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THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARD II

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THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARD II: ADVANCED TACTICS

Alejandro Melchor

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INTRODUCTION

There is magic in poetry, the way a few words can move the heart. There is also magic in stories and the way they can make people reach towards impossible goals. Music has its own brand of magic, the way that it can mix only 12 paltry notes and create new things incessantly, talking to the heart and the mind without the need of passing through words. Such is the magic of the bard, a singer of songs and teller of tales, a jack of all trades who finds his knowledge and power not in the dusty halls of a library or the obscure heritage of a strange bloodline, but in the whim of inspiration and the freedom of the roads.

More than any other character, the bard has a chance to do almost all that other characters can. He can cast spells, he is a passable combatant and he is capable of learning many trades, including various performance arts. The diversity with which he approaches life makes him capable of tackling almost any situation, perhaps not as expertly as someone with better preparation in a given field, but with sufficient expertise to come out on top. Perhaps the most important thing about the bard is that he will seldom be unprepared, rounding out any party by providing support both in combat and in magic, and becoming the ideal negotiator and party spokesperson not only for an adeptness with mind-bending magic, but more importantly because of his natural charisma and knowledge of how to deal with others.

THE ADVANCED TACTICS SERIES

The Advance Tactics series takes an advanced look in the whole 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. More than simple continuations, the second series of Quintessential books slot seamlessly into any fantasy-based campaign, giving advanced alternatives for characters of one class or race within the game, allowing both players and Games Masters the chance to give mid- and high-level characters new options without overpowering or unbalancing the game as a whole. The Collector's Series II will not necessarily allow players to make their characters even better, but

they will be able to do a lot more than they ever thought possible before.

THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARD II: ADVANCED TACTICS

With the help of this sourcebook, any character choosing the bard class will find many alternatives and options expanding his range of abilities. With Career Paths, bards can customise their advancement and gain special benefits from their chosen branch of training; Legendary Classes offer a subset and expansion of their magical prowess that may take them to epic levels and beyond. Multiclassing offers a bard a complement to his abilities, while Superior Tools offers to enhance his performance. Tricks of the Trade expands the range of methods a bard can apply to his special abilities, while Power Performances helps a bard build up the power of their art to achieve greater diversity. Song and poetry are not the only ways that a bard can express his artistic soul; there are other kinds of performance that he can practise, equally valid for channelling the power of his inspiration. Through dance, acting, acrobatics and other performance arts, in addition to new styles of song, the bard can explore fully the infinite recesses of his inspiration and talent.



Bard characters have many paths at their feet, and are unique of all adventurers that they can follow most of them at the same time. Combining their innate talent for magic, their adeptness at learning and their ability to deal with people, bards occupy an exceptional niche in any group as the party's representative, leader and support, and *The Quintessential Bard II: Advanced Tactics* provides all the necessary tools for the bard to become a legend at such roles.



The Sestani siblings walked the lonely roads at the border of Solostan. Eilan, the elder brother, looked ahead at his two sisters, Eyra and Eldreen, as they discussed the details of their newest composition.

'I tell you that it should be C flat,' Eyra, the youngest of the three was arguing, her short hair making her look like a boy sometimes, except when she started to dance. Her lithe body swayed like a willow in the wind, and no man (or woman if she so desired) could resist her.

'You would be changing the whole mood of the song,' Eldreen, the middle sister, countered. She wore her hair long but tied back by a scarf, dressing in robes that hid her figure. She was the more adept in magic of the tree, and the one with the most interest in acquiring lore and intelligence. 'This is supposing to be depressing and you are making it more cheerful than it need be.'

'That is because it needs a beat if you want me to dance to it.' Eyra crossed her arms.

'Girls, settle down,' Eilan chuckled. 'Eldreen is right; this song does not need a dance, so you can take a rest during this number, Eyra.'

'And look through some purses as well.' The youngest Sestani laughed, shaking her head. 'Oh, well; unlike others, I do not always want to be the centre of attention.'

'Are you implying something?' Eldreen started to challenge but Eilan raised a hand suddenly. The three stopped and looked around. 'Horses.'

'You think they are stragglers from the Hylerrin siege?' Eyra asked, going for her twin kukri knives. 'They are coming from that direction.'

'Maybe.' Eilan nodded, urging them to get off the road. There was no place to hide in the grassy plains, so all they could do was walk beside the road and try to be inconspicuous. 'Keep your hands off your weapons and let me do the talking.'

The noise of horses sounded closer until they were visible. Eyra had been partially wrong in her guess; the riders did not bear the uniforms or standards of the Khaithan forces but the ones of Solostan, but they also bore the shield of arms of Hylerrin.

'Greetings, travellers.' The lead rider stopped in front of the three siblings. 'Whence do you come from?'

'We hail from Hesla, to the south,' Eilan lied. 'We circled around Hylerrin as we heard it was being besieged.'

'You heard right,' the rider answered. 'But we broke the siege and are now hunting down for Khaithani survivors; we have orders to take all travellers within a day's distance for questioning so, if you would be so kind to come back with us and... what is that girl doing?'

Eilan turned around, cursing silently his sister's unruly behaviour. But instead of seeing her draw her knives or something equally stupid, he saw her dancing. She had begun fidgeting, then swaying, and now was fully into one of her routines. He blinked his eyes as he felt himself unable to look away, and realised that she was doing that dance.

'You do not need to take us,' Eyra said, and the soldiers nodded. 'Just turn around; you questioned us and realised we were just harmless wandering performers.'

The soldiers nodded and turned their horses around. Eyra stopped dancing and broke into an uncontrollable giggle.

'Man, that never gets old!' she laughed, and the three bards resumed their way.



CAREER PATHS

Bards are natural jacks-of-all-trades, which makes it both easy and difficult for them to choose a particular area in which to specialise. The easy part comes because whatever they want to focus their talents on, it costs them little to do so, coming to the field with some preparation for it. The difficult part is that, while they focus, the rest of their abilities continue to be present but neglected, like vestigial limbs that continue to tempt the bard into abandoning the Path he has chosen.

Career Paths are a core idea for the Quintessential II series of sourcebooks from Mongoose Publishing and provide a range of templates for each character class and race that will allow a player to plan his character's advancement following a given concept. While a Career Path focuses on the mechanics of advancement by providing a small benefit and disadvantage to the character's abilities, it also serves as a roleplaying aid to guide the character's progress and goals through his adventuring career, shortening the time spent choosing new abilities and powers during level advancement.

Any one Career Path may be applied to a character when he gains a new level. The listed benefits and disadvantages are applied; any roleplaying description modified and adjusted to take into account the template and then the character is ready to follow his chosen Path. From this point forth, both the player and the Games Master should be aware of the selected Career Path and take steps to ensure the character is played accordingly. It must be stressed that Career Paths are a roleplaying tool, not simply a method to gain lots of new abilities!

FOLLOWING A BARD'S CAREER PATH

A character can tread onto a bard's Career Path at any time he gains a new level. The character *must* possess at least one level of bard in order to follow a bard's Career Path. In each Path's description, the advancement options section describes a number of skills, feats or other choices that serve both as a route map and a list of prerequisites for that Path. The character must possess the following requirements:

- ✦ Two skills at the requisite rank from that Path's advancement options.
- ✦ Two feats from that Path's advancement options.
- ✦ The minimum ability requirement (if any) for that Path.

A character may only follow *one* Path at any time. In addition, the Path he has chosen must be maintained. Every time the character advances a level, he must do at least one of the following:

- ✦ Select a new feat from the Career Path's advancement options (only available if his level advancement grants a feat).
- ✦ Increase the ability listed as the minimum ability for that Path (only available if his level advancement grants an ability increase). Not an option for Paths of prowess.
- ✦ Increase a skill from that Path's advancement options. If the character is taking a bard level, he need only spend one point. If he is taking any other class level, he must spend two points, though he may split this among two different Path skills if he wishes.
- ✦ Select a new known spell from a specific school or subschool of magic noted in that Path's advancement options.

For example, a 5th level bard with Str 16, Intimidate 5 ranks, Jump 6 ranks and the Athletic feat decides he wants to follow the standard bearer Career Path. As he meets all of that Path's requirements, he may start following the Path when he next increases his level. When he reaches 6th level as a bard he must either spend one skill point on Intimidate, Jump or Knowledge (nobility & royalty), or select his new feat from the standard bearer's options (meeting all the normal prerequisites for that feat). He is now a 6th level bard who follows the standard bearer Path and receives the relevant benefits and disadvantages. If he chose to advance as a barbarian instead, making him a bard 5/ barbarian 1, he must either spend his one new feat from the standard bearer's options (meeting all the normal prerequisites for that feat), or spend two skill points on Intimidate, Jump or Knowledge (nobility & royalty). In neither case can he opt to increase the Path's required ability in order to maintain his dedication, though he could do so when attaining 8th level.

Note that skills and feats do not change their status regarding the character. Cross-class skills do not become class skills and he must still meet the prerequisites of a feat in the advancement options list before being able to gain it. The Career Path is more like a road map that restricts the character's freedom of choice in exchange for a benefit and a clearer sense of purpose.

The character immediately gains a benefit upon entering the Career Path but also suffers a disadvantage. Some Career Paths offer several benefits and disadvantages that a character can choose from, representing the different choices present to even the narrowest Path. Only one of these benefit/disadvantage combinations is chosen in this case.

A character may voluntarily abandon a Career Path, and lose both the benefit and disadvantage immediately – this normally happens when the character is preparing to switch to a new Career Path (possibly not even a bard Path). Switching Paths is entirely feasible. This mostly involves time – at least six months minus the character's Intelligence modifier in months (minimum one month) between dropping the old Path and gaining the new Path's benefits and disadvantages. During this period, the character demonstrates how he is changing his style and philosophy through roleplay. He must still meet all the prerequisites for the new Career Path.

If the character gains a level and does not comply with at least one of the Career Path's advancement options, he is considered to have abandoned the Path. He will lose the benefit (but also the disadvantage) of the chosen Path, as he has allowed his top-notch skills to get rusty in favour of training in other areas. In order to regain the Path, he will have to wait until he gains another level, this time complying with the Path's advancement requisites, in order to walk the Path and gain the benefits once more. Note that a character that has followed multiple Career Paths and then abandoned his most recent one altogether can only regain the Path in this manner for the Path he has most recently abandoned.

PATHS OF TALENT

The Paths of Talent refer to a character's inherent attributes and how they affect his performance. A character relying on Strength uses different tactics than one who relies on Wisdom.

The Chronicler

If bards are known for something it is because of their songs and ballads. Conscientious bards will take great pains to collect as many stories and pieces of music as possible, picking them up from their constant travels as well as from documents and records. Since stories are often the tip of a much bigger iceberg of lore, the bards who follow the chronicler's Path cannot help but discover deeper secrets than their brethren. Their insatiable thirst for knowledge motivates them to create records of their own, immortalising through script and song the events they witness in their lifetimes.



Adventuring: Like a wizard, a chronicler adventures in order to gain knowledge. He never skips a visit to long-forgotten ruins and uses his natural charm to squeeze into prestigious libraries. When charm does not work, a chronicler is quite capable of resorting to sneakier methods. The chronicler is the one who will most likely document the party's exploits and glorify their names for posterity, not to mention that he will compete with any wizard for the position of intelligence specialist.

Roleplaying: A chronicler will always be asking questions; his intention goes from simple curiosity to desire for completion for the song or story he is working at the moment. He will do almost anything to uncover a secret, and can reason his way through a problem with the same ease that he can charm others to get what he wants. The chronicler is one of the Paths with more interest in magic, and the bard will focus many of his efforts towards learning all there is about magic and his arcane practise.

Advancement Options: A character follows the chronicler Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Minimum Intelligence 13; Decipher Script 5 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 5 ranks, Knowledge (history) 5 ranks, Search 5 ranks; Augment Summoning, Combat Expertise, Diligent, Eschew Materials, Heighten Spell, Improved Feint, Investigator, Iron Will, Magical Aptitude, Scribe Scroll; any feat with an Intelligence prerequisite.

Benefit: A chronicler can choose from one of three benefits (and corresponding disadvantages):



- ✦ *Annals of History:* The chronicler collects all sorts of historical anecdotes concerning just about everything. He can use his bardic knowledge bonus to add to a Knowledge (history) check once per day per Intelligence modifier. In addition, bardic knowledge can be used as an *identify* spell, rolling a normal check against a DC equal to 15 + the item's caster level. This benefit corresponds to the Obsolete Lore disadvantage.
- ✦ *Perfect Retelling:* Chroniclers train by learning histories and also by committing events to memory so they can record them for posterity's sake. Through this training, chroniclers develop a prodigious memory for details. The character can make bardic knowledge checks to remember just about anything that he has witnessed, recalling details such as the details of a coat of arms (DC 10), the number of rings in a noble's hands (DC 15), the disposition of a magic circle (DC 20) or even the appearance of runes that he does not understand but can re-trace in front of others who could (DC 25). This benefit corresponds to the Delayed Perception disadvantage.
- ✦ *False Story:* The chronicler has studied the elements and structures of true anecdotes, and can spin a tale so convincing that all will believe it is true. With a normal Perform check opposed by listeners' Sense Motive check, the chronicler can subtly alter the perceptions of how an event happened. A group of listeners uses the highest check bonus amongst its numbers, since members of the group will talk amongst themselves as they compare notes. For every point that the bard's Perform check exceeds the listeners' Sense Motive check, he can alter one detail of an event in the listeners' memory. Such details include which weapon an assailant was using, the gender of a person no longer in the scene, and so forth. By changing enough details, the chronicler can weave a completely different account of what really happened. The listeners' perception of the event slowly returns to normal by one detail per day. This benefit corresponds to the Credibility disadvantage.

Disadvantage: A chronicler suffers from one of the following disadvantages, depending on the benefit he chose:

- ✦ *Obsolete Lore:* Although the chronicler possesses vast stores of facts and information, most of them are not very up to date. The bard cannot use his bardic knowledge ability to gain information about persons, places and events that happened within ten years of the moment the bard makes his check; he is only aware of things as they are considered history, rather

than gossip. This disadvantage corresponds to the Annals of History benefit.

- ✦ *Delayed Perception:* As perfect as a chronicler's memory is, such focus on the past means that he is slightly disconnected from the present. The character's Spot and Listen checks suffer a -5 penalty. This disadvantage corresponds to the Perfect Retelling benefit.
- ✦ *Credibility:* Chroniclers are pledged to record the truth of events, and having to lie and forge an anecdote goes against what they believe even if they understand that necessity can come first. If the chronicler uses his False Story ability, he suffers a penalty to all Bluff and Diplomacy checks equal to the number of details he changed in an event's perception. This penalty lasts for 1d4 days and can stack with penalties of subsequent uses of the False Story ability. This disadvantage corresponds to the False Story benefit.

The Herald

Bards are the lifeblood of communication between settlements separated by wilderness, however dangerous it can be; their ability to gain and convey information aids them in such a task, but if a bard wants to become a herald, he must have one other quality: he must be *fast*. Heralds often find themselves in the midst of dangerous situations which they are better off avoiding, and developing their agility ensures that they can sneak through enemy patrols, marauding bandits and even dangerous terrain in order to keep people talking to each other.

Adventuring: Heralds have an inherent wanderlust that keeps them on the move, and the adventuring lifestyle comes naturally to them. While used to travelling alone and surviving by their own skill, heralds welcome being part of a group, moving around to fulfil tasks that require his particular talents, whenever they are needed. Such mobility makes them the glue of any particular group that becomes separated, and they become ideal support combatants when facing enemies, attacking from behind with ranged weapons or darting in and out of danger as required.

Roleplaying: Heralds tend to be fidgety and restless. They may speak a lot or be just as silent, but are always moving, imprinting some manic energy to their movements and expressions. Heralds, when not performing their task of making announcements, prefer to approach things in sneaky ways, slipping unnoticed or taking the roads less travelled, mostly because they

are the most difficult and few have the skills to follow the herald, which is just what they prefer.

Advancement Options: A character follows the herald Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Minimum Dexterity 13; Hide 5 ranks, Move Silently 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks, Tumble 5 ranks; Acrobatic, Agile, Combat Reflexes, Deft Hands, Dodge, Improved Initiative, Mobility, Point Blank Shot, Spring Attack, Run, Weapon Finesse; any feat with a Dexterity prerequisite.

Benefit: A herald can choose from one of three benefits (and corresponding disadvantages):

- ✦ *Travel Pace:* The herald develops a walking pace that allows him to cross great distances quickly; he multiplies his overland speed by 1.2. He may apply this multiplier to any mount he uses, but not to vehicles. He may opt to use this option or travel normally, but once he picks a mode of travel it applies for the entire day. This benefit corresponds to the Exhausted disadvantage.
- ✦ *No Barriers:* Heralds are tasked with delivering messages despite any obstacle, and they learn how to pass through lines of enemies to reach their destination. The character can take 10 on Tumble checks for the purposes of tumbling past enemies without provoking attacks of opportunity. This benefit corresponds to the Stunted Jump disadvantage.
- ✦ *Concealed Message:* Sometimes, heralds need to keep hidden things they are charged to deliver, particularly messages and important documents or something as simple as their signet rings. The herald can make Sleight of Hand checks as a move action, or take a -10 penalty to perform a Sleight of Hand check as a free action. This benefit corresponds to the Weak Grip disadvantage.

Disadvantage: A herald suffers from one of the following disadvantages, depending on the benefit he chose:

- ✦ *Exhausted:* Whenever the herald engages in his travel pace ability, neither he nor his mount can carry a heavy load; if they do, they are considered exhausted by the end of the day's journey. This disadvantage corresponds to the Travel Pace benefit.
- ✦ *Stunted Jump:* The herald is used to sprinting short distances, so his ability to take long jumps suffers as a result. The herald suffers a -5 penalty on

all horizontal Jump checks. This disadvantage corresponds to the No Barriers benefit.

- ✦ *Weak Grip:* For all his dexterity, the herald's grip is weaker than normal. He suffers a -1 penalty to attack rolls with all one-handed and two-handed weapons, although he can fight with light weapons normally. This disadvantage corresponds to the Concealed Message benefit.

The Manipulator

There are few areas where bards come into their own as when they are manipulating people. They have an innate knack for spotting someone's weakness and exploiting it to best effect, and always know the right words to get others to do what they want. Masters of mind-affecting powers, the manipulators combine magic, music and silver tongues to move people around. Sometimes, they do so with the best of intentions in mind, and such talents make them the best leaders and ambassadors around.

Adventuring: Manipulators do not appreciate adventuring when they are not part of a group; their aptitudes make them more useful when they are dealing with other sentient beings they can understand. This does not stop them from venturing forth towards danger, but they prefer to remain behind during combat. Even through this perceived cowardice, manipulators nonetheless can lift the spirit of their companions like no other, and have the ability to get the group out of very serious binds where words are indeed mightier than the sword.

Roleplaying: Manipulators are not necessarily sneaky or treacherous; they simply prefer other methods of conflict resolution that leave them relatively unscathed. The braver ones often take to the field, using their talents to motivate their companions and followers, for they have a tendency to become leaders, whether in the frontlines or behind the seat of power. While not necessarily devious, manipulators have a penchant to always say the right word at the right time.

Advancement Options: A character follows the manipulator Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Minimum Charisma 13; Bluff 5 ranks, Diplomacy 5 ranks, Disguise 5 ranks, Intimidate 5 ranks; Combat Expertise, Deceitful, Extend Spell, Improved Feint, Investigator, Leadership, Negotiator, Persuasive, Silent Spell, Still Spell; any feat with a Charisma prerequisite.

Benefit: A manipulator can choose from one of three benefits (and corresponding disadvantages):





- ✦ *Social Map*: The manipulator is an expert on recognising the ebbs and flows of the social scene, so that he can navigate it better. With either a Gather Information or bardic knowledge check (DC 20) and by spending one hour mingling about, the character gains a perfect understanding of the relationships between the people present at a particular gathering (even if they are on different parts of the locale). Such knowledge includes even hidden relationships such as that between secret lovers, blackmailers (although it is never revealed what the blackmail is about), familiar and business ties, and suchlike. This benefit corresponds to the Conniving Fop disadvantage.
 - ✦ *Social Shockwave*: The manipulator can speak words in someone's ears and have it affect someone else, for he understands the flow of gossip. The character can make Bluff and Diplomacy checks against people he is not actually interacting with, provided there are more people that could take the character's words to the intended target. The character suffers a -2 penalty on checks done this way as information degrades between gossipers. Additionally, if the character suffers one point of temporary Charisma damage, he can use supernatural, spell-like abilities as well as spells with a social significance in this same manner, ensuring that, even if the intended target resists, it cannot identify the manipulator as the ability's source. This benefit corresponds to the Social Blunder disadvantage.
 - ✦ *Deceptive Banter*: The manipulator has a honeyed tongue that can get anything done. Once per day per Charisma modifier, he can use a Bluff, Diplomacy or Perform check in lieu of a Disguise, as he literally hammers down his false identity with words. Spending one use of bardic music will give this check a +5 bonus. The bluffed disguise will only last for the particular encounter that it was used; the character must make new checks for every one that sees him and has a reason for suspect the character. This benefit corresponds to the Mistaken Identity disadvantage.
- Disadvantage:** A manipulator suffers from one of the following disadvantages, depending on the benefit he chose:
- ✦ *Conniving Fop*: Analysing a scene for later manipulation can be risky in certain ways; some people are bound to notice that the character is asking particular questions about subjects best left avoided. While he uses the Social Map ability, the manipulator must make four Bluff or Diplomacy checks (one every 15 minutes) against a DC equal to the 10 + the average Sense Motive bonus amongst the people present. If he fails a check, he suffers a -2 penalty on all social-based skill checks (Bluff, Diplomacy, Perform, Sense Motive and other applicable checks under the Games Master's judgement); this penalty applies to further checks to avoid detection, and the penalty for failed checks stack. The total penalty lasts for one day for dealing with people in that particular gathering. This disadvantage corresponds to the Social Map benefit.
 - ✦ *Social Blunder*: His repeated use of third parties to carry out his objectives exposes the manipulator to potential gaffes that may affect his performance. Every time he uses the Social Shockwave benefit, he must pass a Sense Motive check (DC 15) or commit a social blunder by whispering the wrong thing to the wrong person. The Games Master has free rein on determining the type of blunder, which can range from alienating the character for the rest of the day, suffering exile from social circles or gaining a dire enemy. Additionally, the Games Master may decide that in certain specific circumstances, a use of the Social Shockwave penalty automatically results in a social blunder. An example of this might be attempting to influence a baron to favour a religion of peace and good by whispering to a servant who zealously follows a faith of war and evil. This disadvantage corresponds to the Social Shockwave benefit.



