inspire awe and fear.

The Fourth Seal – creates a zone of empathy around the bard that allows for greater artistic expression.

5th Level

Thunder’s Song – gives an eight-fold increase in range to vocal bardic music.

The Fifth Seal – generates an overwhelming wave of empathic connection.

6th Level

Mountain Voice – the bard’s voice drowns out all other sounds around him.

Types of Venues

Venue Type	Description
<i>Borrowed</i>	Rented or literally borrowed from another group. These venues are not typically very well laid out for performances but may well be very close to important places.
<i>Court</i>	Located in the noble courts or places of governance of the realm.
<i>Owned</i>	Dedicated facilities designed for and utilized by performers.
<i>Public</i>	Either specially designated facilities for performing or are areas that are open to most legitimate forms of public use (like street corners).
<i>Religious</i>	Primarily dedicated places of worship for one or more gods. Their use as a performance venue either directly relates to that worship or functions as part of larger, organized campaign to create public interest.
<i>Traveling</i>	Move from place to place. Without a fixed location they rely more on availability and a repeated pattern to ensure that they can make ends meet.

Summary

Name	Effect
Ancient	The venue is old beyond knowledge. A powerful enough performance (DC 30) will summon up the ghosts of the past.
Blessed by the Fey	Those who play here gain a bonus to their enchantment and charm effects.
Blessed by the Gods	Those who play here gain a bonus to their morale boosting effects.
Fortified (level)	The venue has protection from mundane forces.
Gateway to Heaven	A powerful enough performance (DC 30) can open a gateway to a celestial plane
Gateway to Hell	A powerful enough performance (DC 30) can open a gateway to an infernal plane.
Guardian (level)	The venue has a guardian who challenges all who would harm the venue a duel.
Infamous	The venue is connected to the underworld rather than the legitimate authorities.
Library of Lore (type)	The venue has extensive collections of knowledge.
Staffed	The venue has a permanent staff of some sort.
Warded (level)	The venue has protection from magical forces.



HEAL RATE PER DAY

BARDIC MUSIC PER DAY =

1/DAY PER LEVEL

SPELLS

SPELL SAVE DC	LEVEL	SPELLS PER DAY	BONUS SPELLS	# SPELLS KNOWN
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<input type="text"/>	1ST	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	2ND	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	3RD	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
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<input type="text"/>	5TH	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	6TH	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>

SPELL SAVE DC MOD

MAGIC ITEMS

MOUNT

NAME	RACE	NUMBER	HD / LVL	HP	INIT	SPD	AC	BAB	STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
NOTES														

HENCHMEN AND MERCENARIES

NAME	RACE	NUMBER	HD / LVL	HP	INIT	SPD	AC	BAB	STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
NOTES														
NAME	RACE	NUMBER	HD / LVL	HP	INIT	SPD	AC	BAB	STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
NOTES														

PHYSICAL APPEARANCE	AGE	SEX
	HEIGHT	SIZE
	WEIGHT	HAIR
	EYES	HANDEDNESS

QUOTE / FAVOURITE SAYING

PERSONALITY AND CHARACTER

BARDIC VENUE

ENEMIES, ALLIES, PAST ACQUAINTANCES

BACKGROUND & FURTHER NOTES

TRAINED ANIMALS

TYPE	HD	HP	INIT	SPD	AC	BAB	STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA	TRAINING SLOTS	TRICKS AND ATTITUDES

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