✦ *Mistaken Identity*: When he uses the Deceptive Banter benefit, the character's lies become so intricate and believable that they may work *too* well. Every time the manipulator uses this ability, there is a 10% chance that the person he uses it against will believe that he actually knows the character's forged identity from somewhere, possibly as an acquaintance or as someone he has merely heard about from others. The Games Master plays out any consequence, from the victim wanting to catch up with his 'friend', not taking no for an answer and thus delaying the character, to the manipulator being confused with a wanted criminal. This disadvantage corresponds to the Deceptive Banter benefit.

The Philosopher

Bards are not much inclined to contemplation; spontaneity is the norm and most live their lives in a carefree way. Not so the philosopher, who ponders the mysteries of art and history so that he can not only not only recollect them but also understand them. A philosopher seeks the heart of his inspiration and isolates it to create works of greater depth and meaning. Likewise, the philosopher possesses a keen insight into the workings of the world, and he can glean the hidden meanings that others less observant will miss, whether between the lines of a prophecy or in the gestures of a trusted contact.

Adventuring: The main motivation for which the philosopher takes upon a life of adventure is his desire to understand. He wants to experience things first-hand so he can properly assimilate them, integrating every little titbit into his art and his body of lore. Philosophers become excellent supporters in a group, although sometimes they can drive their companions insane with their strange questions and constant probing.

Roleplaying: A philosopher bard is contemplative and usually tranquil. He maintains a serene façade while his mind turns and twists innumerable ponderings. He is ready to give advice, regardless of the welcome it may receive. He is very observant, taking in everything around him through all of his senses, and his stories almost always contain some advice or moral that can be applied to a current situation. Sometimes they can be seen as aloof or arrogant, or even plain crazy given their tendency to talk to themselves.

Advancement Options: A character follows the philosopher Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Minimum Wisdom 13; Listen 5 ranks, Knowledge (Nature) 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks; Alertness, Blind-Fight, Empower Spell, Far Shot, Heighten Spell, Improved Counterspell,

Iron Will, Negotiator, Point Blank Shot, Track; any feat with a Wisdom prerequisite.

Benefit: A philosopher can choose from one of three benefits (and corresponding disadvantages):

- ✦ *Keen Ears*: The philosopher is aware of everything that happens around him, and one of his more developed senses is hearing, gaining a +2 bonus to Listen checks. In addition, whenever overhearing a conversation, the philosopher can make Sense Motive checks with his bard level added as a competence bonus. This benefit corresponds to the Overload disadvantage.
- ✦ *Sound Judgement*: Philosophers study very abstract subjects that give them tools to look at any given situations and gain insights into how to achieve the best outcome. This ability is born from both their inspiration and their wisdom. When the character is in a situation that seems unsolvable (an escape-proof trapped room, a sudden ambush by overwhelming odds, an obstinate negotiator, and suchlike.), he can spend one use of bardic music to gain some sort of insight in the form of clues by the Games Master or at least a +5 bonus to any skill check or saving throw required to solve the situation. This benefit corresponds to the Hubris disadvantage.



- ✦ **Conundrum:** Philosophers are fond of incorporating their insights and thought processes into their music, which may leave ordinary listeners stone cold in confusion and incomprehension. As an additional bardic music ability, the philosopher can focus his song on a single target within 90 ft. that can hear him, and affect it as if by the *confusion* spell by spending one use of bardic music and making a Perform check. The victim's Will saving throw is equal to the result of the Perform check. Even if the victim saves successfully, the philosopher can keep trying every round without needing to spend another use of bardic music as long as he keeps concentrating. He can make additional Perform checks in the case that he rolls higher, but may keep a result whenever desired, applying to all of the victim's subsequent saving throws. The victim can make a new save every round that the bard maintains the Conundrum ability. Like any other use of bardic music, the philosopher can move and fight, but may not speak or cast spells with a verbal component. This benefit corresponds to the Unnecessary Complication disadvantage.

Disadvantage: A philosopher suffers from one of the following disadvantages, depending on the benefit he chose:

- ✦ **Overload:** The philosopher's attentiveness sometimes proves his downfall. Whenever targeted by a sonic effect or dealt sonic damage, the philosopher's ears tremble and he must make a Will save (DC 18) or be dazed for 1d4 rounds, in addition to any other daze or stun effects that he might be affected by. This disadvantage corresponds to the Keen Ears benefit.
- ✦ **Hubris:** The philosopher can become so proud of his insightful nature that he can fail to notice the complexities in an enemy manoeuvre. Every time he uses the Sound Judgement ability, the Games Master can make one of the character's saving throws suffer a -5 penalty in the same game session that the Sound Judgement ability was used. This disadvantage corresponds to the Sound Judgement benefit.
- ✦ **Unnecessary Complication:** Because he revels in rhetoric and exposition, the philosopher's bardic music takes additional time to be effective. The bard must perform for a full round when using any of his bardic music abilities, after which they finally start working normally. This disadvantage corresponds to the Conundrum benefit.

The Standard-Bearer

Bards are the ideal messengers and couriers, but their ability to fight is comparable to that of other more

violent professions even if they are not as durable. The standard-bearer is a herald warrior, a negotiator that nonetheless travels with a blade at his hip. He accompanies an army and rides forth with the general when it is time to parley with the enemy, and carries the army's banner into battle, staying close to his leader and never letting go of his flag, as he holds his companion's morale in his hands.

Adventuring: Even when not attached to an army or group of combatants, the standard-bearer is very much interested in develop his fighting skills. Conscious that he should not be taking to the front lines with the same glee as a trained fighter, the bard nonetheless strives to be a force to be reckoned with in battle, going out on adventures to strengthen himself. A standard-bearer becomes a support fighter and may even be a second line of defence once the first one falls.

Roleplaying: A standard-bearer is rare amongst bards as he relies on the strength of his arm rather than on the glibness of his tongue. He does not forget the tricks of his origin and mixes demonstrations of strength with a bit of guile to intimidate others, and tends to be a great braggart when it comes to retelling deeds, real or imagined. His focus on brute strength sets him as a case apart from other bards, and breaks a lot of conceptions about him.

Advancement Options: A character follows the standard-bearer Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Minimum Strength 13; Climb 5 ranks, Intimidate 5 ranks, Jump 5 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 5 ranks; Athletic, Combat Expertise, Combat Reflexes, Improved Critical, Improved Initiative, Improved Overrun, Improved Trip, Improved Sunder, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (any); any feat with a Strength prerequisite.

Benefit: A standard-bearer can choose from one of three benefits (and corresponding disadvantages):

- ✦ **Banner Arm:** The standard-bearer must enter battle while holding his company's banner in one hand while fighting with the other. He considers one-handed weapons as if they were light weapons, and two-handed weapons as if they were one-handed weapons for the purposes of using them in his off-hand (penalties still apply). This benefit corresponds to the Decreased Defence disadvantage.
- ✦ **Banner Defence:** Holding a large object in one hand while fighting can prove an advantage for the standard-bearer; if he is holding a two-handed weapon or an object of similar size in his off-hand, the character can use it as partial concealment so all attacks against

him have a 20% chance of failing. This benefit corresponds to the Clumsy Grip disadvantage.

- ✦ *Banner Damage:* Used to handling a large banner in intense situations, the standard-bearer's strength and finesse increase. He applies his full Strength modifier to off-hand weapon damage and he applies double his Strength modifier to damage dealt with a weapon held with two hands, instead of the normal one-and-a-half. This benefit corresponds to the Stiff disadvantage.

Disadvantage: A standard-bearer suffers from one of the following disadvantages, depending on the benefit he chose:

- ✦ *Decreased Defence:* Because his two-handed combat style revolves around keeping the off-hand banner from getting hit, the standard-bearer suffers a -1 penalty to AC when he fights two-handed with a weapon other than a light weapon in his off-hand. This disadvantage corresponds to the Banner Arm benefit.
- ✦ *Clumsy Grip:* Because he is concentrating on holding the banner and protecting himself while doing so, the character can be unbalanced by attacks targeting his stability; he suffers a -1 penalty to Balance checks and Reflex saves when holding a two-handed weapon or an object of similar size in his off-hand. This disadvantage corresponds to the Banner Defence benefit.
- ✦ *Stiff:* Because he has concentrated on his raw force rather than on dexterous finesse, the standard-bearer loses some of the combat advantages. He only applies half his Dexterity modifier to attack rolls with ranged weapons as well as with light weapons if he has the Weapon Finesse feat. This disadvantage corresponds to the Banner Damage benefit.

The Traveller

The main activities of a bard almost always involve travelling in one way or another; he could be connecting settlements, sharing news or he could be seeking a particular piece of lore. Or, as is the traveller's case, he could just roam around for the love of it. A traveller enjoys the journey more than he does the destination, and the tales and adventures he picks along the way are secondary benefits to the joy of seeing new sights and visiting new places. The traveller is a rugged individual that enjoys leading a rough life on the road. He is quite incapable of settling down, relishing the experiences he acquires in his travels and taking every chance to go out the door.



Adventuring: Where most people prefer roads that they know are safe to walk, the traveller passes over such paths in favour of the difficult and demanding trails. Taking literally the roads less travelled, the bard finds more satisfaction in having defeated the journey behind than in having reached the destination, and might just go back if he thinks he could do better. A traveller will join any adventure that promises to take him to unknown locales or to defy the elements during the journey. He has what it takes to become a capable guide, recounting old tales about a road while using his perfect orientation at the same time.

Roleplaying: While not as jumpy and restless as a herald, travellers share the same wanderlust and desire to be off on the road. Their interest is not so much 'getting there' as it is 'getting through'; they are relentless and untiring, someone could even say that they are stubborn. When they are not travelling, these bards apply their tenacity to the task at hand, although they prefer physical labour rather than intellectual pursuits. Travellers can dance and perform acrobatics for hours on end, and are quite proud of their ability to keep going.

Advancement Options: A character follows the traveller Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Minimum Constitution 13; Climb 5 ranks, Concentration 5 ranks, Perform (dance) 5 ranks, Survival 5 ranks; Athletic, Combat Casting, Diehard, Endurance, Extend Spell, Great Fortitude, Iron Will,



Run, Self Sufficient, Track; any feat with a Constitution prerequisite.

Benefit: A traveller can choose from one of three benefits (and corresponding disadvantages):

- ✦ *Arcane Shield Proficiency:* The traveller is used to the hardships of the road, usually through dangerous terrain that forces him to equip himself with protection. The bard can use a light shield without incurring in arcane spell failure, and the arcane spell failure chance of heavy shields is reduced by 10%. This benefit corresponds to the Defence Hole disadvantage.
- ✦ *Untiring Step:* The traveller is used to spending hours on end on the road. Whenever he must make a Constitution check to protect himself from exhaustion or other environmental conditions like extreme heat or cold, the bard may use his entire Fortitude save bonus on the roll instead of just his Constitution modifier. This benefit corresponds to the Inner Reserve disadvantage.
- ✦ *Sustained Voice:* The traveller is a hardy individual with considerable stamina. This power translates to his magical art as he can sustain the quality of his performance for longer times. All bardic music abilities whose effects fade after a few rounds have their duration increased by a number of rounds equal to his Constitution modifier; for example the allies of a bard with Con 16 can maintain the bonus from *inspire courage* for eight rounds after the bard stops singing (five rounds +3 Con modifier). This benefit corresponds to the Limited Art disadvantage.

Disadvantage: A traveller suffers from one of the following disadvantages, depending on the benefit he chose:

- ✦ *Defence Hole:* Using a shield while spellcasting opens the bard's defences. When the bard casts a spell using a shield as per the Arcane Shield Proficiency advantage, he suffers a penalty to AC equal to the bonus the shield normally provides. The penalty is deducted from the character's shieldless AC. This disadvantage corresponds to the Arcane Shield Proficiency benefit.
- ✦ *Inner Reserve:* When the character makes a Fortitude save instead of a Constitution check to resist physical effects, he suffers one point of Strength damage if a successful result does not exceed the DC by ten or more; if he beats the DC by ten points or more, there is no effect. This disadvantage corresponds to the Untiring Step benefit.

Eyra was very busy even if she was just sitting on the fountain's edge. It could be said that she and her siblings had crashed the party they were currently partaking in, except that it was hardly an intrusion if the party was held in the open plaza. Eldreen was engaging a few partygoers in idle chatter while Eilan was off stealing some hearts. Being the youngest, Eyra often found herself in the proverbial kid's section, enduring the attentions either of awkward teens or dirty old men.

'Anything interesting?' Eilan walked by, spotting his sister's look of boredom.

'Nuh... this place is kind of boring,' she answered as she nodded towards the gathering. 'That guy over there is so sleeping with that other guy's wife; and the cuckolded husband is no little dove either... look at how he's eyeing the mayor's daughter. And you see that woman? I could bet my earrings that she's doing some sort of side business with that other guy.'

'Aha... and the place is boring,' Eilan chuckled, sitting down and giving the girl a glass of juice.

'Aw, come on, bro... Eldreen lets me drink wine!' the girl pouted.

'But we need you sharp tonight,' he answered. 'I found out that there's a certain woman blackmailing another man about some secret stash of gold, illegally procured. Add two and two together and tonight we could walk out of here with a couple of bags.'

- ✦ *Limited Art:* The bard has a powerful voice, but he exhausts it with each use. The number of times per day that he can use his bardic music is equal to $\frac{3}{4}$ of his bard level (75%) instead of equal to his bard level. This disadvantage corresponds to the Sustained Voice benefit.

PATHS OF PROWESS

The Paths of Prowess refer to a character's skills as he makes choices in his training and development. Bards have a wide palette from which to choose from, capable of pursuing a variety of Paths that exploit their talent.

The Diplomat

Bards possess a magnetic personality by definition; they find it easy to push their opinions onto others as well as excelling in the arts of manipulation. Such traits open the Path of the diplomat, a bard who is more interested

in solving problems through negotiation than through armed conflict. Diplomats are brave, but their courage is not readily apparent for people who believe only in the force of arms; diplomats care little about such opinions of them, since they only see their reputation as a tool for their use, and being underestimated suits them just fine.

Adventuring: Diplomats are attracted by conflict wherever it festers, motivated by the challenge of solving heated situations through their words and savvy rather than through the swords of the sides in conflict. They are the ‘mouth’ of an adventuring party, taking charge of negotiations that can range from haggling the best price for captured loot to getting the party out of a serious faux pas with a local ruler. The diplomat also acts as an internal problem solver, making sure that his companions hold no secret grudges against one another, keeping them working as a team.

Roleplaying: To say that a diplomat is conciliatory would be to point out the obvious. Diplomats are most often calm and collected, their eyes always on the prowl for the subtle hints in others’ behaviour that will give them an edge in their negotiations. Their words are always kind, but almost as often hide a second motive that will help the diplomat glean information he desires or provoke a chain reaction of social consequences that will land him at the top of any heap.

Advancement Options: A character follows the diplomat Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Bluff 5 ranks, Diplomacy 5 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks; Greater Spell Focus (enchantment), Negotiator, Persuasive, Skill Focus (diplomacy), Still Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment); selection of a divination or enchantment spell when increasing known spells.

Benefit: A diplomat shines when he has to deal with large numbers of people, whether directly or through a representative. Even when hostilities have started, the diplomat can try to force a negotiation. He spends one use of his bardic music and makes a Diplomacy check against a single target, who must oppose with a Will save. If the target fails by up to four points, he is stunned for one round per the bard’s Charisma modifier, during which the diplomat must keep talking to him. If the target fails his save by five points or more, he stops fighting and is willing to engage in talks, similar to a *charm monster* spell, although the target feels no particular friendship towards the diplomat. Targeting an enemy group’s leader with this ability is a good way to stop combat. The diplomat can parlay with his target but, if he or any of his allies attack the target (or any of the target’s followers if he is a leader), the effect is broken.

Disadvantage: Because they expect to talk first and fight later, diplomats react poorly to combat situations. They remain flat-footed for the rest of the round after they took their first action in combat, and suffer a –2 penalty to initiative.

The Mindbender

Music and words have the power to win hearts and minds, and the bard that walks the Path of the mindbender knows it very well. Unlike the diplomat who uses tact and the soother whose art is meant to heal, the mindbender uses his mastery of emotions to twist the minds of others to his own ends. The mindbender researches the effects of music and art on the emotions and thoughts of others, and comes up with results that excel even the effects of magic, for they come naturally to him instead of being caused by manipulation of arcane power.

Adventuring: A mindbender usually travels with one or more people he has dominated or has manipulated into serving him, or he may be travelling in search of fresh victims. The mindbender relishes in the confusion his meddling causes and is unscrupulous in the application of his abilities. When he joins a party he immediately tries to sway any companion to his way of thinking, trying to control the group to fulfil his personal goals.

Roleplaying: The bard following the mindbender Path is almost amoral in his approach to his field of expertise. He may be a power-hungry despot who gains satisfaction from bending others’ wills, or he may be a pragmatist that realises that only through domination can he get things done in a satisfactory way. He never boasts of his prowess or knowledge lest he alert potential victims to the danger he represents, and always performs his work from the shadows or hiding behind his bardic music.

Advancement Options: A character follows the mindbender Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Bluff 5 ranks, Hide 5 ranks, Move Silently 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks; Alertness, Eschew Materials, Heighten Spell, Iron Will, Persuasive, Still Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment); selection of an enchantment spell when increasing known spells.

Benefit: Mindbenders possess a unique talent in which they can exert their insidious influence without being identified. When the mindbender casts spells from the enchantment school, targets must succeed at a second Will save at the same DC as the spell, as must witnesses to the act. Any character who fails this save does not notice that the mindbender used magic. The Will save to identify the caster increases by +2 for each of the following metamagic feats he applies to the spell: Still Spell, Eschew Materials, Enlarge Spell. This benefit



also applies to the *fascinate* and *suggestion* bardic music abilities.

Disadvantage: The fine connection that the mindbender creates between himself and his target can have the adverse effect of feeding effects right back at the character. If a character that the mindbender is controlling with an enchantment spell suffers any damage, the mindbender must pass a Will save (DC 5 + the amount of damage dealt) or suffer feedback of d6 nonlethal damage. Additionally, if a character that the mindbender is controlling is targeted by an enchantment spell from another character and fails the save, the mindbender must make a save against the spell (at the original DC -5) or also be affected by it.

The Soother

Bards occupy a unique niche amongst arcane spellcasters in that they have the power to heal. Wizards and sorcerers can learn how to break curses or remedy harmful conditions, but few of them actually take the time and effort to specialise in that field, preferring to spice their spell collection with a variety of effects. Bards who take the effort to focus their limited spell power towards healing and remedy are a boon to their comrades. Known as soothers, they employ magic and song to cure and protect, making sure that everyone around them is at his full capacity.

Adventuring: Soothers feel the tug of adventure because they know that their talents are needed and they try to be everywhere at once, or as close to that ideal as possible. Soothers take to the road in order to help as many people as possible, sometimes as lone crusaders who travel from town to town solving problems, other times as part of a group of like-minded individuals. Soothers will seldom join a party that does not at least try to keep the interests of the common folk in mind. They are an invaluable part of any group without divine healers and, while good intentioned, they do not like being taken for granted.

Roleplaying: Most soothers take an oath to aid friend and foe alike, their sole mission being to alleviate suffering all around, but others are less naïve or idealistic and focus their efforts on their allies and innocent victims. More pragmatic soothers add a price tag to their services, and the less principled ones offer them to forces of darkness. Soothing bards may not always have a sunny disposition; many do become jaded with the endlessness of their task and adopt a slightly cynical approach to helping others.

Advancement Options: A character follows the soother Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Concentration 5 ranks, Heal 5 ranks, Knowledge (nature) 5 ranks, Spellcraft 5 ranks; Brew Potion, Combat Casting, Dodge, Mobility, Run; selection of an abjuration or conjuration (healing) spell when increasing known spells.

Benefit: The soother has travelled far and wide in his personal quest to help others. This constant movement exposes the bard to a wide variety of ailments and maladies, which he stores in his memory so he knows how to treat them later. As a move action, the character can make a bardic knowledge check to identify poison and disease at a DC equal to the conditions' save DC. By spending a single use of bardic music and using a standard action, the soother may then attempt to purge any non-magical poison or disease he has identified by making a bard level check against the save DC of the affliction. Success indicates that the poison or disease is cured, but the soother may only use this ability a number of times per day equal to his Charisma modifier. He may also try to ascertain the relative power and health of an individual, making a bardic knowledge check against a DC equal to 10 + target's level or HD, with success relaying the target's level, HD and remaining hit points. Success in either of the previous checks also informs the bard whether the target is suffering from ability damage and energy drain.

Disadvantage: The soother pours all his effort towards healing and alleviating ailments so that the mere idea of harming others is abhorrent, even if sometimes necessary. The soother suffers a permanent -2 penalty to the save DCs of spells used to harm or hamper an opponent.

The Spy

Bards who travel in anonymity can gain access to the strangest of places by virtue of their profession: crossing the gates of an impregnable castle in order to entertain its lord, or crossing behind enemy lines to gather news. This aspect of the bard's talent makes him a very good spy, and many bards are actually agents of some organisation or government, collecting information on lands far and wide and with their finger on the pulse of any community.

Adventuring: Spies are natural adventurers as they travel in order to wrest secrets from every settlement they happen upon. Contrary to belief, bardic spies are not as much infiltrators as they are observers. They will not sneak inside a home and steal documents, but they will charm the home's owner out of his socks so



he reveals what those documents say. An adventuring party may not be aware they are travelling with a spy, but he serves as their information broker and the man who always finds out what they need to know.

Roleplaying: The spy seems like any other bard, sometimes adopting the stereotype on purpose so that they will not be remembered in the future. They are used to lying and being lied to, so they know perfectly well what truth sounds like. Their real personality lies hidden beneath this mask and very few in the world will get to see it. They show a natural curiosity that can only be satisfied by doing what they already do best: eavesdrop, peek and cajole.

Advancement Options: A character follows the spy Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Bluff 5 ranks, Gather Information 5 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks; Alertness, Enlarge Spell, Extend Spell, Investigator, Negotiator, Persuasive, Still Spell, Spell Focus (divination), Spell Focus (illusion); selection of a divination or illusion spell when increasing known spells.

Benefit: Through a bit of talk and interaction, spies can ferret out almost any secret from a person. The spy spends an amount of time he desires talking with a target, accumulating a +1 bonus to a Diplomacy check per ten

minutes of friendly interaction. When he believes he is ready, the character makes the Diplomacy check with a DC determined by the obscurity of the information the spy wants (consult the DCs for the bardic knowledge ability and add the target's Wisdom modifier). The Games Master determines whether the person has the information the spy seeks.

Disadvantage: Because he lives in the shadows, adapting to social situations to practise his craft, the spy has a compulsory urge to lie. He builds fantastic tales of daring exploits or constructs a completely new identity without even trying. He is so used to lying that he must succeed at a Will save (DC 15) or be forced to hide the truth and spin a lie, regardless of whom he is speaking with. While he does not need to make this save when speaking about minor or irrelevant day-to-day matters or situations where it will be obviously clear to others that he is lying due to evidence before their eyes, he may well lie anyway. Even when amongst friends or allies, spies tend to spin a comforting web of falsehoods around them as a form of protection or just to keep in practise.

The Tactician

While perfectly capable of handling direct combat in their terms, some bards shy away from melee in order to provide support for their companions. Others, however, become tacticians, directing the flow of combat through their keen observation of the battlefield. They study the ways of battle not in order to participate in them but so they can respond to anything that they encounter in their enemies. They like to take leadership positions but do not make a show of their authority, instead focusing on the advice they give.

Adventuring: Tacticians take any chance they have to witness battle and conflict, learning from it and applying past lessons to new situations. While their grasp on strategy can be applied to other fields that involve coordinating efforts, it is in combat that they see the best opportunity to apply their powers of observation and coordination. They prefer to become leaders in order to have their instructions obeyed without hesitation, but are comfortable in an advisory position if they have the assurance that they will be listened to.

Roleplaying: Tacticians are cold and calculating even in the face of overwhelming odds. Their minds are always looking for the next best opening that they can exploit or direct others to exploit. Their penchant for analysis and advice sometimes get on the nerves of companions, but as long as they do it honestly and give praise as well as criticism (and they are successful), their help is always welcomed.





Advancement Options: A character follows the tactician Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Bluff 5 ranks, Listen 5 ranks, Spot 5 ranks, Tumble 5 ranks; Combat Casting, Dodge, Mobility, Run, Still Spell, Spell Focus (enchantment), Spell Focus (illusion); selection of an enchantment or illusion spell when increasing known spells.

Benefit: The tactician can coordinate a devastating attack by directing his and his friends' efforts. As a special bardic music ability, the tactician begins shouting commands and directions with a particular rhythm to his words, providing a bonus to attack and damage rolls to all his allies that starts at +0. Every time an ally successfully hits an enemy with a melee or ranged weapon, the bonus increases by +1 until it reaches a number equal to the tactician's bard level. Once the round is over, the bonus resets to +0 plus +1 for every round the character has maintained his instructions (+1 at second round, +2 at third round, and so on). For every time that the bard is hit by a melee or ranged weapon, the bonus decreases by -1.

Disadvantage: Tacticians are used to fighting in groups, and can become confused and unsure when they are isolated from their companions. If the tactician is ever further than 30 feet from his nearest ally, he suffers a -2 morale penalty to attack and damage rolls as well as to saving throws.

The Trickster

Illusion is one of the preferred forms of magic that bards learn to use. Bards know what moves the hearts of men (and women as well) and can thus tailor an illusion to best effect, and their whimsical nature only serves to make them relish in such effects. The most extreme illusionists amongst bards are the tricksters, who handle illusion as just another instrument in their repertoire of tricks, which can go from good-natured pranks to strategic ruses during combat. Tricksters specialise in deceiving the senses and their illusions are works of art capable of fooling the most distrustful of persons.

Adventuring: Tricksters become adventurers when they start looking for more potential victims for their illusions, but sometimes it is the other way around; they become tricksters out of necessity when outclassed and outmatched in other types of contests. A trickster will often work either under the direct command of a group's strategist or fulfil that role himself, using his mastery of illusion to confound the group's enemies and give his allies an advantage, however short-lived.

Roleplaying: Tricksters are sly and resourceful and have large imaginations, coupled with the talent to make their visualisation into something that looks real. Their illusions and tricks portray the bard's talent for deception, with such displays of prowess often earning him the mistrust of friends and foes alike. Tricksters are not pathological liars; their ability to deceive is not a proof of an inherently dishonest nature but rather of a particular ease towards a school of magic. Tricksters can be quite honest in their normal dealings with others, resorting to illusion and trickery only when it would achieve noble goals.

Advancement Options: A character follows the trickster Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Bluff 5 ranks, Perform 5 ranks, Sleight of Hands 5 ranks, Spellcraft 5 ranks; Combat Casting, Deceitful, Heighten Spell, Spell Focus (illusion); selection of an illusion spell when increasing known spells.

Benefit: Much like his command of music, the trickster reaches such an intimate level of practise with illusion

magic that he treats it as a natural talent. Whenever he casts an illusion spell he can spend a use of bardic music to make a Perform check, which becomes the new save DC for the spell. This is not a permanent effect; if he casts the same spell again, he must either choose to use its normal save DC, or spend another use of bardic music and make another Perform check. In addition, by spending a single use of bardic music, the trickster can make illusion spells that normally last as long as the character concentrates on them last an additional five rounds after he stops concentrating.

Disadvantage: Because he concentrates on deception magic, the trickster's expertise in other areas of magical praxis suffers as a result. All the save DCs of spells of schools different than illusion are reduced by -2.

The Virtuoso

Bards are known for their clear voices and artistic talents, and none embody such qualities better than the virtuoso does. These bards concentrate all their efforts towards bettering their skill at performance, creating works that can melt the coldest soul and inflame the stoniest heart. Given the power of bards, a virtuoso is not merely a talented artist, but an important part of a group's support members, bolstering everyone's chance for success at almost anything they attempt to do.

Adventuring: Virtuosos are, like most bards, possessed of an urge to get in trouble. However, their source of satisfaction is not exactly the same as other bards, favouring applause and accolades over knowledge and material rewards. To this end, they will travel far and wide, spreading their fame and renown through a series of outstanding performances, leaving their mark behind in every town, settlement or even caravans they come across.

Roleplaying: Virtuosos can be accused of being vain, and they often are – but for good reasons. They foster their talent to its greatest heights, tapping every last mote of potential in their souls to create works of art with every performance. As part of an adventuring group, a virtuoso is in charge of keeping the group's morale, and even if some of his companions look down upon his focus on art rather than more practical skills, none complain when the magical power of the virtuoso's craft turns the tide of battle.

Advancement Options: A character follows the virtuoso Career Path by choosing the following advancement options: Concentration 5 ranks, Diplomacy 5 ranks, Perform (any two) 5 ranks; Combat

Casting, Eschew Materials, Heighten Spell, Skill Focus (perform), Persuasive, Still Spell, Spell Focus (illusion); selection of an illusion spell when increasing known spells.

Benefit: The virtuoso is the quintessential bard, concentrating all his energy in his magical art. When bardic music ability affects a limited number of targets, the virtuoso can add one additional target per point of Charisma modifier. All other target restrictions remain in effect.

Disadvantage: Caring for his instrument, voice, hands or other tools of his art are vital tasks for any bard, and especially so for a virtuoso. He must spend considerable time and effort to maintain his tools in perfect condition, spending one hour every morning in maintenance and exercise, costing 5 gp per character level. This cost represents costly oils, expensive teas and the like. If the bard fails to care for himself in this manner, he loses one use per day of his bardic music abilities. He keeps losing additional uses of his bardic music ability every day that he does not care for his instrument, stacking until he may eventually lose *all* uses per day of his bardic music. Once he returns to caring for his instrument, the player recovers all his bardic music uses.



Multiclassing

The bard's power comes from his diversity of talents as well as his expertise to deal with perceptions and emotions through both magic and song. Despite this variety, bards have shortcomings that may not fit in a player's concept for his character, which is where multiclassing comes in. Nothing keeps bards from gaining levels in another class, strengthening one of their many fields of interest by taking a second class that concentrates on such areas, such as combat, skills or magic. This chapter presents the best way to conduct a combination of the bard with the rest of the classes in *Core Rulebook I*, with advice on which feats and options are best when the character gains new abilities from achieving a new level in any of his classes.

This book assumes that the character's main class is the bard; other classes complementing their own abilities with a couple of bard levels will be covered in their respective Quintessential Series II books. Humans, half-elves and gnomes have no problems in taking levels from another class at any point in their career, but other races must keep their advancement balanced so as not to incur in an experience penalty.

The tables indicate a recommended advancement rate that is by no means mandatory, but might work best for that class. Given the great number of options available to meet a player's concept of what his character is or does, they are merely guidelines, not a strict road map.

Alignment Restrictions

Bards cannot be lawful in alignment, which prohibits them multiclassing with paladin and monk levels. This chapter presents the dervish and messenger multiclassing considering that the character will become an ex-bard as his alignment changes to accommodate his second class. There are other options to multiclass these three seemingly incompatible classes:

Ex-Monks: To multiclass with the monk class, the character actually starts as a monk and then changes his alignment when switching to bard, becoming an ex-monk.

Ex-Paladins: This is not a good option, as the forced alignment change would strip the character off his paladin abilities and spells when he makes the switch.

Multiple Switch: If the player justifies why his character's worldview changes so constantly, the character may begin as bard, become lawful in order

to train as a monk and return to non-lawful to resume his bardic career. The same cannot be easily done with paladins for the same reasons as above.

Games Master's Call: In the end, games masters and players may decide that the concept of a bard/monk or a bard/paladin is interesting to play and forego with the alignment restrictions, allowing a lawful bard or non-lawful monk or paladin.

The bard/druid presents a similar limitation, but the character must avoid only being lawful neutral to comply with both of the normal bard and druid alignment restrictions.

Prestige Classes

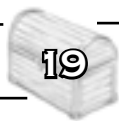
One of the advantages of multiclassing is that the character may meet the prerequisites of the more exotic prestige classes. A character can break off the suggested progression or take a slightly different one in order to meet the requirements for a prestige class and then continue with his career along those lines. Many of these classes give far greater advantages than simple multiclassing as they combine different abilities into a single class level so the Games Master has the final word about what prestige classes exist in his campaign.

Epic Advancement

Note that the tables presented in this chapter are not for a complete character class, but a combination of two. A character can reach epic levels once he gains his 21st level from either class and is subject to the rules for epic characters, although he continues gaining the abilities in the appropriate class table until they reach 20th level in either class. Spellcasting bards continue to gain spells per day and spells known according to the normal table and may not purchase epic feats that demand that they be able to cast spells from the spellcasting class' maximum level because they have not reached the spellcasting class' maximum.

Variant Rules

Each of the multiclass descriptions given below have a section marked as *variant rules*. This deals with optional, specialised rules that represent how a character following multiple paths can develop abilities pertinent to both, but that are not normally represented. Some of these variant rules are simply a crossing of class skills, enabling the bard to choose from a wider range of skills. Others grant entirely new abilities that develop as the



two classes combine. However, there are a number of limitations that must be obeyed:

- ✦ All are subject to the Games Master's approval before being chosen.
- ✦ Each variant rule starts with the line 'Upon gaining X level'. Every variant rule is selected instead of an appropriate ability that would have been gained at either the appropriate bard level, or the appropriate alternate (non-bard) class level. A bard may take this variant after the given level, but only if he is still able to sacrifice the necessary ability, power or skills required to gain the variant rule.
- ✦ In addition, the character must have at least one level in the alternate (non-bard) class. Occasionally more levels are needed in the alternate class; this will be specified in the text.

Once a variant rule has been taken, it cannot be reversed later on. The ability, power or skills sacrificed to gain the variant rule is lost forever.

Base Bonus Progression

Multiclassing can get tricky after a few levels because the class tables indicate a total bonus for each level, listing the accumulated total. To mix and match this chapter's advancement tables use the information below, listing by what amount the base bonus progresses at any given level, depending on class.

RAGER (BARD/BARBARIAN)

Most people associate bardic music with serenity and comfort, with quiet harmony and ethereal singing. But music also begets wild passions, as the wild drumming and dances of barbarian tribes can surely attest; it echoes the beat of a savage heart until all who hear cannot help but feel enlivened and filled with emotion. Ragers are bards who understand the rhythm of fury; they understand the secret music behind the howls of raging beasts and learn how to recreate them, give them form and wield their primal power.

Advancement and Base Bonus Progression

Level	Base Attack Bonus			Base Save Bonus	
	Good (Bbn, Ftr, Pal, Rgr)	Average (Brd, Clr, Drd, Mnk, Rog)	Bad (Sor, Wiz)	Good	Bad
1 st	+1	+0	+0	+2	+0
2 nd	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0
3 rd	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1
4 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0
5 th	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
6 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
7 th	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0
8 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0
9 th	+1	+0	+0	+0	+1
10 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0
11 th	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0
12 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
13 th	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
14 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0
15 th	+1	+1	+0	+0	+1
16 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0
17 th	+1	+0	+0	+0	+0
18 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+1
19 th	+1	+1	+0	+0	+0
20 th	+1	+1	+1	+1	+0



The Rager (Bard/Barbarian)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)
2 nd	Bbn 1	+1	+2	+2	+2	Fast movement, illiteracy, rage 1/day
3 rd	Bbn 2	+2	+3	+2	+2	Uncanny dodge, (character feat)
4 th	Brd 2	+3	+3	+3	+3	(ability increase)
5 th	Brd 3	+4	+4	+3	+3	Inspire competence
6 th	Bbn 3	+5	+4	+4	+4	Trap sense +1, (character feat)
7 th	Bbn 4	+6/+1	+5	+4	+4	Rage 2/day
8 th	Brd 4	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	(ability increase)
9 th	Bbn 5	+8/+3	+5	+5	+5	Improved uncanny dodge, (character feat)
10 th	Brd 5	+8/+3	+5	+5	+5	
11 th	Bbn 6	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	Trap sense +2
12 th	Brd 6	+10/+5	+7	+7	+7	<i>Suggestion</i> , (character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Brd 7	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	
14 th	Bbn 7	+12/+7/+2	+7	+7	+7	Damage reduction 1/—
15 th	Brd 8	+13/+8/+3	+7	+8	+8	Inspire courage +2, (character feat)
16 th	Bbn 8	+14/+9/+4	+8	+8	+8	Rage 3/day, (ability increase)
17 th	Brd 9	+14/+9/+4	+9	+8	+8	Inspire greatness
18 th	Bbn 9	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+9	Trap sense +3, (character feat)
19 th	Brd 10	+16/+11/+6/+1	+9	+10	+10	
20 th	Bbn 10	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+10	Damage reduction 2/—, (ability increase)

Rager Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
10 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
13 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
14 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
15 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
16 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
18 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
19 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
20 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.

A rager is a very atypical bard, or at least deviates from what most people believe bards to be; he dresses in furs and leathers, plays crude instruments and most of his repertoire includes war songs and poems exalting the most violent passions. He is also extremely effective in battle, capable of duking it out with the best fighters as well as dabbling a little in the magic other barbarians mistrust and avoid.

Strengths

A rager gains a number of benefits from adding barbarian levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

- ✦ **Hit Dice:** The barbarian's d12 Hit Die makes the character much more durable in combat, although he only gains it on levels he assigns to the barbarian class.
- ✦ **Base Attack Bonus:** The barbarian has the best base attack bonus, which makes the rager a much better combatant.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The barbarian has a good Fortitude save progression, complementing the bard's good Reflex and Will saves.
- ✦ **Rage:** Rage is the barbarian's signature ability, which cripples the bard's spellcasting and music unless he takes the variant options below.
- ✦ **(Improved) Uncanny Dodge:** The rager benefits from these abilities in that he can survive better being in a tight spot.
- ✦ **Damage Reduction:** Only available at high character levels, when magic should already be providing protection to the character and opponents deal a lot of points of damage; however, it remains useful as it is free and constant.

Weaknesses

The rager dilutes his bardic training by taking up barbarian levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The barbarian's poor Will save leaves a bard unprepared for some of the threats that a wizard or cleric is more likely to resist.
- ✦ **Skills:** The barbarian gains a base four skill points per level, which is one step worse than the bard's, in



addition to the definitely lower number of class skills the barbarian has.

- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/barbarian will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and barbarian levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ Although starting with the barbarian class ensures that the character will begin with 12 hit points, the trade-off is that he starts the game with eight less



skill points and limited class skills to spend starting skill points in, limiting the bard's role.

- ✦ *Cat's grace* becomes much more useful for the character, who now can use it on himself to become a better combatant. Use it in conjunction with Weapon Finesse to increase the attack bonus, while rage increases the damage bonus.
- ✦ Both bard and barbarian share their preference for light armour, the chain shirt is the best option for the rager as it provides excellent protection while remaining light armour that does not encumber the barbarian nor interferes with the bard's spellcasting.
- ✦ The Dodge, Mobility and Spring Attack tree is of particular use, even more so with the barbarian's fast movement ability.
- ✦ The *rage* spell becomes less useful as the character can now induce a much more effective barbarian rage on himself, and becomes downright redundant if the character takes the song of rage variant rule below.
- ✦ The character should specialise in wilderness survival skills, which he can spend points on as class skills from both of his classes. Intimidate is also a more likely skill for a rager to have than subtle Diplomacy or Bluff.

Variant Rules

- ✦ **Song of Rage:** Upon gaining 3rd character level, the rager can select Song of Rage as a feat. He can now channel his rage through his bardic music, and by spending one use of his rage ability and one use of his bardic music ability at the same time, the rager can provoke a rage in another character. The target character then enters a state of rage with the same characteristics as the rager's, who must maintain his concentration to sustain the effect. The induced rage lasts for as long as the rager remains singing and three rounds after he stops, or up to the normal maximum duration of three rounds plus the target's Constitution modifier, whichever happens first. The target may voluntarily end the rage at any time.
- ✦ **Greater Song of Rage:** Upon gaining 3rd bard level, the character can choose the greater song of rage instead of the inspire competence class ability. The character can now induce rage with only a use of his bardic music, saving the uses of his normal rage for himself.

- ✦ **Song of Serenity:** Upon gaining 6th bard level, the character learns the song of serenity, replacing his *suggestion* class ability. He learns the finer points of his rage and thus learns on how to cancel it in himself and others. The song of serenity can be used in two ways: at the cost of one use of bardic music, the song acts as a *calm emotions* effect, except that it does not cancel other bardic music effects. The second effect of the song of serenity is to automatically dispel the fatigued state that a character suffers after a rage, also with one use of bardic music.

CHORISTER (BARD/CLERIC)

Legends speak of a song of the Spheres, the sounds of creation and other allegories that grant music a place in the divine plans. Choristers know that this is no allegory, that music in itself is miraculous and that such magic is available to anyone with sufficient passion and talent. Erring a little on the heretical side, many choristers claim that their music is the true voice of the gods and, as they are able to sing it, they are much closer to divinity than other types of priests.

The chorister is often a lay priest, not really part of a church's hierarchy but nonetheless paying homage to its ideals and tenets. He travels the roads singing praises to his chosen deity; some choristers are even party to the more underhanded side of a given church, free from some of the ethical strictures that bind ordained clerics and paladins, but nonetheless serving the god's will.

Strengths

A chorister gains a number of benefits from adding cleric levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

- ✦ **Hit Dice:** Clerics have a d8 Hit Die, which is slightly better than the bard's.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The cleric has a good Fortitude and Will save progressions, complementing the bard's Reflex and strengthening his Will.
- ✦ **Divine Magic:** The cleric's spell list is very different than the bard even if they overlap slightly in the healing arts; having access to it means the character can now use almost all magic items, not to mention the access to better healing spells.

The Chorister (Bard/Cleric)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)
2 nd	Clr 1	+0	+2	+2	+4	Turn or rebuke undead
3 rd	Brd 2	+1	+2	+3	+5	(character feat)
4 th	Clr 2	+2	+3	+3	+6	(ability increase)
5 th	Brd 3	+3	+4	+3	+6	Inspire competence
6 th	Clr 3	+4	+4	+4	+6	(character feat)
7 th	Brd 4	+5	+4	+5	+7	
8 th	Clr 4	+6	+5	+5	+8	(ability increase)
9 th	Brd 5	+6/+1	+5	+5	+8	(character feat)
10 th	Clr 5	+6/+1	+5	+5	+8	
11 th	Brd 6	+7/+2	+6	+6	+9	<i>Suggestion</i>
12 th	Clr 6	+8/+3	+7	+7	+10	(character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Brd 7	+9/+4	+7	+7	+10	
14 th	Clr 7	+10/+5	+7	+7	+10	
15 th	Brd 8	+11/+6/+1	+7	+8	+11	Inspire courage +2, (character feat)
16 th	Clr 8	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+12	(ability increase)
17 th	Brd 9	+12/+7/+2	+9	+8	+13	Inspire greatness
18 th	Clr 9	+12/+7/+2	+9	+9	+13	(character feat)
19 th	Brd 10	+13/+8/+3	+9	+10	+14	
20 th	Clr 10	+14/+9/+4	+10	+10	+15	(ability increase)

Chorister Bard Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
10 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
13 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
14 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
15 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
16 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
18 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
19 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
20 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.



- ✦ **Domains:** The character gains a domain ability and one extra spell per level.
- ✦ **Turn Undead:** This ability arms the bard with the additional magical ability to control and destroy undead, which are normally not affected by the bard's music. The bard's high Charisma certainly bolsters his clerical power against undead.

Weaknesses

The chorister dilutes his bardic training by taking up cleric levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Skills:** The cleric gains a base two skill points per level, which is the least number amongst the classes and which seriously dilutes the bard's training in several skills.
- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/cleric will not reach the same heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not

be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.

- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.
- ✦ **Ability Disparity:** A bard's spellcasting depends on his Charisma while a cleric depends on his Wisdom; this might distract the distribution of ability increases, depending on what ability scores the character started with.

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and cleric levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ While the Trickery domain looks attractive, its benefits are small considering that the granted power's skills are already part of the bard's list, and so are many of the spells.
- ✦ Depending on the chorister's role, more helpful domains include Luck, Protection, the alignment domain (except Law, of course) and Travel.
- ✦ The bard's high Charisma makes the character's turn undead attacks all the more effective; the Extra Turning and Improved Turning feats exploit this combination to the fullest.
- ✦ Light armour remains the best choice as it will not interfere with the bard's arcane spells, but as the cleric is allowed heavier protection, medium or heavy armour can an option if the chorister is willing to take the trade-off of increased protection for the chance of arcane spell failure.
- ✦ The chorister is a slightly worse combatant than a cleric due to his fewer hit points; picking a ranged fighting style is a better idea, which also points to deities with a ranged weapon as their favourite if the character takes the War domain.
- ✦ The character should not select healing spells as part of his bard spells, as he has them available as a cleric, and he can also cast them spontaneously if he is a good cleric.

Chorister Cleric Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day ¹					
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
1 st	0 th	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	3	1+1	—	—	—	—
3 rd	1 st	3	1+1	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	4	2+1	—	—	—	—
5 th	2 nd	4	2+1	—	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	4	2+1	1+1	—	—	—
7 th	3 rd	4	2+1	1+1	—	—	—
8 th	4 th	5	3+1	2+1	—	—	—
9 th	4 th	5	3+1	2+1	—	—	—
10 th	5 th	5	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—
11 th	5 th	5	3+1	2+1	1+1	—	—
12 th	6 th	5	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—
13 th	6 th	5	3+1	3+1	2+1	—	—
14 th	7 th	6	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—
15 th	7 th	6	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1	—
16 th	8 th	6	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—
17 th	8 th	6	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1	—
18 th	9 th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1
19 th	9 th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	2+1	1+1
20 th	10 th	6	4+1	4+1	3+1	3+1	2+1

¹ In addition to the stated number of spells per day for 1st through 9th level spells, a cleric gets a domain spell for each spell level, starting at 1st. The '+1' in the entries on this table represents that spell. Domain spells are in addition to any bonus spells the cleric may receive for having a high Wisdom score.

Variant Rules

- ✦ **Domain Music:** Starting at 1st cleric level, the character can select Domain Music as a feat. The chorister can then use bardic music much more effectively against creatures covered by a clerical domain, with any DCs to resist increasing by +3 or gaining a +3 to Perform checks. Creatures affected by a domain are those that can be turned/rebuked or otherwise affected by the cleric as a granted power, such as fire elementals when taking the Water domain, or animals as per the Animal domain's power to *speak with animals*. If the creature would not normally be affected by bardic music due to immunity to mind-affecting spells, by virtue of the chorister's faith it *is* affected, although without the +3 bonus to the Chorister's attempt. Note that the cleric has a natural ability to turn/rebuke undead, and so undead can now be affected by bardic music by taking this variant rule.
- ✦ **Holy/Unholy Song:** Upon gaining 3rd character level, the chorister can select Holy/Unholy Song as a feat with its effects dependant on whether he can cast healing or harming spells spontaneously as a cleric. By spending one use of bardic music, the chorister affects allies or foes within 30 feet from him. If the cleric can channel positive energy to cast healing spells, all allies within the chorister's song's area gain damage reduction 3/evil for as long as the character sings and they remain within the area. If the cleric instead channels negative energy to cast inflict spells, all allies within the chorister's song's area gain damage reduction 3/good for as long as the character sings and they remain within the area. Sustaining the Holy/Unholy Song is a standard action, and the effect stops as soon as the chorister stops singing.
- ✦ **Angelic/Fiendish Verses:** Upon gaining 6th character level, the character can select Angelic/Fiendish Verses as a feat that has Improved Turning as a prerequisite. This ability is actually an additional application of bardic music. The character makes a Perform check as he spends one daily use of bardic music to recite the verses depending on his alignment (using the Angelic version if he can turn undead and the Fiendish if he can rebuke them instead). For the duration of the character's singing, creatures opposed to the chorister's alignment (evil for the Angelic verses and good for the Fiendish ones) that come within 30 feet suffer a -2 to attack and damage rolls if they fail a Will save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Cha modifier). In addition to this, affected creatures must make a caster check with the same DC whenever they want to cast a spell or use a spell-like ability, or have it disrupted. The effect ends as soon as the chorister stops singing.

WHISPERER (BARD/DRUID)

Plants and animals have a voice that scant few humanoids can understand, let alone speak. Whisperers are what many jokingly refer as a side order of druids. They understand the ways of nature, but approach it with a certain wild joy that sometimes is at odds with the more stern approach of most other druids. Whisperers feel a certain kinship with the beasts of the land more than with the plants and the earth, and such sympathy allows them to sing with an animal's voice, and the animals join in with pleasure.

Unlike most other druids, whisperers have little qualms with the civilised world, as long as they do not witness the mistreatment of animals; they serve as superb teamsters, falconers, handlers and trainers, and travel often to farmlands and other places where people may have trouble with animals, smoothing the relationships between hunters and prey, shepherd and herd.

Strengths

A whisperer gains a number of benefits from adding druid levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

- ✦ **Hit Dice:** Druids have a d8 Hit Die, which is slightly better than the bard's.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The druid has a good Fortitude and Will save progressions, complementing the bard's Reflex and strengthening his Will.
- ✦ **Divine Magic:** The druid's spell list is very different than the bard's; although it has some similarities in terms of spells with equivalent purpose, rather than repeated spells.
- ✦ **Druid Abilities:** As the character advances, he gains the druid's multiple abilities, although they are mostly beneficial for a full druid living in the wilderness. Wild shape is the most useful of these, as it saves a selfish bard the trouble of learning *polymorph*.

Weaknesses

The whisperer dilutes his bardic training by taking up druid levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Skills:** The druid gains a base two skill points per level, which is the least number amongst the classes, which seriously dilutes the bard's training in several skills.



The Whisperer (Bard/Druid)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)
2 nd	Drd 1	+0	+2	+2	+4	Animal companion, nature sense, wild empathy
3 rd	Drd 2	+1	+3	+2	+5	Woodland stride, (character feat)
4 th	Brd 2	+2	+3	+3	+6	(ability increase)
5 th	Drd 3	+3	+3	+4	+6	Trackless step
6 th	Brd 3	+4	+4	+4	+6	Inspire competence, (character feat)
7 th	Drd 4	+5	+5	+4	+7	Resist nature's lure
8 th	Brd 4	+6/+1	+5	+5	+8	(ability increase)
9 th	Drd 5	+6/+1	+5	+5	+8	Wild shape (1/day), (character feat)
10 th	Brd 5	+6/+1	+5	+5	+8	
11 th	Drd 6	+7/+2	+6	+6	+9	Wild shape (2/day)
12 th	Brd 6	+8/+3	+7	+7	+10	<i>Suggestion</i> , (character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Drd 7	+9/+4	+7	+7	+10	Wild shape (3/day)
14 th	Brd 7	+10/+5	+7	+7	+10	
15 th	Drd 8	+11/+6/+1	+8	+7	+11	Wild shape (Large), (character feat)
16 th	Brd 8	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+12	Inspire courage +2, (ability increase)
17 th	Brd 9	+12/+7/+2	+9	+8	+12	Inspire greatness
18 th	Drd 9	+12/+7/+2	+9	+9	+12	Venom immunity, (character feat)
19 th	Brd 10	+13/+8/+3	+9	+10	+13	
20 th	Drd 10	+14/+9/+4	+10	+10	+14	Wild shape (4/day), (ability increase)

Whisperer Bard Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
10 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
13 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
14 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
15 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
16 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
18 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
19 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
20 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.

Whisperer Druid Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
1 st	0 th	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	3	1	—	—	—	—
3 rd	2 nd	4	2	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	4	2	—	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	4	2	1	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	4	2	1	—	—	—
7 th	4 th	5	3	2	—	—	—
8 th	4 th	5	3	2	—	—	—
9 th	5 th	5	3	2	1	—	—
10 th	5 th	5	3	2	1	—	—
11 th	6 th	5	3	3	2	—	—
12 th	6 th	5	3	3	2	—	—
13 th	7 th	6	4	3	2	1	—
14 th	7 th	6	4	3	2	1	—
15 th	8 th	6	4	3	3	2	—
16 th	8 th	6	4	3	3	2	—
17 th	8 th	6	4	3	3	2	—
18 th	9 th	6	4	4	3	2	1
19 th	9 th	6	4	4	3	2	1
20 th	10 th	6	4	4	3	3	2

- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/druid will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.
- ✦ **Ability Disparity:** A bard's spellcasting depends on his Charisma while a druid depends on his Wisdom; this might distract the distribution of ability increases, depending on what ability scores the character started with.

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and druid levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ The druid, like the cleric, can select spells from their entire lists and have many spells that bards do not have available. Consider these first before preparing

other spells that the bard might know or could reproduce.

- ✦ Although the Natural Spell feat does not complement the combined abilities of a whisperer, the Games Master can allow the feat to permit the character to use his bardic music powers while in a *wild shape*.
- ✦ The whisperer is an excellent defence against specific kinds of fey creatures that use their voice or music to charm or affect characters; the combination of the druid's *resist nature's lure* and the bard's *countersong* help the whisperer mount a very good defence against such effects.
- ✦ The whisperer will be limited to leather armour for protection, which will force him to rely on magic or on defensive options like Combat Expertise and Dodge to survive in combat situations. *Barkskin* is a good option.
- ✦ The whisperer can create magic items that combine his two styles of magic, which is quite a rare combination, to say the least. The player should consult with the Games Master for ideas on the kinds of magic effects he could bestow on items by mixing the rare spells found in the druid's and bard's lists.
- ✦ Because the *wild shape* ability will allow the whisperer to approach targets without rousing too much suspicion, the Listen and Spot skills become very important for espionage and reconnaissance.

Variant Rules

- ✦ **Wild Calling:** At 1st druid level, the whisperer can sacrifice two skill points to extend the power of his wild empathy class ability, gaining wild calling. Through this, animals become particularly susceptible to the whisperer's bardic music. All bonuses received by creatures of the animal type through bardic abilities like inspire courage or inspire competence are doubled, and all bardic music DCs for creatures of the animal type to resist increase by +3.
- ✦ **Wild Whispers:** Upon gaining 3rd character level, the whisperer can select Wild Whispers as a feat with wild empathy and bardic music as prerequisites. By spending one use of bardic music, the whisperer can *speak with animals* as per the spell of the same name cast by a druid of his full character level.
- ✦ **Intimate Companion:** Upon gaining 5th character level, the whisperer can take the intimate companion ability, reducing his druid level by two for the purpose



The Sword Dancer (Bard/Fighter)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1
2 nd	Ftr 1	+1	+2	+2	+2	Bonus feat, (character feat)
3 rd	Ftr 2	+2	+3	+2	+2	Bonus feat, (character feat)
4 th	Brd 2	+3	+3	+3	+3	(ability increase)
5 th	Brd 3	+4	+4	+3	+3	Inspire competence
6 th	Ftr 3	+5	+4	+4	+4	(character feat)
7 th	Brd 4	+6/+1	+4	+5	+5	
8 th	Ftr 4	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	Bonus feat, (ability increase)
9 th	Brd 5	+7/+2	+5	+5	+5	(character feat)
10 th	Brd 6	+8/+3	+6	+6	+6	<i>Suggestion</i>
11 th	Ftr 5	+9/+4	+6	+6	+6	
12 th	Brd 7	+10/+5	+6	+6	+6	(character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Ftr 6	+11/+6/+1	+7	+7	+7	Bonus feat
14 th	Brd 8	+12/+7/+2	+7	+8	+8	Inspire courage +2
15 th	Brd 9	+12/+7/+2	+8	+8	+8	Inspire greatness, (character feat)
16 th	Ftr 7	+13/+8/+3	+8	+8	+8	(ability increase)
17 th	Brd 10	+14/+9/+4	+8	+9	+9	
18 th	Ftr 8	+15/+10/+5	+9	+9	+9	Bonus feat, (character feat)
19 th	Brd 11	+16/+11/+6/+1	+9	+9	+9	
20 th	Brd 12	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+10	<i>Song of freedom</i> , (ability increase)

Sword Dancer Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
10 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
13 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
14 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
15 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
16 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
18 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
19 th	11 th	3	3	3	3	1	6	4	4	4	3
20 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.

of determining an animal companion's capabilities and powers. In exchange, the animal companion gains the power of speech and its Intelligence score becomes half of the whisperer's character level plus the Whisperer's Intelligence modifier. The animal can speak the languages the whisperer knows, plus the language of his own species. If the animal companion stands within 30 feet of the whisperer, he can pick up with his voice any bardic song that the whisperer interrupts and requires concentration. The animal can maintain this song for a maximum of one round per half its master's bard level and is subject to all the restrictions of bardic music, including the five-round duration after it stops its songs.

- ✦ **Call of the Wild:** Upon gaining 6th character level, the whisperer can select Call of the Wild instead of the bard's inspire competence ability. The character spends one use of bardic music in order to attract a swarm of animals as the *summon swarm* spell as if cast by a druid of his full character level. The duration is replaced by the amount of time the whisperer sings the call plus five rounds, replacing the spell's normal duration.

SWORD DANCER (BARD/FIGHTER)

There is a special brand of warrior that considers his martial prowess an art, not merely a skill. They look for the beauty in every sword strike, finding the rhythm of every battle. The name 'sword dancer' does not limit these artistic warriors to a single weapon of choice; they can master sword, staff or mace and treat it like a tool for art, just as other bards play lutes, harps and flutes. Sword dancers enjoy combat as much as a painter enjoys a blank canvas and dancers enjoy a stage; it is an opportunity to render a beautiful performance and exploit all their talent.

Sword dancers are seldom well received amongst other warriors, as their eccentric styles are very individualistic and others have trouble adapting to it. While sword dancers are quite capable of altering their martial performance to the fighting styles of their companions, they are artists first, and although suited for a support position their artistic ego demands them to take the spotlight.

Strengths

A sword dancer gains a number of benefits from adding fighter levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:



- ✦ **Hit Dice:** The fighter's d10 Hit Die is the second highest possible, allowing the bard to take a more active role in combat.
- ✦ **Base Attack Bonus:** The fighter has the best base attack bonus, which makes the sword dancer a much better combatant.
- ✦ **Saves:** The fighter has a good Fortitude save, complementing the bard's good Reflex and Will saves.
- ✦ **Bonus Feats:** Given the number of feats the fighter gains, the sword dancer can develop a more effective combat strategy, freeing his character feats for more bardic applications.

Weaknesses

The sword dancer dilutes his bardic training by taking up fighter levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Skills:** The fighter gains a base two skill points per level, which is the least number amongst the classes and, coupled with the fighter's meagre class skill list,



this seriously dilutes the bard's training in several skills.

- ✦ **Ability Disparity:** A bard's spellcasting depends on his Charisma while a fighter depends either on Strength or Dexterity; this might dilute the distribution of ability increases, depending on what ability scores the character started with.
- ✦ **Arcane Spell Failure:** If the character wears armour like other fighters, he incurs a failure chance on his spellcasting; bards suffer no spell failure in light armour, but this also means that their choice of a fighting style is limited.
- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/fighter will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and fighter levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ When selecting a specialty for the Perform skill, the character should select an 'instrument' that does not require him to use his hands, such as singing, for he will most probably be using his hands to hold his weapons.
- ✦ The sword dancer's fighting style should concentrate on Dexterity rather than Strength, which makes ranged combat a very viable option as a feat tree for the fighter's bonus feats, although defensive feats such as Combat Expertise should also be an option.
- ✦ The Still Spell feat is a must for a sword dancer who wishes to cast his spells while still having his weapon in his hands, and getting Combat Casting and pouring ranks into the Concentration skill are a must for a character who expects to do any spellcasting in the midst of a combat situation.
- ✦ The bard is already proficient with the whip, saving the character one feat in case he wishes to go over that

road. A sword dancer can benefit greatly from the Improved Trip feat while wielding a whip and, unlike regular bards, he can choose Greater Weapon Focus, Weapon Specialisation (if he favours fighter levels over bard's) and Greater Weapon Specialisation for it.

- ✦ The bard can cast *cat's grace* on himself and benefit from the Weapon Finesse feat, not to mention the increases to initiative, Armour Class and Reflex saves.
- ✦ With an above-average Charisma and access to the Bluff skill, the sword dancer should think about getting the Improved Feint feat.
- ✦ Unlike other multiclass options, the exchange of starting skill points for higher hit points, weapon proficiencies and feat make the fighter a better starting class, especially for taking the variant rules below. The first fighter bonus feat should be Weapon Focus with the weapon intended to be the sword dancer's 'instrument'.

Variant Rules

Martial Instrument: At 1st bard level, the sword dancer trains to use a weapon as his instrument of artistic expression; he can spend skill points to buy ranks in Perform with the specialty in a weapon for which he has the Weapon Focus feat. Apart from being able to use the weapon as part of his performances, he can use his martial artistry in combat; if he spends a use of bardic music, he gains a bonus to attack rolls equal to +1 for every five ranks in his chosen Perform (weapon) skill. This bonus lasts for one round per the sword dancer's Charisma modifier. Additionally, any Perform (weapon) skill is considered a fighter class skill for the character as long as he has the corresponding Weapon Focus feat. However, this focus on martial prowess means that the sword dancer's knack for picking up odd bits of knowledge lies somewhat neglected, increasing the DC of any bardic knowledge checks the character makes by +5 and rendering the Gather Information skill cross-class for him.

Combat Performance: Upon gaining fighter level 4th, the sword dancer can take Combat Performance as a fighter bonus feat. From this point onward, the sword dancer can use his bardic music ability as a free action attached to an attack action and only when he is using a weapon for which he has the Weapon Focus feat and the martial instrument ability. The free action to use the bardic music ability happens at the same time as the



attack action with the character's martial instrument; if he is not attacking, activating and maintaining a bardic music effect is a standard action.

Sword Dance: Starting at character level 9th, the sword dancer can take Sword Dance as a feat that has the following prerequisites: Perform (weapon) 12 ranks, Dodge, Mobility, Weapon Focus (same weapon as the Perform skill), Weapon Specialisation (same weapon as the Perform skill) and Whirlwind Attack. With the Sword Dance, the character is able to take a five-foot step after every successful attack performed with the Whirlwind Attack feat. The character need not take this step if he does not want to, and he can take as many steps until they add up to his maximum movement (six steps for a 30-foot speed, for example).

DERVISH (BARD/MONK)

Bards are proverbial jack-of-all-trades, capable of adapting to any situation, including a change of philosophy. The dervish is a particular kind of bard who started on the path of dancing and reached enlightenment at the end. Dervishes practise a sort of meditative trance that allows them to tap into the innermost core of their souls, accessing it consciously while regular bards must use the tools of song and dance.



Dervish Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
3 rd	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
4 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
5 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
6 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
7 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
8 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
9 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
10 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
11 th	11 th	3	3	3	3	1	6	4	4	4	3
12 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
13 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
14 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
15 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
16 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
17 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
18 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
19 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
20 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.





The power that a dervish wields combines the apparently whimsical art of bards with the strict discipline of monks in order to create an entirely new kind of magic, one that reaches the same soulful power of music through the regulated steps of a martial art.

Strengths

A dervish gains a number of benefits from adding monk levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

- ✦ **Hit Dice:** Monks have a d8 Hit Die, which is better than the bard's.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The monk has all the good save progressions, complementing and increasing the bard's good Reflex and Will saves.
- ✦ **Monk Abilities:** The character gains an unarmed attack, AC bonus, speed increase and flurry of blows, in addition to the other abilities he gains as his monk level increases.

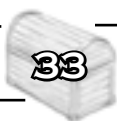
Weaknesses

The dervish dilutes his bardic training by taking up monk levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Multiclass Restrictions:** The monk cannot alternate with levels from other classes, which aggravates some of the other disadvantages like spell access and caster level. See the beginning of this chapter for a further treatment of bards multiclassing as monks.
- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/monk will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard/monk will stop advancing as a spellcaster the moment he becomes a monk and, although the present option in this book does not allow a return trip, lenient Games Masters may allow the character to return to his bardic roots after experimenting with a monk's lifestyle.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than

The Dervish (Bard/Monk)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)
2 nd	Brd 2	+1	+0	+3	+3	
3 rd	Brd 3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Inspire competence, (character feat)
4 th	Brd 4	+3	+1	+4	+4	(ability increase)
5 th	Brd 5	+3	+1	+4	+4	
6 th	Brd 6	+4	+2	+5	+5	<i>Suggestion</i> , (character feat)
7 th	Brd 7	+5	+2	+5	+5	
8 th	Brd 8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	Inspire courage +2, (ability increase)
9 th	Brd 9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	Inspire greatness, (character feat)
10 th	Brd 10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7	
11 th	Brd 11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7	
12 th	Brd 12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	<i>Song of freedom</i> , (character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Mnk 1	+9/+4	+6	+10	+10	Bonus feat, flurry of blows, unarmed strike
14 th	Mnk 2	+10/+5	+7	+11	+11	Bonus feat, evasion
15 th	Mnk 3	+11/+6/+1	+7	+11	+11	Still mind, (character feat)
16 th	Mnk 4	+12/+7/+2	+8	+12	+12	<i>Ki</i> strike (magic), slow fall 20 ft., (ability increase)
17 th	Mnk 5	+12/+7/+2	+8	+12	+12	Purity of body
18 th	Mnk 6	+13/+8/+3	+9	+13	+13	Bonus feat, slow fall 30 ft., (character feat)
19 th	Mnk 7	+14/+9/+4	+9	+13	+13	Wholeness of body
20 th	Mnk 8	+15/+10/+5	+10	+14	+14	Slow fall 40 ft., (ability increase)



he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.

- ✦ **Ability Disparity:** A bard's spellcasting and main skills depend on his Charisma while a monk depends either on Strength or Dexterity, and on Wisdom; this might distract the distribution of ability increases, depending on what ability scores the character started with.

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and monk levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ While he advances as a bard, the character should start stacking up on unarmoured defence options, including magic as well as feats. He must stop using armour when he gains his first monk level.
- ✦ The character should learn spells that will aid him tactically as well as directly once he takes up monk

The Dervish (continued)

Flurry of Blows Attack Bonus	Unarmed Damage	AC Bonus	Unarmoured Speed Bonus
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
—	1d3	+0	+0 ft.
+7/+7/+2	1d6	+0	+0 ft.
+8/+8/+3	1d6	+0	+0 ft.
+9/+9/+4/-1	1d6	+0	+10 ft.
			+10 ft.
+10/+10/+5/+0	1d8	+0	
+11/+11/+6/+1	1d8	+1	+10 ft.
+12/+12/+7/+2	1d8	+1	+20 ft.
+13/+13/+8/+3	1d8	+1	+20 ft.
+14/+14/+9/+4	1d10	+1	+20 ft.

training; these include *invisibility*, *cat's grace*, the various *cure* spells, *blur*, *heroism*, *shatter*, etc.

- ✦ *Haste* is one of the best spells a dervish can have, combining with his flurry of blows ability for a truly devastating barrage of attacks.
- ✦ The bard should take Weapon Finesse at some point, especially if he has high Dexterity (a good option for bards anyway). This will allow him to handle ranged combat as well as light weapons, and will later apply to the monk's unarmed attacks.
- ✦ At 12th level, just as he is about to change class and worldview, the bard should take Weapon Focus (unarmed) to give himself another edge in the change.
- ✦ It does not matter what instrument the bard chooses for his Perform skill; he can have his hands occupied and still be able to attack as a monk, as his unarmed attacks can be done with the legs. For style's sake, poetry is a good option for the dervish so he can recite mystical martial art sutras.
- ✦ Given the bard's skill points and class skills, he can chose to advance on any path he likes, although it is advised that he pump up on Knowledge skills that will not be available later for the monk.

Variant Rules

- ✦ **Dervish Trance:** At 1st monk level, the character gains the ability to enter a dervish trance, focusing inwards through music and physical motion to achieve spiritual concord and unity. By spending one use of bardic music and taking a full round action, the dervish gains his Charisma bonus to his saving throws for one hour. However, this inward focus on personal spirituality means that the dervish is less accomplished in dealing with others and observing the world around him, and as a result Bluff, Gather Information, Sense Motive and Spot all become cross-class skills.
- ✦ **Quicken Song:** Upon gaining 6th character level and at least 1st monk level, the dervish can take the quicken song ability instead of *suggestion*. By spending two uses of bardic music, he can activate and maintain a bardic music ability as a free action. When the bard interrupts a quickened song, the effect ends immediately instead of lasting for additional rounds. If the character gains the 13th level of bard, he loses this ability as he cannot maintain the strain without monk training.



The Messenger (Bard/Paladin)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Divine Spells per Day	
							1 st	2 nd
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)	—	—
2 nd	Brd 2	+1	+0	+3	+3		—	—
3 rd	Brd 3	+2	+1	+3	+3	Inspire competence, (character feat)	—	—
4 th	Brd 4	+3	+1	+4	+4	(ability increase)	—	—
5 th	Brd 5	+3	+1	+4	+4		—	—
6 th	Brd 6	+4	+2	+5	+5	<i>Suggestion</i> , (character feat)	—	—
7 th	Brd 7	+5	+2	+5	+5		—	—
8 th	Brd 8	+6/+1	+2	+6	+6	Inspire courage +2, (ability increase)	—	—
9 th	Brd 9	+6/+1	+3	+6	+6	Inspire greatness, (character feat)	—	—
10 th	Brd 10	+7/+2	+3	+7	+7		—	—
11 th	Brd 11	+8/+3	+3	+7	+7		—	—
12 th	Brd 12	+9/+4	+4	+8	+8	<i>Song of freedom</i> , (character feat, ability increase)	—	—
13 th	Pal 1	+10/+5	+6	+8	+8	Aura of good, <i>detect evil</i> , smite evil 1/day	—	—
14 th	Pal 2	+11/+6/+1	+7	+8	+8	Divine grace, lay on hands	—	—
15 th	Pal 3	+12/+7/+2	+7	+9	+9	Aura of courage, divine health, (character feat)	—	—
16 th	Pal 4	+13/+8/+3	+8	+9	+9	Turn undead, (ability increase)	0	—
17 th	Pal 5	+14/+9/+4	+8	+9	+9	Smite evil 2/day, special mount	0	—
18 th	Pal 6	+15/+10/+5	+9	+10	+10	<i>Remove disease</i> 1/week, (character feat)	1	—
19 th	Pal 7	+16/+11/+6/+1	+9	+10	+10		1	—
20 th	Pal 8	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+10	+10	(ability increase)	1	0

✦ **Sonic Fist:** Upon gaining 2nd monk level, the character can choose Sonic Fist as a monk bonus feat with a prerequisite of bardic music ability and Stunning Fist. By spending one use of his Stunning Fist feat and one use of bardic music at the same time, the character strikes with such force that he can immobilise more than one opponent. His target as well as every creature other than the bard within five feet per Wisdom modifier plus Charisma modifier must make a Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Cha modifier); those that fail are stunned for 1d4 rounds. The dervish can cancel a stunned condition he caused simply by touching the affected character.

forces powerful enough to calm even the raging storms inside the heart of a bard. Instead of random songs and ballads, messengers spread the word of their god; their duty is to be the deity's heralds more its warriors. Their voices do not resonate with the power of whim, but an enlightening moment of revelation changes its quality towards faith and conviction.

Messengers join a paladin order in rare cases, the bard's idiosyncratic life lending itself more towards the personal revelations that produce unaffiliated paladins. In any case their start their service to the faith as powerful individuals, already possessing talents that other paladins of their same rank will never have unless they abandon their oaths.

MESSENGER (BARD/PALADIN)

The call of the paladin is a difficult one to heed, and bards seem as the least likely of individuals to even hear it. The messengers, however, prove that faith and duty are

Strengths

A messenger gains a number of benefits from adding paladin levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

Messenger Bard Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
3 rd	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
4 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
5 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
6 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
7 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
8 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
9 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
10 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
11 th	11 th	3	3	3	3	1	6	4	4	4	3
12 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
13 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
14 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
15 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
16 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
17 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
18 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
19 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3
20 th	12 th	3	3	3	3	2	6	4	4	4	3

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.

- ✦ **Hit Dice:** Paladins have a d10, the second best Hit Dice amongst the classes, which is better than the bard's.
- ✦ **Base Attack Bonus:** The paladin has the best progression, which increases the bard's own average progression.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The paladin has a good Fortitude save progressions, complementing the bard's good Reflex and Will saves.
- ✦ **Paladin Abilities:** The paladin gains a number of abilities that do not depend on class level, such as divine grace, detect evil, divine health and aura of courage. Other abilities that depend on level are smite evil (for damage), lay on hands (for hit points cured), turn undead (for turning damage) and special mount (for duration of the mount).
- ✦ **Strength of Personality:** Many of the above abilities depend on the character's Charisma, which is already high for an average bard.
- ✦ **Divine Magic:** This is not a great strength, since the character will only have access to a single spell, but nonetheless it does provide the messenger with a little additional flexibility and power.



Weaknesses

The messenger dilutes his bardic training by taking up paladin levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Multiclass Restrictions:** The paladin cannot alternate with levels from other classes, which aggravates some of the other disadvantages like spell access and caster level. See the beginning of this chapter for a further treatment of bards multiclassing as paladins.
 - ✦ **Code of Conduct:** The bard must become lawful good and abide by the paladin's code upon gaining his first paladin level (preferably before), which will probably prevent him from using some of his more unscrupulous spells.
 - ✦ **Saving Throws:** The paladin's poor Will save leaves a bard unprepared for some of the threats a bard is more likely to face, although *divine grace* can help to make up for this.
 - ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/paladin will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard/paladin will stop advancing as a spellcaster the moment he becomes a paladin and, although there is no return trip unless the character wants to risk losing the paladin abilities he gained.
 - ✦ **Arcane Spell Failure:** If the character wears armour as other paladins, he incurs a failure chance to his spellcasting; he will suffer no spell failure in light armour, but this also means that his choice of a fighting style is limited.
 - ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.
 - ✦ **Ability Disparity:** A bard's spellcasting depends on his Charisma while a paladin depends either on Strength and Wisdom; this might distract the distribution of ability increases, depending on what ability scores the character started with.
- ✦ The paladin is the most demanding class in terms of abilities; the character needs a good Strength (or Dexterity depending on fighting style), decent Constitution, good Wisdom *and* Charisma. Of these, the bard focuses on two, even if lucky rolls provide the character with high abilities all around. The player should assign the highest scores to the abilities useful to the bard, and then start building up the ones useful to the paladin with the ability increases at 4th, 8th and 12th levels.
 - ✦ The character's Wisdom should be at least 12 so that he can cast 2nd level divine spells.
 - ✦ Most of the advice for the sword dancer also applies to the messenger in terms of fighting style.
 - ✦ For a less conventional approach, the messenger has a great potential for investigation and interaction. Not only does the character possess great powers of persuasion (Diplomacy and high Charisma), but also the reputation of paladinhood and possibly a decent Wisdom score (for Sense Motive).
 - ✦ Even with the lay on hands ability, the character should learn healing spells as a bard, keeping the ability to heal and keep himself alive.
 - ✦ The *summon monster* spells can provide the messenger with attendants ready to fight for him, obviously chosen from the celestial ranks.

Variant Rules

The following abilities can be gained during the bard's progression given the caveats of multiclassing with the paladin class; once chosen, the character should not be allowed to progress beyond 12th level as a bard; choosing these options means that he *will* become a paladin at a certain point in his career.

- ✦ **Inspire Confidence:** Upon gaining 3rd character level, the character can select Inspire Confidence as a feat or to replace the *inspire competence* bardic music ability. Inspire Confidence grants a bardic music ability that the messenger can use to aid his allies to resist magical attacks. All allies within a 30-foot radius gain a +2 morale bonus to all their saving throws for as long as the character concentrates on his song and five rounds after he stops.

- ✦ **Righteous Speech:** Upon gaining 6th character level, the character can select Righteous Speech as a

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and paladin levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

The Itinerant (Bard/Ranger)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Divine Spells per Day	
							1 st	2 nd
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)	—	—
2 nd	Rgr 1	+1	+2	+4	+2	1st favoured enemy, Track, wild empathy	—	—
3 rd	Rgr 2	+2	+3	+5	+2	Combat style, (character feat)	—	—
4 th	Brd 2	+3	+3	+6	+3	(ability increase)	—	—
5 th	Brd 3	+4	+4	+6	+3	Inspire competence	—	—
6 th	Rgr 3	+5	+4	+6	+4	Endurance, (character feat)	—	—
7 th	Brd 4	+6/+1	+4	+7	+5		—	—
8 th	Rgr 4	+7/+2	+5	+8	+5	Animal companion, (ability increase)	0	—
9 th	Brd 5	+7/+2	+5	+8	+5	(character feat)	0	—
10 th	Rgr 5	+8/+3	+5	+8	+5	2nd favoured enemy	0	—
11 th	Brd 6	+9/+4	+6	+9	+6	<i>Suggestion</i>	0	—
12 th	Rgr 6	+10/+5	+7	+10	+7	Improved combat style, (character feat, ability increase)	1	—
13 th	Brd 7	+11/+6/+1	+7	+10	+7		1	—
14 th	Rgr 7	+12/+7/+2	+7	+10	+7	Woodland stride	1	—
15 th	Brd 8	+13/+8/+3	+7	+11	+8	Inspire courage +2, (character feat)	1	—
16 th	Rgr 8	+14/+9/+4	+8	+12	+8	Swift tracker, (ability increase)	1	0
17 th	Brd 9	+14/+9/+4	+9	+12	+8	Inspire greatness	1	0
18 th	Rgr 9	+15/+10/+5	+9	+12	+9	Evasion, (character feat)	1	0
19 th	Brd 10	+16/+11/+6/+1	+9	+13	+10		1	0
20 th	Rgr 10	+17/+12/+7/+2	+10	+14	+10	3rd favoured enemy, (ability increase)	1	1

feat or to replace the *suggestion* bardic music ability. Righteous Speech grants a bardic music ability that the Messenger can use to impede the advance the minions of darkness. The character selects to affect chaotic or evil creatures when he spends an use of bardic music to activate righteous speech; all creatures of the selected alignment within 30 feet of the character must make a Will save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Cha modifier) or be *slowed* as per the spell cast by a sorcerer of the same level as the character.

✦ **Echoes of Justice:** Upon gaining 12th character level, the character can channel the voice of divinity through his own lips, bringing holy judgement to his enemies. The character can take Echoes of Justice as a feat, although he will not be able to enjoy its benefits until he gains the smite evil ability. With Echoes of Justice, the character can spend one use of bardic music at the same time as a use of smite evil; by doing this, he can deal damage to all evil creatures within a distance of ten feet per Charisma modifier. All evil creatures in the area suffer an amount of damage equal to the character's level and are deafened for 1d6 rounds, unless they make a successful Will save (DC 10 + half the character's

level + Cha modifier), in which case they suffer only half damage and are not deafened.

ITINERANT (BARD/RANGER)

Bards live half of their lives on the roads, walking from one town to another to spread their songs and make their living. Some bards, called itinerants by their brethren, take this one step further, living *most* of their time on the roads and as little as possible in settlements. Itinerants are wanderers all, explorers who prefer to learn the subjects of their songs first-hand rather than handed down from other bards. Itinerants are wanderers and vagabonds, learning the ways of survival so that they encounter no obstacles when heading for an interesting place mentioned in the many tales and legends that they learn.

Their fondness for living in the wilderness does not come from the worship that motivates druids and their bardic counterparts the whisperers; itinerants live outdoors because they love the sense of adventure and





challenge, and because the vastness of the wild is perfect inspiration for composing their epics.

Strengths

A itinerant gains a number of benefits from adding ranger levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

- ✦ **Hit Dice:** Rangers have a d8 Hit Die, which is better than the bard's.
- ✦ **Base Attack Bonus:** The ranger has the best progression, which increases the bard's own average progression.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The ranger has good Fortitude and Reflex save progressions, complementing the bard's good Will save and bolstering his Reflex.
- ✦ **Favoured Enemy:** If the bard does not plan to go after many monsters, this is not such a great strength, but it is a boon for bards in the hunt for exotic components and for specialising in monster lore.
- ✦ **Combat Style:** The ranger gains a couple of free feats oriented to combat.

Itinerant Bard Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
10 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
13 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
14 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
15 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
16 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
18 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
19 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
20 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.

- ✦ **Ranger Abilities:** Woodland stride and swift tracker are very ranger-specific and are not as attractive to a bard, although evasion is always useful.
- ✦ **Divine Magic:** This is not a great strength, since the character will only have access to a single spell, but nonetheless it does provide the itinerant with a little additional flexibility and power.

Weaknesses

The itinerant dilutes his bardic training by taking up ranger levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The ranger's poor Will save leaves a bard unprepared for some of the threats a bard is more likely to face.
- ✦ **Skills:** The ranger gains a base four skill points per level, which is one step worse than the bard's, in addition to the more limited choice of class skills the ranger has.
- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/ranger will not reach the same heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.
- ✦ **Ability Disparity:** A bard's spellcasting depends on his Charisma while a ranger depends either on Strength or Dexterity, and on Wisdom for some of his skills; this might distract the distribution of ability increases, depending on what ability scores the character started with.

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and ranger levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ Most of the recommendations applicable for the bard/fighter also apply to the bard/ranger, although with fewer hit points, the character should definitely look for ways to avoid hand-to-hand confrontations.

- ✦ If the character does not opt for the variant rules below, he should select archery as his combat style, as it gives him better chances when fighting from afar.
- ✦ The bard and the ranger have different spheres of action, namely civilisation and wilderness, and their respective skills show this. As professional wanderers, bard/rangers should capitalise on the skills they share between the two classes, particularly those dealing with stealth and perception.
- ✦ Physical and tactical spells should take priority in the bard's arsenal over those dealing with trickery, although if the character is specialising as a scout, divination magic earns its place as well.

Variant Rules

- ✦ **Enemy of Legend:** Upon gaining the 1st ranger level and having already gained at least one level of bard, the character can replace the ranger's Track feat with Enemy of Legend. This feat signifies that the character's knowledge about his chosen favoured enemy not only stems from study of current examples, but also of legends and history thanks to his bardic training. The character adds one fourth of his bardic knowledge bonus to the bonus to skill checks he gains from his favoured enemy ability to all his chosen favoured enemies. He also chooses one of his favoured enemies, against which he adds his Intelligence modifier to attack rolls.
- ✦ **Combat Style:** Upon gaining his 2nd ranger level, the character can select an additional combat style aside from two-weapon fighting or archery, which is whip expertise. When the character selects whip expertise, he handles the whip with such precision that he is capable of inflicting damage with it. Any whip he wields deals a base 1d4 points of lethal damage (1d3 for Small whips), and they ignore the restriction of normal whips that deal no damage at all to targets with an armour bonus of +1 or higher or natural armour bonus of +3 or higher. In addition, he does not provoke attacks of opportunity when attacking with a whip, and does threaten the area into which he can attack.
- ✦ **Improved Combat Style:** Upon gaining 6th ranger level, the character can improve his use of the whip if he chose whip expertise with his combat style feature. With this option, the character gains the Improved Trip feat for free even if he does not meet the prerequisites.



The Rascal (Bard/Rogue)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Rog 1	+0	+0	+2	+0	Sneak attack +1d6, trapfinding, (character feat)
2 nd	Brd 1	+0	+0	+4	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1
3 rd	Brd 2	+1	+0	+5	+3	(character feat)
4 th	Rog 2	+2	+0	+6	+3	Evasion, (ability increase)
5 th	Brd 3	+3	+1	+6	+3	Inspire competence
6 th	Rog 3	+4	+2	+6	+4	Sneak attack +2d6, trap sense +1, (character feat)
7 th	Brd 4	+5	+2	+7	+5	
8 th	Rog 4	+6/+1	+2	+8	+5	Uncanny dodge, (ability increase)
9 th	Brd 5	+6/+1	+2	+8	+5	(character feat)
10 th	Brd 6	+7/+2	+3	+9	+6	<i>Suggestion</i>
11 th	Rog 5	+7/+2	+3	+9	+6	Sneak attack +3d6
12 th	Brd 7	+8/+3	+3	+9	+6	(character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Rog 6	+9/+4	+4	+10	+7	Trap sense +2
14 th	Brd 8	+10/+5	+4	+11	+8	Inspire courage +2
15 th	Rog 7	+11/+6/+1	+4	+11	+8	Sneak attack +4d6, (character feat)
16 th	Brd 9	+11/+6/+1	+5	+11	+8	Inspire greatness, (ability increase)
17 th	Rog 8	+12/+7/+2	+5	+12	+8	Improved uncanny dodge
18 th	Brd 10	+13/+8/+3	+5	+13	+9	(character feat)
19 th	Rog 9	+13/+8/+3	+6	+13	+10	Sneak attack +5d6, trap sense +3
20 th	Brd 11	+14/+9/+4	+6	+13	+10	(ability increase)

Rascal Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	0 th	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
10 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
13 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
14 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
15 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
16 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
18 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
19 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
20 th	11 th	3	3	3	3	1	6	4	4	4	3

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.

RASCAL (BARD/ROGUE)

There is no sneakier character than the rascal, combining the superb skills of the rogue and the higher than average talent of the bard, not to mention the addition of magic and song to the character's bag of tricks. A rascal is an incredibly eclectic person that can be trusted to have a solution for almost any situation; he has both the talent and the know-how for solving problems, which gives him a lot of manoeuvring room when it comes to negotiating contracts.

The rascal strides the shady world of rogues with the carefree attitude of the bard, living as some sort of public face to shadow organisations that find themselves in the need to negotiate with other groups from time to time. Jumping at the chance to expand his experience, a rascal does not hesitate to join adventuring parties, lending them his expertise in almost all matters.

Strengths

A rascal gains a number of benefits from adding rogue levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The rogue has a good Reflex save progression, complementing the bard's good Will save and bolstering his Reflex.
- ✦ **Skills:** Rogues gain eight skill points per level, by far the best progression of all the classes, which added to the bard's six skill points and equally large class skill list makes for a very skilful character that can afford to buy half ranks for cross-class skills in more esoteric areas.
- ✦ **Defensive Abilities:** The rogue gains trap sense, evasion, uncanny dodge and their improved version relatively early, which helps the character avoid situations that would otherwise spell certain death.
- ✦ **Sneak Attack:** Both the rogue and the bard benefit from downing an opponent quickly and from a distance.
- ✦ **Ability Synergy:** Bards can depend on Dexterity as much as a rogue will, and the ability to purchase Charisma-based skills with rogue skill points only adds to the advantages.



Weaknesses

The rascal dilutes his bardic training by taking up rogue levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The rogue's poor Will and Fortitude saves leave a bard unprepared for some of the threats they are likely to face.
- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/rogue will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.



Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and rogue levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ Use Magic Device is an excellent skill to choose, as both rogue and bard have it as a class skill, and it opens the way for using all sorts of magic items.
- ✦ *Blink* is a gift from heaven for bard/rogues, for creatures they attack will lose their Dexterity bonus to AC, and therefore be subject to sneak attacks. *Invisibility* also provides this advantage, but it ends after the first attack, unlike *greater invisibility*.
- ✦ Bard spells cannot be made silent with the Silent Spell feat, which makes their spellcasting cumbersome from the rogue's perspective. Taking an Item Creation feat and making magic items with the spells he needs is an option, as drinking a potion or wearing a ring are noiseless activities.
- ✦ Skills are a distinguishing characteristic of both classes, so the character can specialise in almost anything he wants. Knowledge ranks are better purchased with bard skill points.
- ✦ Improved Feint is a must have for characters wanting to milk everything out of their sneak attack. Bluff is a class skill for both classes, and the bard's high Charisma improves the chance of success. If he is under the effects of *haste*, he becomes as devastating or even more than a fighter or a barbarian.

Variant Rules

Friend of the Shadows: Upon gaining 3rd character level, the character can select Friend of the Shadows as a feat or by sacrificing one daily use of bardic music permanently. Once per day while he is in a settlement, the character can make a bardic knowledge check to identify the settlement's criminal elements. The Games Master determines the DC of the check and the results of the roll, going from DC 5 to recognise a pickpocket urchin to DC 25 to know who is the most probable head of the local thieves' guild, and DC 30 to locate the guild's headquarters.

Silent Performance: Upon gaining 8th character level, the character can take Silent Performance by sacrificing his uncanny dodge ability (when he gains improved uncanny dodge, he gains uncanny dodge instead). The character can do what no other bard can, making his

spells silent as if he had the Silent Spell feat. He must make a Perform check (DC 15 + spell level) as a move action; if the check is successful, the next spell he casts within one round per point of Charisma modifier can be cast silently as a full-round action.

Fabrication: Upon gaining 12th character level, the character gains the ability to weave an impossible tale with his bardic abilities that will cover his roguish bent, and can select Fabrication as a feat. By spending two uses of bardic music, the character makes either a Bluff or Perform check, and the result becomes the DC of a single target's Will save. If the target fails, he believes that whatever course of events that the character narrates is the undisputable truth, even if he witnessed the true event. The new version must be at least plausible; the target gains a +1 to his Will save for every completely incongruent fabrication in the character's tale. The character can try to use this ability on several members of a group, suffering a -2 penalty to his Bluff or Perform check for every additional person he wishes to affect with the same use of this ability. However, for every person present that already believes the character due to a previous use of fabrication, the character gains a +2 morale bonus to his Bluff or Perform check.

SOULSINGER (BARD/SORCERER)

There are two kinds of magic that can be handled by sheer strength of personality: the soulful art of bardic lore and the inherited bloodline of the sorcerer. When a person who receives a shard of magical blood explores the paths of artistic magic, a powerful combination surges forth, the magic of a mysterious ancestor boosted by the heir's personal exploration of his innermost soul. The soulsinger is a magical powerhouse, perhaps not as knowledgeable as a wizard, but with access to powers that cannot be found in musty libraries and capable of unleashing a storm of sorcery around him.

Magic permeates a soulsinger's every word, gesture and even thought; he simply cannot contain the power that boils inside him. Soulsingers often act in ways that seem strange to others, for they are heeding the bidding of magic itself, not in the form of a voice that can be reasoned with, but as an impulse that, most of the times, the soulsinger believes come from his own initiative.

Strengths

A soulsinger gains a number of benefits from adding sorcerer levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

The Soulsinger (Bard/Sorcerer)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)
2 nd	Sor 1	+0	+0	+2	+4	Summon familiar
3 rd	Brd 2	+1	+0	+3	+5	(character feat)
4 th	Sor 2	+2	+0	+3	+6	(ability increase)
5 th	Brd 3	+3	+1	+3	+6	Inspire competence
6 th	Sor 3	+3	+2	+4	+6	(character feat)
7 th	Brd 4	+4	+2	+5	+7	
8 th	Sor 4	+5	+2	+5	+8	(ability increase)
9 th	Brd 5	+5	+2	+5	+8	(character feat)
10 th	Sor 5	+5	+2	+5	+8	
11 th	Brd 6	+6/+1	+3	+6	+9	<i>Suggestion</i>
12 th	Sor 6	+7/+2	+4	+7	+10	(character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Brd 7	+8/+3	+4	+7	+10	
14 th	Sor 7	+8/+3	+4	+7	+10	
15 th	Brd 8	+9/+4	+4	+8	+11	Inspire courage +2, (character feat)
16 th	Sor 8	+10/+5	+4	+8	+12	(ability increase)
17 th	Brd 9	+10/+5	+5	+8	+12	Inspire greatness
18 th	Sor 9	+10/+5	+6	+9	+12	(character feat)
19 th	Brd 10	+11/+6/+1	+6	+10	+13	
20 th	Sor 10	+12/+7/+2	+6	+10	+14	(ability increase)

Soulsinger Bard Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
10 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
13 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
14 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
15 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
16 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
18 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
19 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
20 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.



Soulsinger Sorcerer Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day						Spells Known					
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
1 st	0 th	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	5	3	—	—	—	—	4	2	—	—	—	—
3 rd	1 st	5	3	—	—	—	—	4	2	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	6	4	—	—	—	—	5	2	—	—	—	—
5 th	2 nd	6	4	—	—	—	—	5	2	—	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	6	5	—	—	—	—	5	3	—	—	—	—
7 th	3 rd	6	5	—	—	—	—	5	3	—	—	—	—
8 th	4 th	6	6	3	—	—	—	6	3	1	—	—	—
9 th	4 th	6	6	3	—	—	—	6	3	1	—	—	—
10 th	5 th	6	6	4	—	—	—	6	4	2	—	—	—
11 th	5 th	6	6	4	—	—	—	6	4	2	—	—	—
12 th	6 th	6	6	5	3	—	—	7	4	2	1	—	—
13 th	6 th	6	6	5	3	—	—	7	4	2	1	—	—
14 th	7 th	6	6	6	4	—	—	7	5	3	2	—	—
15 th	7 th	6	6	6	4	—	—	7	5	3	2	—	—
16 th	8 th	6	6	6	5	3	—	8	5	3	2	1	—
17 th	8 th	6	6	6	5	3	—	8	5	3	2	1	—
18 th	9 th	6	6	6	6	4	—	8	5	4	3	2	—
19 th	9 th	6	6	6	6	4	—	8	5	4	3	2	—
20 th	10 th	6	6	6	6	5	3	9	5	4	3	2	1

Soulsinger Spell Pool (Variant Rule)

Level	Spells per Day					
	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
1 st	2	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd	7	3	—	—	—	—
3 rd	8	3	—	—	—	—
4 th	9	4	—	—	—	—
5 th	9	5	—	—	—	—
6 th	9	6	—	—	—	—
7 th	9	7	0	—	—	—
8 th	9	8	3	—	—	—
9 th	9	9	4	—	—	—
10 th	9	9	4	—	—	—
11 th	9	9	6	—	—	—
12 th	9	9	7	3	—	—
13 th	9	9	7	3	—	—
14 th	9	9	8	4	—	—
15 th	9	9	9	5	—	—
16 th	9	9	9	6	3	—
17 th	9	9	9	7	3	—
18 th	9	9	9	8	4	—
19 th	9	9	9	8	4	—
20 th	9	9	9	8	5	3

- + **Spell List:** The sorcerer’s spell list is much more varied than a bard’s giving him access to more types of arcane magic.
- + **Spells per Day:** The sorcerer adds the ability to cast many more spells per da, albeit of the lower levels.
- + **Familiar:** The sorcerer gains a familiar at 1st level; being an intelligent creature, it can complement a bard’s disguise as an itinerant performer, if the familiar does not feel too dignified to perform parlour tricks.
- + **Ability Synergy:** Both the bard and the sorcerer depend on Charisma to cast their spells, meaning that they will grow strong in both fields of magic by assigning ability increases to Charisma.

Weaknesses

The soulsinger dilutes his bardic training by taking up sorcerer levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Hit Die:** The sorcerer's d4 Hit Die is even worse than the bard's d6, severely limiting his usefulness as a support combatant and relegating him to the role of magical support.
- ✦ **Base Attack Bonus:** The sorcerer's base attack bonus increases poorly, diminishing the bard's chances of hitting things.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The sorcerer's poor Reflex save leaves a bard unprepared for some of the threats they are more likely to face.
- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/sorcerer will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and sorcerer levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ The character should divide his spells by purpose when deciding what class will learn it. Sorcerer spells are more useful for artillery purposes, such as damaging spells and other spells with instantaneous effects, or which the character expects to be dispelled. *Dispel magic* would be useful only if expecting to take the sorcerer class up to 10th level, the maximum bonus allowed by the spell for caster checks.
- ✦ The character should not buy ranks in Use Magic Device unless he is interested in using divine magic items, for his sorcerer levels already give him free access to more than half of the magic items.
- ✦ The character should take one of the following familiars: a snake for the bonus to Bluff checks or a toad for the additional hit points. For issues more related to flavour, the raven is better suited for the bard.

- ✦ The bard is an obligatory starting class, not only for the more numerous skill points and class skills, but also the higher hit die and weapon proficiencies.
- ✦ Since the sorcerer suffers from arcane spell failure with all types of armour, the character should learn spells like *shield* and *mage armour* to protect himself. The later addition of *stoneskin* never hurts.

Variant Rules

- ✦ **Spell Pool:** Starting at 3rd character level, the character can select Spell Pool as a feat. As soon as he does so, he merges the spell slots from his bard and sorcerer classes. This only affects the spells that the character can cast in a day; the spells he learns remain the same, separated by the different spell lists. The character does not learn additional spells, and any spell he casts is done with all the characteristics determined by the appropriate caster level; that is, the character can spend a 3rd level spell slot to cast a 3rd level sorcerer spell (minimum caster level 6th) or a 3rd level bard spell (minimum caster level 7th), but the characteristics of each spell are determined by the class that it belongs to.
- ✦ **Soul Spell:** Upon gaining 6th character level, the character can tap the power of his soul to empower his magic, and can select Soul Spell as a feat with prerequisites of bardic music and sorcerer levels. The character can increase the save DC of a spell or its caster level with uses of bardic music, with the casting and the use of bardic music taking the same action. Each bardic music use yields a number of soul spell points equal to one for every three ranks in his highest Perform skill. Every +1 bonus to a spell's save DC costs 1 soul spell point, and every +1 caster level costs two soul spell points. For example, a 10th level soulsinger with ten ranks in his Perform skill casts a spell and boosts it with a bardic music use (three soul spell points); he could raise the spell's save DC by +3 or cast it as a 6th level sorcerer or 6th level bard (as per the table below) *and* raise the spell's save DC by +1.
- ✦ **Quicken Soul Spell:** Upon gaining 9th character level, the character can select Quicken Soul Spell as a feat with prerequisites of bardic music and sorcerer levels. The character acquires the equivalent of the Quicken Spell feat. Spontaneous casters normally cannot cast a quickened spell, but with this variant



The Loremage (Bard/Wizard)

Level	Class	Base Attack Bonus	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special
1 st	Brd 1	+0	+0	+2	+2	Bardic music, bardic knowledge, countersong, <i>fascinate</i> , inspire courage +1, (character feat)
2 nd	Wiz 1	+0	+0	+2	+4	Summon familiar, Scribe Scroll
3 rd	Brd 2	+1	+0	+3	+5	(character feat)
4 th	Wiz 2	+2	+0	+3	+6	(ability increase)
5 th	Brd 3	+3	+1	+3	+6	Inspire competence
6 th	Wiz 3	+3	+2	+4	+6	(character feat)
7 th	Brd 4	+4	+2	+5	+7	
8 th	Wiz 4	+5	+2	+5	+8	(ability increase)
9 th	Brd 5	+5	+2	+5	+8	(character feat)
10 th	Brd 6	+6/+1	+3	+6	+9	<i>Suggestion</i>
11 th	Wiz 5	+6/+1	+3	+6	+9	Bonus feat
12 th	Brd 7	+7/+2	+3	+6	+9	(character feat, ability increase)
13 th	Wiz 6	+8/+3	+4	+7	+10	
14 th	Brd 8	+9/+4	+4	+8	+11	Inspire courage +2
15 th	Wiz 7	+9/+4	+4	+8	+11	(character feat)
16 th	Brd 9	+9/+4	+5	+8	+11	Inspire greatness, (ability increase)
17 th	Wiz 8	+10/+5	+5	+8	+12	
18 th	Wiz 9	+10/+5	+6	+9	+12	(character feat)
19 th	Brd 10	+11/+6/+1	+6	+9	+13	
20 th	Wiz 10	+12/+7/+2	+6	+10	+14	Bonus feat, (ability increase)

Loremage Wizard Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day ¹					
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	5 th
1 st	0 th	—	—	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	3	1	—	—	—	—
3 rd	1 st	3	1	—	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	4	2	—	—	—	—
5 th	2 nd	4	2	—	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	4	2	1	—	—	—
7 th	3 rd	4	2	1	—	—	—
8 th	4 th	4	3	2	—	—	—
9 th	4 th	4	3	2	—	—	—
10 th	4 th	4	3	2	—	—	—
11 th	5 th	4	3	2	1	—	—
12 th	5 th	4	3	2	1	—	—
13 th	6 th	4	3	3	2	—	—
14 th	6 th	4	3	3	2	—	—
15 th	7 th	4	4	3	2	1	—
16 th	7 th	4	4	3	2	1	—
17 th	8 th	4	4	3	3	2	—
18 th	9 th	4	4	4	3	2	1
19 th	9 th	4	4	4	3	2	1
20 th	10 th	4	4	4	3	3	2

rule, the character may do so by spending two uses of bardic music at the same time as he casts the spell. A quickened soul spell takes up a spell slot three levels higher than the spell's actual level.

LOREPAGE (BARD/WIZARD)

Knowledge is power, and no one knows this better than the loremage, a character who explores the intricacies of arcane magic in order to see all it is capable of. Loremagages approach magic with a two-pronged attack, studying its formulae and tapping into their own inspiration. The combination that results from both approaches is something worthy to behold, as the loremage understands both the letter and the spirit of magical laws. The knowledge that he gains from this allows him to be more flexible in his use of magic, taking one method where other proves ineffective.

In addition to their magical insight, loremagages are also master scholars, with the knowledge of ages past and days present available at the tips of their tongues. They

Loremage Bard Spells

Level	Caster Level	Spells per Day					Spells Known				
		0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th	0 th	1 st	2 nd	3 rd	4 th
1 st	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
2 nd	1 st	2	—	—	—	—	4	—	—	—	—
3 rd	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
4 th	2 nd	3	0	—	—	—	5	2 ¹	—	—	—
5 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
6 th	3 rd	3	1	—	—	—	6	3	—	—	—
7 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
8 th	4 th	3	2	0	—	—	6	3	2 ¹	—	—
9 th	5 th	3	3	1	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
10 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
11 th	6 th	3	3	2	—	—	6	4	3	—	—
12 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
13 th	7 th	3	3	2	0	—	6	4	4	2 ¹	—
14 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
15 th	8 th	3	3	3	1	—	6	4	4	3	—
16 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
17 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
18 th	9 th	3	3	3	2	—	6	4	4	3	—
19 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹
20 th	10 th	3	3	3	2	0	6	4	4	4	2 ¹

¹ Provided the character has a high enough Charisma score to have a bonus spell of this level.

are ready to engage in friendly banter with anyone that looks remotely interesting, all in the hopes to gain more insights that increase their understanding of most about everything, which in turn empowers their magical spells.

Strengths

A loremage gains a number of benefits from adding wizard levels to his bard class, the following being the most important for the role of the bard:

- ✦ **Powerful Spellcasting:** The wizard can learn a great variety of spells as he writes them down in his spellbook; provided he has time to plan, he can prepare the best spell for any situation. In addition he gains access to powerful arcane spells much quicker than any other arcane spellcasting class. The character's maximum spellcasting ability for spell levels 0th through 5th does not differ much from a full wizard's and a 20th level loremage (Brd10/Wiz10) can cast only four spells per day less.

- ✦ **Bonus Feats:** Wizard levels grant the loremage with a couple of bonus feats he can use to empower his magic. Scribe Scroll is particularly useful if he wants to learn spells as a bard that he has in his wizard spellbook

- ✦ **Familiar:** The wizard gains a familiar at 1st level; being an intelligent creature, it can complement a bard's disguise as an itinerant performer, if the familiar does not feel too dignified to perform parlour tricks.

Weaknesses

The loremage dilutes his bardic training by taking up wizard levels, adding the following weaknesses:

- ✦ **Hit Die:** The wizard's d4 Hit Die is even worse than the bard's d6, severely limiting his usefulness as a support combatant and relegating him to the role of magical support.



- ✦ **Base Attack Bonus:** The wizard's base attack bonus increases poorly, diminishing the bard's chances of hitting things.
- ✦ **Saving Throws:** The wizard's poor Reflex save leaves a bard unprepared for some of the threats they are more likely to face.
- ✦ **Arcane Spell Failure:** A wizard's magic is affected by even the lightest armour even if the bard's is not, so the character must either learn to fight unarmoured or risk the chance of spell failure.
- ✦ **Spell Access:** A multiclass bard/wizard will not reach the heights of power as a pure bard. It must be noted that this is a very severe disadvantage that must be weighed very carefully; a multiclass bard will not be able to cast spells like *invisibility* until an average character level of 7th, where normally he would be able to learn it at 4th level.
- ✦ **Caster Level:** By dividing his attention between classes, the character has a smaller caster level than he would otherwise have, reducing the effectiveness of some spells.
- ✦ **Ability Disparity:** A wizard's spellcasting depends on his Intelligence while a bard depends on his Charisma for both spellcasting and other abilities; this might distract the distribution of ability increases, depending on what ability scores the character started with.
- ✦ If the wizard is a specialist, the character can learn prohibited spells as a bard.
- ✦ Healing spells are a must; wizards have no access to them.
- ✦ See the advice for the soulsinger multiclass regarding familiars, defensive options, the Use Magic Device skill and preferred starting class.
- ✦ The character can become a specialist wizard and select the illusion and/or enchantment schools as prohibited schools, while still learning spells and being capable of using magic items from those schools using with his bard levels.

Variant Rules

Recommended Options

As the character combines bard and wizard levels, there are some options he can take to optimise the mixture of both classes' abilities.

- ✦ The most important recommendation is to watch over the spell selection for each class. Each class has its own style and preferences for magic, echoed in their differing spell lists. Do not repeat spells; even given the ability to cast the same spell spontaneously as well as prepared is not worth the loss of flexibility from the bard's limited spells known.
- ✦ Metamagic feats are the best option to use both the character feats as well as the wizard's bonus feats, for they can be applied to the spells of both classes. Remember that a bard has no use for Silent Spell nor Quicken Spell.
- ✦ **True Scholar:** Starting at 2nd wizard level, the character may elect to spend three skill points on learning to integrate his two spheres of knowledge. From that point onward, he adds his wizard level as well as his bard level to all bardic knowledge checks.
- ✦ **Spell Intuition:** Upon gaining 6th character level, the character can select Spell Intuition as a feat with the prerequisites of bardic music and at least one wizard level. From this point onwards, he can spontaneously add metamagic effects to his prepared spells by spending one use of bardic music per metamagic spell. In addition to spending the prepared spell, adding metamagic spontaneously also requires the character to spend a spell slot of the level indicated by the metamagic effect, but he can choose to sacrifice either a prepared spell or a spontaneous spell slot.
- ✦ **Mechanical Understanding:** Upon gaining 9th level, the character gains an intimate understanding of how magic interacts with items it enchants. The character can take Mechanical Understanding as a feat with the prerequisite of any Item Creation feat. When a character is within 30 feet of a magic item (whether he identifies it by its owner using it, through *detect magic* or by other similar abilities) he can spend a use of bardic music to try to disrupt it. The character makes a caster check, using his full character level against a DC of 10 plus the item's caster level. If he is successful, he suppresses one effect on the item. For items with multiple effects, the character chooses which one he suppresses. The effect remains unavailable for a number of minutes equal to the character's Intelligence modifier multiplied by ten.

THE LEGENDARY BARD

Bards are crafters of legends, singing the stories of great heroes performing their great deeds, but many times it is the bards themselves who become legend, going on impossible journeys to unknown places and returning to sing about what they have seen. A bard can reach such heights of talent and skill in his chosen art that his performance bring tears to the eyes of gods and wake souls from the lands of the dead.

By meeting certain criteria, a bard character may divert his advancement towards a set of abilities that are literally the stuff of legends. Sometimes he seeks these paths, but other times they find him, leaving him little choice but to follow them and see what lies at the end... sometimes he does not even realise he is becoming a legend until he hears his own songs praised by other bards.

This chapter presents a number of prestige classes suitable for bards of medium to high level; members of

other classes that meet the prerequisites may start upon their path, although they find it much more difficult to join, as they lack the multiple talents that the bard takes for granted.

BUTTERFLY

The land is brimming with adventures; there are always monsters to slay, armies to rout, ruins to explore. But there is a microcosm of adventure that few have the patience, not to mention the savvy, to navigate and thrive in: society. Society has its own monsters and labyrinths that must be dealt with through a different approach than straight adventuring, and the butterfly knows exactly how. The butterfly can move through the corners of society with practised ease, mingling with commoners and nobility without breaking a sweat, adopting the mannerisms and learning the etiquette of all environments. The butterfly possesses the tools to play with members of society as if they were pawns on a board, just the same way a general manages his troops on the battlefield.

Epic Levels

Some of these classes may take a character beyond 20th level; indeed, many are actually designed to do so! When a character gains his 21st level, whether from a single class or any combination of multiclassing and prestige classes, he becomes an epic character as detailed in *Core Rulebook II*, at which point some of his characteristics change slightly.

The character can reach 21st level while in the middle of taking one of the prestige classes in this book, in which case he follows the following rules:

- ✦ Ignore the prestige class' base attack bonus and all base save bonuses; use the progression in the epic advancement table below using the total character level instead of any individual class level. These are epic bonuses that do not grant additional attacks (in the case of the base attack bonus).
- ✦ Continue to gain the class features of each level attained in both the prestige class and any previous core class until they reach their maximum (5th or 10th for prestige classes, 20th for core classes).
- ✦ Prestige classes with five levels stop there and the character must gain new levels from other classes.
- ✦ Core classes and prestige classes with ten levels may continue advancing beyond their maximum,

using the progression information found in *Core Rulebook II* for core classes, and the epic progression text box in the description of each prestige class in this book. Ten-level prestige classes may only be advanced beyond 10th level if the character's total character level is 20th or higher.

- ✦ Character feats and ability increases are gained normally at every level divisible by three for feats and any level divisible by four for ability increases.

Epic Advancement

Character Level	Epic Attack Bonus	Epic Save Bonus
21 st	+1	+0
22 nd	+1	+1
23 rd	+2	+1
24 th	+2	+2
25 th	+3	+2
26 th	+3	+3
27 th	+4	+3
28 th	+4	+4
29 th	+5	+4
30 th	+5	+5



The butterfly flits around all the echelons of civilised society, adopting the proper ways of conducting himself so that he truly becomes a citizen of the world, belonging to every kind of settlement where people interact in a peaceful manner. He is the hidden master of the people, as well as its voice and its senses.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

Abilities: Charisma 15 or higher.

Skills: Bluff 5 ranks, Gather Information 10 ranks, Diplomacy 8 ranks, Sense Motive 5 ranks.

Feats: Spell Focus (enchantment).

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast spontaneous arcane spells.

Class Skills

The butterfly's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (nobility and royalty) (Int), Knowledge (local) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (n/a) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Butterflies are proficient with all simple weapons as well as with the whip. They are not proficient with any type of armour or with shields.

Spellcasting: At every level, the butterfly gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities, and so forth) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a butterfly, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Eyes of the People (Su): At 1st level, the butterfly initially learns to mingle with people by simple observation, taking in the local quirks until he literally becomes one with the citizens of a community. The character touches a target casually, which may happen normally or may be forced with a touch attack or Sleight of Hand check (DC equal to the target's AC). The character can then see through the eyes of the person touched. He cannot guide the person's movements, and the person is not aware that there is a passenger in his eyes. While the character is limited to the target's visual range, he sees things as if he were looking at them with his own eyes, which means that he may enjoy the benefits of low-light vision and darkvision even if the target does not possess either, and also the effects of spells like *true seeing*. The character cannot cast spells through his target. While seeing through another's eyes, the character has only a partial awareness of what is around him; he can only move at half-speed and has a -4 penalty to Spot checks and Reflex saves, and he is denied his Dexterity bonus to AC. The character must concentrate to maintain this

The Butterfly

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Eyes of the people 1/day, voice of the people	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	<i>One of the herd</i>	+1 level of existing class
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Alternate life, sense relationship	+1 level of existing class
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Eyes of the people 2/day	+1 level of existing class
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	<i>Subtle manipulation</i>	+1 level of existing class
6 th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Alternate life	+1 level of existing class
7 th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Eyes of the people 3/day	+1 level of existing class
8 th	+6	+2	+2	+6		+1 level of existing class
9 th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Alternate life	+1 level of existing class
10 th	+7	+3	+3	+7	<i>Subtle manipulation II</i> , eyes of the people 4/day	+1 level of existing class

ability, which has a maximum duration of 15 minutes per butterfly class level. Only creatures with an Intelligence score of 4 or higher can carry the character's sight with this ability. At 1st level, the character can use this ability only once per day, but every three levels thereafter he can use it one additional time per day. If the duration of this ability ends and the character can use it more than once per day, he can spend another use immediately without losing his concentration on his current target.

Voice of the People (Su): Just as the butterfly learns to see what the people see, he gains the ability to speak with their voice. With a successful Gather Information check (DC depending on the community's size as determined by the table below), the character can know how the majority of the people feel towards a certain subject. He can speak what that opinion is with the certainty that only his magical social senses can give him. If the character has the bardic knowledge feature or an equivalent ability, he adds that bonus to the Gather Information check.

Community	DC
Thorp	5
Hamlet	10
Village	12
Small Town	15
Large Town	18
Small City	20
Large City	25
Metropolis	30

One of the Herd (Sp): At 2nd level the character gains the ability to blend in anywhere, making himself appear as a member of whatever community or group he mingles with. This is not an illusionary disguise, but a mind-affecting ability that convinces everyone around the character that he belongs there and deserves no further attention. Creatures with a reason to suspect the character or whose job is to recognise intruders and outsiders (such as guards) are entitled a Will save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Cha modifier); if successful, their perception does not dismiss the butterfly and they will react accordingly, although they will not know they were subject to a spell-like ability. If they fail, they consider the character to belong to the scene somehow and do not bother him. If the character does something to stand out, such as interacting with people physically or for more than a brief moment, onlookers receive a +1 bonus to their Will save. The character can use this ability once per day or, if he has bardic music abilities, spend one use of bardic music to activate this. *One of the herd* lasts ten minutes per character level.

Epic Butterfly

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Bonus Feats: The epic butterfly gains a bonus feat every three levels higher than 10th.

Spellcasting: Upon reaching 21st character level, the character stops gaining new spell slots and learning new spells; he must take the Improved Spell Capacity epic feat to gain new spell slots and the Spell Knowledge epic feat to learn new spells.

Eyes of the People (Su): Every three levels after 10th, the epic butterfly can use this ability one additional time per day up to a maximum of six times per day. When he is able to use this ability seven times per day, instead he can now use it at will.

Alternate Life (Ex): The character continues creating alternate identities, gaining a new one on every level divisible by three (12th, 15th, 18th, etc.).

Sense Relationships (Su): At 3rd level the butterfly's social senses become more refined; he not only knows the general opinion of a populace, but now he can also observe any sizeable gathering and determine the network of contacts and acquaintances present. Three times per day per plus one per Wisdom modifier, the character can look at a single intelligent creature and sense the ties between him and others along with its strength, which can go from simple business relationships that break off once a transaction is over, to secret and passionate liaisons. The character can only focus on one person at a time, but he can 'jump' to other persons he is connected to. The character can sense connections with people which are not present, but he can only sense the nature of the connection, not the identity of the other end of the link (so he can know a person has very strong feelings towards a third party, but he cannot know who it is if that other person is not present). Once he activates this ability, the character can keep jumping his perspective from person to person until he gets bored, or he can follow a particular person and see all the ties he has with people he crosses paths with. The butterfly cannot read the thoughts and current emotions of his targets, only analyse the ties that bind him to the people he interacts with.

Alternate Life (Ex): When mingling with the different strata of society, the butterfly finds it useful to masquerade as someone else belonging to that social circle. When he reaches 3rd level, the character has spent enough time manipulating and observing in



order to plant clues and references about a fake identity. The character can assume this identity and it will be recognised most of the times, allowing the character to forge networks of contacts in different environments, as well as entry into certain places. Anyone investigating on the background of his forged identity will find the clues that the butterfly planted, lending authenticity to his assumed life. Throughout his career, the character forges additional identities, gaining a different one at 6th and 9th levels. The player must detail the alternate identities with name, profession, brief personal history, etc.; whatever friendships and enmities he has will be gained by playing as that identity. For mechanical purposes, whenever the character assumes one of his identities, the player rolls a Disguise check, adding his butterfly level as a bonus. The check result becomes the DC of any Spot check other characters must make to pierce the disguise, but only if there is some justification to their suspicions and only if the character is present. Piercing the true nature of an alternate life requires a Gather Information check with a DC equal to 15 plus the character's level plus his Charisma modifier.

Subtle Manipulation (Su): At 5th level, the butterfly gains the ability to cause a reaction he desires from a chosen target with some carefully disguised conversation and gossip. The character must make a Bluff check, adding his butterfly class level as a bonus against the target's Will save. If the target defeats the butterfly by one to four points, he is not affected and remains unaware that the character was trying to manipulate him. If the save beats the Bluff check by five or more points, the would-be victim is aware of the character's intentions, although he might not know exactly how the butterfly was trying to pull off his manipulation. If the butterfly rolls higher, he can make his victim either perform a single action expressed in a short sentence, or have a particular opinion towards a certain subject of the butterfly's choosing. The victim is entitled a new Will save at the end of each day for a change of opinion and for any unfulfilled task against the same DC, but each day that passes the DC decreases by -1. The character can attempt to use this mind-affecting, language-dependent ability once per day or by spending one use of bardic music if available.

Subtle Manipulation II (Su): This is the same as the subtle manipulation ability, except that at 10th level the character can now affect a number of creatures whose added HD and/or levels do not exceed twice the butterfly's full character level. Creatures with six or more HD and/or levels can make a Will save individually, but weaker creatures attempt their save as one using the highest bonus amongst those present.

FATESINGER

Fate is an uncertain thing that scholars and philosophers never seem to agree on, with priests and wizards only adding complications. For some, fate is something written in stone by divinity, for others it is a force that can be manipulated with the sufficient knowledge and power. Fatesingers do not care for such definitions. For them, fate shares many characteristics with music – it can be defined, but not truly comprehended. A fate singer reaches inside his soul to seek the core of his artistic inspiration, only to find that the chords he touches can play to a different music, and that the passion and inspiration with which they sing echoes in the ephemeral flows of the fate around them. Fatesingers are not organised as a group and very few people in the world even know that they exist, with most of those being fatesingers themselves.

A fatesinger usually finds their unique talent on their own in a great epiphany while they finish their greatest performance ever or when sketching the final note on the most sublime composition of their careers; their hearts have touched a wellspring of beauty and power, and such insight allows them to perceive and directly affect such an elusive concept as fate.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

Abilities: Charisma 15 or higher.

Epic Fatesinger

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Bonus Feats: The epic fatesinger gains a bonus feat every three levels higher than 10th.

Spellcasting: Upon reaching 21st character level, the character stops gaining new spell slots and learning new spells; he must take the Improved Spell Capacity epic feat to gain new spell slots and the Spell Knowledge epic feat to learn new spells.

Fated Abilities: For every three levels a fatesinger attains beyond the level where he gained one of the fate-altering spell-like abilities, the fatesinger can affect one additional target with a single activation to that ability. The abilities included are *fated success*, *destined avoidance* and *fated failure*.

True Destiny: Every three levels above 10th (13th, 16th and 19th) the character can use this ability one additional time per day.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Spellcraft 5 ranks, Perform 12 ranks.

Feats: Spell Focus (divination).

Other: Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The fatesinger's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Fatesingers are proficient with all simple weapons as well as with the whip. They are not proficient with any type of armour or with shields.

Spellcasting: At every level, the fatesinger gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities and suchlike) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a fatesinger, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Music: The fatesinger continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability. To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, his bard and fatesinger levels stack. The character does not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Defensive Manipulation (Su): The fatesinger starts his journey by learning how to manipulate fate reflexively and only centred around himself. He adds his Charisma modifier as a deflection bonus to his AC.

Fated Success (Su): Normal bards can help allies to perform better by encouraging them to give their all; fatesingers do it by inscribing success into their personal fates. A 2nd level fatesinger with at least 12 ranks in



Perform can spend two uses of bardic music to ensure success for himself or a single ally within 30 feet. For every three levels a fatesinger attains beyond 2nd, he can target one additional ally with a single use of this ability (two at 5th level, three at 8th). To bring about a fated success, a fatesinger must sing, and if targeting an ally then that character must hear him sing. The effect works on the target's next skill check. A creature whose fate has been changed to ensure success adds a +20 circumstance to the next skill check that he performs while the fatesinger is reciting and five rounds after he stops.

Destined Avoidance (Su): Singing to the fate of an expected action is easy, and as the fatesinger grows more comfortable with his influence over destiny, he learns to react to events he did not expect, such as ambushes, traps and special attacks. A 4th level fatesinger with at least 14 ranks in Perform can spend two uses of his bardic music ability to rewrite the strands of fate that dictate an ally will fall victim to an attack. This ability is a free action that the fatesinger can use outside his turn up to once per round, but it uses up a standard action either in his upcoming turn in the present round or in the next one if the character already acted in that round. The ally must be within 30 feet and able to hear the character, and the fatesinger must be able to see his ally. The ally whose destiny is being rewritten gains a +20 circumstance



bonus to one saving throw. The fatesinger may only rewrite destiny in this way once per round.

Fated Failure (Su): Now that the fatesinger can rearrange fate reflexively, his talents expand so that he learns to affect targets whose fates are opposed or inimical to his or his allies' own. A 5th level fatesinger with at least 15 ranks in Perform can spend a use of his bardic music ability to dictate the failure of one target at a single task. For every three levels a fatesinger attains beyond 5th, he can target one additional opponent with a single use of this ability (two at 8th level). To bring about a fated failure, a fatesinger must sing and the target must be within 30 feet and hear him sing. The fatesinger determines whether the effect works on the targeted opponent's next skill check, saving throw or attack roll, but once decided he cannot change it. The target is entitled a Will save (DC 10 + fatesinger class level + Cha modifier) to negate the effect. A creature whose fate has been altered to include failure suffers a -20 circumstance bonus on the next roll of the type determined by the fatesinger when he used this ability.

Fated Strike (Su): Combat is a tangled mess of interweaving destinies which change from moment to moment, but the fatesinger has learned how to pull on the immediate strands in order to ensure a simple but devastating result. A 6th level fatesinger with at least 16 ranks in Perform can spend two uses of his bardic music ability to ensure the success of one attack made by an ally. To propitiate a successful attack, a fatesinger must sing and his target must hear him sing in addition to being within 30 feet. A target whose fate has been tweaked to ensure a successful attack gains a +20 circumstance bonus to his next attack roll.

Instant Recall (Su): The character has achieved such a powerful influence on what happens that he can turn back a fate that he finds undesirable. The character

must act with certain forethought and mark a moment where he can start monitoring fate. The player records what happens during each round in a combat situation or each five minutes during a non-combat situation; which attacks succeed, which spells are cast, which skills checks are performed and the consequences of each. By spending three uses of his bardic music ability he can reverse the consequences of any one effect that happened within a round (for combat) or within five minutes (for other situations) per point of Charisma modifier that he possesses. The memory of the event remains in the minds of everyone present, but the effect itself is reversed. A grievous wound's damage never really affected a character, a wizard never really cast a spell (thus recovering his spell slot) and so forth. The Games Master is the final arbiter on which acts can be reversed by the fatesinger's manipulation.

True Destiny (Su): When the fatesinger reaches the peak of his abilities, he not only has control of what happened and what may happen, but also of what did *not* happen. By spending two uses of his bardic music ability, the fatesinger can rearrange fate in his favour, adding one element to a present scene. Such elements include having just the right piece of equipment for the situation, altering the quality of a piece of scenery so that it is advantageous to the character (or disadvantageous to his enemies), and similiar bonuses. As a general rule, things that 'just happened to happen' are the things that the fatesinger can include in a given situation. He can only attempt to rearrange fate in this way once per day.

INTERLOPER

Tales are told of many heroic figures who, while not particularly mighty at arms or educated in the arcane, manage to achieve great deeds more due to being in the wrong place at the worst possible time. Their strength lies in a talent for grabbing opportunities as they present

The Fatesinger

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Defensive manipulation, bardic music	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	<i>Fated success</i>	+1 level of existing class
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3		+1 level of existing class
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	<i>Destined avoidance</i>	+1 level of existing class
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	<i>Fated failure</i>	+1 level of existing class
6 th	+4	+2	+2	+5	<i>Fated strike</i>	+1 level of existing class
7 th	+5	+2	+2	+5		+1 level of existing class
8 th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Instant recall	+1 level of existing class
9 th	+6	+3	+3	+6		+1 level of existing class
10 th	+7	+3	+3	+7	True destiny 1/day	+1 level of existing class

themselves, making the best of the situations they find themselves in and turning apparent defeat into victory more due to luck and determination than anything else. Interlopers are this kind of hero – always seeming to end up in incredibly dangerous circumstances, finding themselves in the middle of some nefarious plan or sinister plot where they wreak havoc with their unbelievable antics. They do not *specialise* in foiling evil machinations and plans; fate simply draws interlopers to such activities like iron filings to a magnet.

Interlopers are seldom clueless about the environments they throw themselves into. They often follow careers that bring them into the kids of bizarre and exotic locales that nurture lairs of evil – many are archaeologists, explorers, spies or just adventurers. They are often well-informed, knowing a great deal of incidental lore and information that always seems to come in handy during their exploits, and allows them to react quickly and effectively to changes in their environment.

Interlopers are said to be the quintessential adventurers; they mix raw talent with a bit of planning, the ability to improvise with the knack to understand. They can throw a wrench into any kind of gear and unravel years, even decades of careful planning with just a little force applied in just the right place.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

Base Attack Bonus: 7 or higher.

Skills: Spot 8 ranks, Tumble 8 ranks, Knowledge (any one) 8 ranks.

Feats: Improved Initiative.

Other: Must have the bardic music and bardic knowledge abilities.

Class Skills

The interloper's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex), and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Interlopers are proficient with all simple weapons, with three martial



weapons as well as with the whip. They are proficient with light armour but not with shields.

Spellcasting: At every odd level, the interloper gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities, and suchlike) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming an interloper, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Music: The interloper continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability. To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, he adds half his interloper level to his bard levels. The character does not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Lore (Ex): The interloper is an avid collector of knowledge and information, both from idle gossip as well as study. He adds his interloper level as a



The Interloper

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+1	+2	+2	+0	Lore, identify magic	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+2	+3	+3	+0	Understanding	
3 rd	+3	+3	+3	+1	Panache	+1 level of existing class
4 th	+4	+4	+4	+1	Opportunistic escape	
5 th	+5	+4	+4	+1	Interference	+1 level of existing class

competence bonus to bardic knowledge checks as well as to all Knowledge skill checks.

Understanding (Ex): Whether from heightened awareness, a synergic combination of different knowledge or a nearly supernatural talent for communication, the interloper has a chance to understand anything that has a meaning, be it a language, a symbol or a body gesture. He adds his interloper level as a competence bonus to Decipher Script and Sense Motive checks. In addition, he can make a bardic knowledge check (DC 15) to glean some meaning from any language spoken before him; he does not understand or speak it, but he knows the general meanings and intentions.

Identify Magic (Sp): The interloper finds himself often in situations where he is the target of magic, or where magic is present in one way or another. The character makes a Will save whenever he is in the presence of magic or the magically charged, with a DC depending on the effect in question (see table). If he successfully recognises the presence of magic or when presented with other evidence that something is magical, the interloper can proceed to identify its properties, which is similar to an *analyse dweomer* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of the character's caster level, except that the character makes a Spellcraft check adding his interloper level as a competence bonus, with a DC equal to 15 + the effect's spell level or half its equivalent caster level.

Magic	DC
Spell (being cast)	8 + spell level
Spell (in place)	10 + spell level
Spell-like ability (being used)	5 + creature's HD
Spell-like ability (in place)	10 + creature's HD
Magic Item	12 + caster level
Spellcaster	15 + caster level
Creature with spell-like abilities	17 + creature's HD

Panache (Ex): Interlopers are known for their ability to succeed when everyone thought they could fail. When a roll that an Interloper makes fails to meet a DC or an opposed roll by a margin of up to five points plus the interloper's Intelligence modifier (if positive), he can spend one use of his bardic music ability to consider the action a success, although a marginal one with reduced effects (Games Master's option; a barely saved attack roll could have a reduced damage roll, for example).

Opportunistic Escape (Ex): At 4th level and higher, the interloper can avoid even magical and unusual attacks with great agility, similar to a rogue's Evasion ability. If he makes a successful Reflex saving throw against an attack that normally deals half damage on a successful save, he instead takes no damage, but if he succeeds by ten points or more, he is able to direct his escape with grace and tactical advantage, gaining one of the following benefits (player's choice):

- +2 to his initiative place.
- +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls for 3 rounds.
- +2 on further saving throws of any kind for 3 rounds.
- Negate his attacker's Dexterity bonus to AC for 2 rounds.

This ability can be used only if the character is wearing light armour or no armour. A helpless interloper does not gain the benefit of opportunistic escape. This ability counts as evasion for the purpose of gaining improved evasion from some other class.

Interference (Ex): The interloper is an expert when it comes to messing up other people's plans, interrupting carefully-laid strategies as they unfold. Once per encounter per Charisma modifier, the interloper can change his initiative order to interrupt the actions of an opponent, just as if he had taken a ready action. The interloper must not have taken any action in the turn in order to use this ability, and he spends one use of his bardic music ability each time he does. The character's initiative order changes to the one he acted upon to interfere.

MAGISTER

Few forces operate with such capriciousness as magic; complete libraries have been written around it, both about new applications as well as about unique discoveries about what governs its behaviour. Magisters are people devoted to the study and understanding of magic itself and of magic's influence in the world around it. Magisters experiment with magic on fundamental levels, toying with how it flows by studying ancient texts that look at magic from the angle of the arcane practitioner as well as from the perspective of the awed witness, for both points of view complete the magister's vision of magic.

The magister experiments daily with magic; he casts spells in a variety of ways until he discovers the underlying principles of its power. His studies, however, are not like the long and dry treatises of archwizards, for the magister also values inspiration and improvisation; his spells are all devised and taken apart with an intact sense of wonder. The magister marvels at a spell's ability to twist the flow of magic.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

Abilities: Charisma 15 or higher, Intelligence 15 or higher.

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 8 ranks, Spellcraft 5 ranks, Perform 12 ranks.

Feats: Spell Focus (any), any one metamagic feat.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast spontaneous magic.

Other: Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The magister's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Magisters are proficient with simple weapons only. They are not proficient with any type of armour or with shields.

Spellcasting: At every level, the magister gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells,



he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities and suchlike) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a magister, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Music: The magister continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability. To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, his bard and magister levels stack. The character does not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Specialised Knowledge (Ex): The magister does not cease to pick up stray knowledge in his travels. However, his focus narrows from general knowledge to things more arcane. He adds his magister level as a competence bonus to bardic knowledge checks, but only to facts somehow related to magic, such as the name of a hermit wizard leaving in a nearby tower, the general properties of magical items, the resting places of legendary weapons, etc. He only adds ¼ of his magister level to other kinds of knowledge.



Epic Magister

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Bonus Feats: The epic magister gains a bonus feat every three levels higher than 10th.

Spellcasting: Upon reaching 21st character level, the character stops gaining new spell slots and learning new spells; he must take the Improved Spell Capacity epic feat to gain new spell slots and the Spell Knowledge epic feat to learn new spells.

Bonus Spell: The magister continues to learn additional spells every two levels above 10th level. When he achieves epic level, this immediately translates into the Spell Knowledge feat.

Bonus Spell: In addition to the spells he can gain every level, the magister learns an additional spell, adding it to his list of known spells for the class that casts spontaneous spells. The spell he learns through this feature must be one from one or more levels lower than the highest spell he is able to cast, and must belong to his spell list. He gains an additional bonus spell every odd level.

Spell Understanding (Ex): The character becomes intimate with the workings of magic, understanding the diagrams and words even if he cannot internalise them. Starting at 2nd level, the magister is capable of casting spells from objects that he would otherwise be unable to cast, or find it too difficult. The difficulty

for deciphering and using scrolls with the Use Magic Device skill are reduced by -10, while the difficulty for using spell trigger items is reduced by -5.

Bonus Feat: The magister gains a bonus feat, but he can only choose his feat from metamagic and item creation feats.

Experimentation: Upon reaching 2nd level, the magister expands his knowledge of magic. He adds a number of spells to his spell list equal to his Intelligence and Charisma modifiers added together. Note that he does *not* gain those spells automatically, he simply adds them to the list of spells he is capable of learning and using from spell trigger and spell completion items. He can select spells of the same type as his original spellcasting class (arcane or divine) that are up to one level higher than he can cast, or select spells from a different type of up to one level lower than he can cast. After adding such spells to his spell list, he can freely learn them whenever he gains new spells.

Greater Experimentation: The magister experiments with his magical knowledge, trying new methods in order to optimise his role as a spellcaster. Upon reaching 6th level, the magister can select a number of spells from his known spells repertoire equal to one per Charisma modifier; he loses the chosen spells and adds the levels to 'buy' new spells on a level-per-level basis. For example, a magister with Charisma 18 chooses four spells; two 2nd level spells, one 3rd level spell and a 4th level spell, totalling 11 spell levels, which he may use to learn any combination of spells (such as 11 1st level spells). He cannot learn spells of a level he is not able to cast yet and he does not gain additional spells slots.

The Magister

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Specialised knowledge, bonus spell	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Spell understanding, experimentation	+1 level of existing class
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Bonus spell	+1 level of existing class
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Bonus spell	+1 level of existing class
6 th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Greater experimentation	+1 level of existing class
7 th	+5	+2	+2	+5	Bonus spell	+1 level of existing class
8 th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Bonus feat	+1 level of existing class
9 th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Bonus spell	+1 level of existing class
10 th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Mechanics of magic	+1 level of existing class

Mechanics of Magic: The magister knows the mechanics of magic with a deeper understanding, recognising the basic kernel that exists in all expression of supernatural power. He can now use one use of bardic music to spontaneously apply a metamagic feat to a spell that would normally require a spell slot of up to two levels higher, without actually increasing the spell slot level required for the spell. If a feat only requires one additional spell level, the other level is lost. In addition to this, he can use the *countersong* ability to counter the effects of any spell, supernatural or spell-like ability from any source.

PLANAR ENVOY

Worldly politics are a dark morass of shifting alliances and secret conspiracies, but even the most Byzantine court pales in comparison with the complications of extraplanar relations, where the heads of state have the power of gods (or are gods) and the laws of nature are as mutable as laws of trade. The planar envoy is a curious mortal who, by virtue of his good judgement and open mind, gained the trust of inscrutable extraplanar beings to the point that he is recognised as an impartial mediator with enough knowledge and tact to help smooth things over between planar factions. While he may not be able to broker a peace agreement between devils and demons, he can still make it so that hostilities remain limited to certain times or places.

Mediation and diplomacy are the most complicated tasks of the planar envoy, but his abilities allow him to perform simple missions like being a courier and messenger, even if the package or message are dangerous enough to get him into even deeper trouble as if he wanted to negotiate with a vicious agent of Evil.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

Abilities: Charisma 15 or higher.

Skills: Diplomacy 12 ranks, Knowledge (arcana) 6 ranks, Knowledge (nobility and royalty) 6 ranks, Knowledge (the planes) 6 ranks, Survival 4 ranks.

Feats: Negotiator.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast spontaneous magic.

Other: Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The planar envoy's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Appraise (Int), Bluff (Cha), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Gather Information (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense



Motive (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), Survival (Wis), Swim (Str) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Planar envoys are proficient with all simple weapons and one martial weapon. They are proficient with light armour but not with shields.

Spellcasting: At every level, the planar envoy gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities and so forth) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a planar envoy, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Diplomatic Speech: The planar envoy continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability, but



The Planar Envoy

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Polyglot, brokerage	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Diplomatic immunity	+1 level of existing class
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3		+1 level of existing class
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Extrplanar survival	+1 level of existing class
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	<i>Channel opinion</i>	+1 level of existing class
6 th	+4	+2	+2	+5	<i>Planeshifter</i>	+1 level of existing class
7 th	+5	+2	+2	+5		+1 level of existing class
8 th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Geas	+1 level of existing class
9 th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Improved extrplanar survival	+1 level of existing class
10 th	+7	+3	+3	+7	<i>Planeswalker</i>	+1 level of existing class

he specialises in his diplomatic missions. To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, his bard and planar envoy levels stack but only if he is using them to achieve a diplomatic objective on behalf of a client (see the brokerage ability below) or the ability specifies he can do so. The Games Master determines when the character can use his planar envoy uses instead of his bard uses. The character does not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Polyglot (Su): The planar envoy is used to encountering the strangest of tongues, so he uses both his knowledge of languages together with his feeling for the beat of communication. By spending one use of his bardic music ability (he can use his planar envoy uses for this ability) the planar envoy gains the equivalent of the *tongues* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of his full character level, and he can communicate with anything that has a language. This ability does not make him capable of understanding the druidic language.

Brokerage (Ex): Although the planar envoy can act on his own, exploiting his ability to represent his travelling companions with different planar entities, his true ability comes to the fore when he operates on the behest of a third and powerful party. The character can offer his mediating services to any sort of creature, provided that he will be representing this 'client' before a being of a different plane. The terms of the service are up for the character and his client to determine, but once they do, they both swear a binding oath of service. Regardless of the client's power, this oath is inviolate, more powerful even than a *geas* spell. The planar envoy can only be under one brokerage per Charisma modifier, but he cannot enter an oath that asks for exclusivity until he completes any previous oaths, and he cannot take additional clients after such an oath is resolved. Once linked in this way, the planar envoy understands perfectly the nature of his client's requests, unmasking

any duplicity or hidden catch that the client 'neglected' to mention. The character is free to terminate his oath under such circumstances, but most creatures already know of the implications of the oath of brokerage and abstain from trying to cheat on the planar envoy.

Diplomatic Immunity (Su): The planar envoy can invoke ancient and binding laws of hospitality when he travels across the lands of his world and across the planar barriers. Whenever he is about to be attacked by the forces of the ruling body of the land (a kingdom's patrols, a demon lord's minions, and suchlike) he makes a Diplomacy check, adding his planar envoy level as a competence bonus. The forces about to attack make a Will save with the Diplomacy check result as the DC, if they fail, they cannot attack and must act with due courtesy, guiding the planar envoy and his companions to their leader. If the character or his allies attack, the effect is broken. The character must make a Diplomacy check each time he meets a member of the liege's forces with a higher authority than the one he met before.

Extrplanar Survival (Su): The planar envoy must be able to reach his target if he wishes to convey a message or begin negotiations, if his destination is in a plane with hostile environments, he is definitely in trouble. At 4th level, the planar envoy can make his visit to any plane a survivable experience. Once per day per Charisma modifier, the character can surround himself with magical energy that holds off all negative or damaging environmental effects due to the nature of a plane, making travel anywhere a safe endeavour. This only applies to innate effects of the plane – for instance, a planar envoy might be unaffected by burning fields of flame in a plane consisting entirely of fire, but the scorching attacks of the denizens would burn him as normal. He can replicate this effect towards one ally per his class level, and the protection lasts ten minutes per planar envoy level.

Channel Opinion (Su): When it comes to negotiations, unless the planar envoy is given full powers and confidence, it will become necessary that he checks back with his client for further instructions... which may not be so easy if there are virtual eternities separating them. Once per day, the planar envoy may try to breach the planar barriers to contact his client by spending one use of his bardic music ability (he can use his planar envoy uses for this) and making a caster check (DC 20). If successful, the character can touch one reflective surface and turn it into a window to wherever his client is at the moment. The client may refuse the connection, and the planar envoy will be aware of this when it happens. Only the planar envoy will be able to see and hear his client through the reflective surface, but others may hear his side of any conversation. The character can maintain the connection for one minute per planar envoy level.

Planeshifter (Su): Up to this point, the planar envoy depended on extraneous magic in order to pierce the planar barriers, most possibly by powerful clients or subcontracting the services of a wizard to take him where he needed to go. This is not the case once he reaches 6th level, when his planar affinity gives him the secret of crossing planar boundaries at will. Once per day, the character wills himself to cross into an adjacent plane or planar layer, which may force him to make several stops. He must concentrate for ten full minutes as he transports himself across planar boundaries, and breaking his concentration in the meanwhile breaks the attempt. He can take one companion with him for every three planar envoy levels plus his Intelligence modifier.

Geas (Sp): The planar envoy usually relies on his charisma and diplomatic acumen to cement agreements and accords, not to mention the pressure his client's power adds to negotiations. Upon reaching 8th level, his personal power grows to the point that he can enforce his dealings. After a negotiation is over and an agreement reached, he can place a *geas* on the

agreement itself, binding both his client (or himself, if he is making negotiations for personal benefit) and the second party to comply with all terms of the agreement. This works exactly like a *geas* spell, but it can affect beings that would normally be immune to compulsions or to the spell proper, for they are agreeing to be bound to the agreement. A planar envoy can sneak such an agreement on a target with a successful opposed Bluff check, binding a creature to the terms of the mutual agreement with the strength of ancient magic.

Improved Extraplanar Survival (Su): The planar envoy adapts more easily to the conditions of different planes. Upon reaching 9th level, he can use the extraplanar survival for a duration of two hours per planar envoy level.

Planeswalker (Sp): The pinnacle of the planar envoy's power rests in his ability to travel to unreachable destinations. At 10th level, the character is able to travel to other planes as per the *plane shift* spell once per day as if cast by a sorcerer of his character level. Unlike the *planeshifter* ability, he arrives at any plane that he could reach with the spell. By additionally spending three uses of his bardic music ability, this ability instead works as a *gate* spell.

SHADOW PUPPETEER

There is a form of performance that can be as marvellous as it can be sinister. Puppets can be incredibly eerie as they imitate the humanoid body even if their jerking movements reveal their artificial nature. Even more eerie is the realisation that behind those movements there is a puppeteer commanding life into an otherwise inanimate doll. The shadow puppeteer excels in this art, adding a magical touch to its practise that replaces strings and rods with sheer will and concentration. The shadow puppeteer can mount an entire show with magical puppets that he crafts himself, making them appear as whatever character the shadow puppeteer needs at the moment, casting them forth as minions under his complete control.

Because the shadow puppeteer can give life to that which does not have any, he can eventually extrapolate this skill towards controlling that which has a will of its own, hiding his presence from the world as easily as he hides it from the stage.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

Skills: Bluff 8 ranks, Hide 6 ranks, Move Silently 6 ranks, Perform (puppetry) 8 ranks.

Epic Planar Envoy

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Bonus Feats: The epic planar envoy gains a bonus feat every three levels higher than 10th.

Spellcasting: Upon reaching 21st character level, the character stops gaining new spell slots and learning new spells; he must take the Improved Spell Capacity epic feat to gain new spell slots and the Spell Knowledge epic feat to learn new spells.





Feats: Craft Wondrous Item, Stealthy, Still Spell.

Other: Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The shadow puppeteer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Spellcraft (Int), Tumble (Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Shadow puppeteers are proficient with all simple weapons as well as with

all bows, the longsword, rapier and scimitar. They are proficient with light and medium armour but not with shields.

Spellcasting: At every level, the shadow puppeteer gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities and suchlike) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a shadow puppeteer, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Music: The shadow puppeteer continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability. To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, his shadow puppeteer and bard levels stack. The character does not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Craft Puppet: The power of the shadow puppeteer rests in his ability to control puppets, not any kind of puppet but a special construct attuned to his magical performance. Craft Puppet is an item creation feat that allows the character to craft a variety of puppets, each with its own cost in gold and experience. The puppets are wooden constructs, and can take any form the character wants, but they have the same characteristics in their three different sizes, given in table below. The puppets are not free constructs; they are unable to act for themselves and thus the characteristics in the table act as bonuses to the shadow puppeteer's base values (as given in the puppetry ability below).

When crafting the puppets, the shadow puppeteer can add any of the following characteristics, up to the puppets maximum capacity (one for Tiny, two for Small and three for Medium puppets) and adding their cost to the base puppets.

Characteristic	Effect	Cost	XP
Hand blades	Increase damage die by 1	+625 gp	+25
Extra movement	+10 ft. speed	+250 gp	+10
Folding	'Store' into a pack two size categories smaller; unpacking is a move action.	+1,000 gp	+40
Hardness	Gain hardness 5	+1,250 gp	+50
Self-repairing	Gain fast healing 1	+1,875 gp	+75
Spell Resistance	Gain SR 11	+2,500 gp	+100



Craft Puppet

Size	Tiny	Small	Medium
Hit Dice	1/2 d10 (2 hp)	1d10+10 (15 hp)	2d10+20 (31 hp)
Initiative	+2	+1	+0
Speed	50 ft.	40 ft.	40 ft.
AC	14 (+2 size, +2 Dex), touch 14, flat-footed 12	14 (+1 size, +1 Dex, +2 natural), touch 12, flat-footed 13	14 (+4 natural), touch 10, flat-footed 14
Attack/Grapple Bonus	+0/-9	+0/-4	+1/+2
Damage	Slam 1d3-1	Slam 1d4	Slam 1d6+1
Space/Reach	2½ ft./0 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.	5 ft./5 ft.
Special Attacks	See text	See text	See text
Special Qualities	Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; also see text	Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; also see text	Construct traits, darkvision 60 ft., low-light vision; also see text
Saves	Ref +2	Ref +1	—
Abilities	Str -2, Dex +4	Str +0, Dex +2	Str +2, Dex +0
Challenge Rating	½	1	2
Cost	2,500 gp	4,000 gp	6,000 gp
XP Cost	100	160	240

Puppetry (Su): The shadow puppeteer can use his puppets normally, pulling their strings and rods, but he is also capable of exerting a supernatural influence to control them from afar. This is similar to a bardic music ability in that the character spends one daily use but, instead of singing or reciting, he performs his puppet show. Controlling all his puppets is a move action for the character, and the puppets themselves have only one standard action each per round. A puppet can move and act with apparent independence from its master, but it cannot move farther than 20 feet plus ten feet per shadow puppeteer level; if the character ever loses line of effect towards his puppet, the puppet stands still until the character is back in line. At 1st level, the shadow puppeteer can only animate one puppet at a time, but he extends his control to one additional puppet with the same use of bardic music every other level as indicated by the table.

The puppet attacks with the bonuses given for its size as described above, using the puppeteer's base attack bonus including any multiple attack, plus any applicable feat and extra damage ability the puppeteer may have. As a standard action, the character can see and hear through the puppet as if he were standing in its position.

Puppeteer's Presence (Sp): One of the keys to a successful puppeteer is to remain unseen, letting the audience concentrate on the puppet's performance. Whenever he is using his *puppetry* ability, the character can make a Perform or Hide check (DC 20) to disappear

as per the *invisibility* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of the same character level as the shadow puppeteer.

Artificial Visage (Su): One eerie characteristic of the art of puppetry is the lifelike quality of the puppets, which a shadow puppeteer takes to the next level. By spending an additional use of bardic music, the character can give all the puppets he is controlling a false visage as per the *disguise self* spell, except that every puppet can be made to look like any humanoid creature of its size. If he is using the *puppetry* ability when he activates the artificial visage, the character can change the visages in mid-play without spending additional bardic music uses; he takes a standard action and makes a Perform check (DC 15 +2 per additional puppet changed after the first).

Poltergeist (Sp): The shadow puppeteer has mastered the control of his tools and instruments, and this ability now extends to any kind of object the character comes in contact with. He spends a bardic music use to extend the invisible strings of his will towards one object that can be as heavy as 50 pounds per shadow puppeteer level. The object behaves as if affected by an *animate object* spell for as long as the character concentrates. The object must be within 60 feet for the character to be able to command its actions.

Remote Presence (Su): The strings of will that the shadow puppeteer uses to control his puppets extend only so much, but when he reaches 8th level, neither distance nor space matter anymore. The character can use his *puppetry* ability up to a range of 400 feet plus 100 feet



The Shadow Puppeteer

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Craft puppet, <i>puppetry I</i>	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	<i>Puppeteer's presence</i>	+1 level of existing class
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	<i>Puppetry II</i>	+1 level of existing class
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Artificial visage	+1 level of existing class
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	<i>Puppetry III</i>	+1 level of existing class
6 th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Poltergeist	+1 level of existing class
7 th	+5	+2	+2	+5	<i>Puppetry IV</i>	+1 level of existing class
8 th	+6	+2	+2	+6	Remote presence	+1 level of existing class
9 th	+6	+3	+3	+6	<i>Puppetry V</i>	+1 level of existing class
10 th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Living puppet	+1 level of existing class

per full character level, and there is no need for line of effect. The character is constantly aware of the puppet's surroundings, but dividing his senses in this way causes him to suffer a -2 penalty on all attack rolls, skill checks and Reflex saves in addition to a -2 penalty to AC. By spending an extra use of bardic music, the character can achieve the ultimate feat of puppet control, and that is to exchange places with his puppet, regardless of distance. He can only attempt this magical exchange once per day.

Living Puppet (Su): The shadow puppeteer can control magical constructs and mundane objects; when he reaches 10th level, his power is such that he can control living beings as if they were marionettes, surrendered to his will. Like the *suggestion* bardic ability, the shadow puppeteer can attempt to use his *puppetry* ability on a living being. The victim must be *fascinated* by the character's previous use of bardic music and is entitled

a Will save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Cha modifier); if the victim fails, the character can now control its movements as if the victim was one of his magical puppets. The shadow puppeteer can cause the victim to use all ordinary attacks, skills with a Strength or Dexterity key ability and extraordinary abilities; he can control the victim's speech, but cannot use any of the victim's skills that depend on his mind, nor can he access any supernatural or spell-like ability, including spellcasting ability. The victim can make a new Will saving throw every round to shrug off the shadow puppeteer's control, and if it is forced to take an action that would cause any sort of harm, the victim gains a new Will save with a +5 bonus). The shadow puppeteer cannot control a creature with Spell Resistance or with more Hit Dice than he has shadow puppeteer levels.

STORYTELLER

The world is made of stories; what people know of the world they learn in the form of anecdotes, from the cautionary bedtime tales riddled with fantasy to the historic accounts of a past king's deeds, ending with the legends that tell how deities created the world. Bards are specialists in stories, learning them as songs or as straight narrations, but in the generalist approach of their chosen profession most fail to grasp their true power. Yet some do not; these storytellers understand that beneath the plot of their narrative lie powerful elements that resonate in the hearts of all that hear them. They grasp this power and purposefully weave it into their performances. The magical nature of their bardic talent coupled with the inherent power of a story gives the storyteller a handle on the hearts of men, and with enough skill, even on the world itself.

Storytellers travel the land plying the harmless side of their trade, using stories simply to inspire and inform. It is when they know that important things hang in the balance that they apply the full weight of their

Epic Shadow Puppeteer

Hit Die: d8.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Bonus Feats: The epic shadow puppeteer gains a bonus feat every two levels higher than 10th.

Spellcasting: Upon reaching 21st character level, the character stops gaining new spell slots and learning new spells; he must take the Improved Spell Capacity epic feat to gain new spell slots and the Spell Knowledge epic feat to learn new spells.

Puppetry: The character increases his power to control puppets; he can continue adding puppets to his maximum total he can control with a single use of bardic music. He adds one extra puppet at 11th, 13th, 15th, 17th and 19th levels.

inspiration, drawing on the true power of the story to make events go their way.

Hit Die: d6.

Requirements

Abilities: Charisma 13 or higher.

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Perform (epic, narrative or similar) 8 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks.

Feats: Persuasive.

Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 3rd level arcane spells, which must include at least two spells each from the enchantment and illusion schools.

Other: Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The storyteller's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis), Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Storytellers are proficient with all simple weapons and one martial weapon. They are proficient with light armour but not with shields.

Spellcasting: At every even level, the storyteller gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities and suchlike) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a storyteller, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Music: The storyteller continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability. To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, his bard and storyteller levels stack. The character does



not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Illusory Cast (Su): The storyteller learns to weave narrations so vivid that listeners are able to picture the protagonists as if they were seeing them in person. Indeed, using his understanding of the power of words, the storyteller summons the precise image of what he speaks into their minds. The storyteller spends one use of his bardic music ability and creates an illusion of a character in the story he is telling in the mind of a target within 60 feet. He can only affect one target at 1st level, but for every two levels over the first he can affect one additional target. The phantasm the storyteller projects is an atavist figure, recognisable by the common elements in all stories so that the target will see the version of the character he knows from his own tales and legendry, or the closest approximation if there is no equivalent. This ability is an illusion and can be saved against like all illusions: only through interaction. After the targets interact with the illusion they can make a Will save (DC 10 + half the character level + Cha modifier) to disbelieve the illusion. The illusion can do almost anything, acting as a 'real' person until the storyteller stops concentrating. The illusory cast member can speak and fight, causing creatures to be flanked in combat situations or capable of holding conversations and deliver their lines at the storyteller's behest. The character must be looking at his victims, and they must be able to hear him and understand him. As a bardic



music ability, the storyteller must keep narrating, and the illusion fades as soon as he stops.

At 3rd, 6th and 9th levels, the storyteller can create an additional illusory character in the minds of all his victims.

Tale Seeds (Su): All tales have a kernel that sums up what the story is all about; its plot as well as its message. The storyteller knows these seeds, and he knows how to plant them in peoples' minds to get the reaction he wants. By spending one use of his bardic music ability, the storyteller plants the seed of a tale in a target within 30 feet. The target makes a Will save (DC 10 + half the character level + Cha modifier) to resist the ability, but only if he succeeds by ten points or more does the victim realise the storyteller tried to plant something on his mind. If the target fails his save, the tale seed germinates into a false memory echoing the story; the target believes he lived through something he did not. The storyteller does not control the details of the experience, but he directs the general reaction, planting feelings the target did not have towards particular subjects and persons. This ability lacks the power to change a person's alignment because the target eventually recovers his previous attitudes, dismissing the planted tale as an idle fantasy. This recovery takes place after one month per the storyteller's Charisma modifier.

Illusory Scenery (Sp): The storyteller is so accomplished in his narrative skills that he can evoke a sense of place, conjuring the image of any location. This ability is similar to the *mirage arcana* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of the storyteller's level. The storyteller spends one use of his bardic music ability and maintains the illusion for as long as he describes the scene. The illusion is complete with environmental feelings, which include strong winds, rain and can even be underwater. In the case of scenery of hostile environments, all creatures inside the area make a Will save (DC 10 + half the

character level + Cha modifier) to disbelieve the illusion; all damage incurred by illusory conditions is temporary, with creatures 'dying' by becoming unconscious for 1d4 minutes and waking up at their previous health.

Shadow of a Tale (Su): The storyteller can attune to the stories dwelling in the minds of others, bringing memories to the surface of their thoughts so that they can experience them again as if a tale told by another. The storyteller spends a use of his bardic music ability and chooses a willing target within 30 ft., who nominates a particular event or period of their memory that they wish brought forth. They then experience an elaborate illusion, complete with sights and sounds, that is drawn from their memories – even those that they have forgotten. If the target's memories have been magically modified, such as by a *modify memory* spell, the storyteller can make a caster check (DC 11 + spell's caster level) to dredge the original memories up; if he succeeds, the memory is displayed as it really was, though the target will still possess his modified recollection of the original event as well as his new knowledge of what actually happened. The images are semi-transparent and play from the target's point of view, and last until the storyteller stops concentrating.

Multiple Voices (Su): The storyteller possesses several abilities that, while powerful on their own, are at their most potent when complementing each other. When he reaches 5th level, he is capable of concentrating on more than one of these abilities at once. By making a successful Performance check (DC 20, +4 for every additional ability beyond the second), the character can activate multiple storyteller *and* bardic music abilities at the same time. He spends the uses of bardic music for each one as normal, whether he succeeds in his check or not. All of the effects stop at the same time when the bard stops his performance.

The Storyteller

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Bardic music, illusory cast	
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	Tale seeds	+1 level of existing class
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Illusory scenery	
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Shadow of a tale	+1 level of existing class
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	Shadow cast, multiple voices	
6 th	+4	+2	+2	+5	Compulsory acting	+1 level of existing class
7 th	+5	+2	+2	+5		
8 th	+6	+2	+2	+6	<i>Summon cast</i>	+1 level of existing class
9 th	+6	+3	+3	+6	Mass performance	
10 th	+7	+3	+3	+7	Dreams are reality	+1 level of existing class

Shadow Cast (Su): Once the character reaches 5th level, his ability to evoke the characters of the stories he narrates increases. At the expense of an additional use of bardic music (bringing the cost to two), the storyteller can make the illusions made by the illusory cast abilities into shadows instead of phantasms as per the *shadow conjuration* spell. The illusions created must remain within 60 feet of the storyteller or disappear.

Compulsory Acting (Su): The storyteller learns to tell a story so compelling that his listeners cannot help but join and enact the story. By spending one use of his bardic music ability, the storyteller can target one creature within 30 feet and make him part of his narration; the target is entitled a Will save (DC 10 + half the character level + Cha modifier) and, if he fails, he must do as the storyteller does as he assumes the role of one of the characters in the story. The storyteller must dictate his commands in the forms of a narration that must make some sort of sense, and the Games Master can allow the target a new saving throw if the actions he is compelled to take are too jarring to the story being told, breaking off the control if he is ever compelled to commit an act that violates any alignment restrictions from any of his classes or one that will bring him harm. This control lasts for as long as the storyteller narrates the story, up to one round per storyteller level.

Summon Cast (Sp): The storyteller's talent to bring his characters to life reaches its peak. The character can spend two additional uses of his bardic music ability (bringing the cost to three) to make the illusions made from the illusory cast ability completely and 100% real. The storyteller can call a number of class levels or Hit Dice worth of fictional characters and creatures equal to his full character level, similar to the *summon monster* spells; no creature or character must be of a CR higher than half the character's level, and the creatures disappear if the character stops concentrating or after a duration of one round per character level, whichever happens first.

Mass Performance (Su): This is a more powerful version of compulsory acting, with the same effects as that ability except that the storyteller can target a number of creatures equal to half his storyteller class level.

Dreams are Reality (Su): By touching the realms of dreams, where stories are born and forgotten every second, the storyteller can make any tale of his into a reality. The character must spend three uses of his bardic music ability and start narrating, impressing his tale upon the world. In mechanical terms, the storyteller creates a demi-plane that reflects the laws of the story he tells. This demi-realm changes accordingly to the character's narration. He can weave this storyworld

Epic Storyteller

Hit Die: d6.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 6 + Int modifier.

Bonus Feats: The epic storyteller gains a bonus feat every three levels higher than 10th.

Spellcasting: Upon reaching 21st character level, the character stops gaining new spell slots and learning new spells; he must take the Improved Spell Capacity epic feat to gain new spell slots and the Spell Knowledge epic feat to learn new spells.

Illusory/Shadow/Summon Cast: The character can create one additional cast member for these abilities every three levels, extending into the prestige epic range at 12th, 15th and 18th levels.

around an area of 60 feet per side centred on him, trapping allies and foes alike. Victims caught inside the storyworld must make a Will save (DC 10 + half the character level + Cha modifier); those who succeed see how the character and those who failed their save disappear, while those captured by the story see their normal world fade from view. While inside the story world, the narrator is a virtual god, capable of creating people and terrain, controlling them to fit the needs of his story. The pocket dimension lasts for as long as the storyteller concentrates or until a duration of one round per rank in Performance expires, whichever happens first. This ability cannot be combined with any other through the multiple voices ability.

VOCALISER

The bards have a unique weapon that no other class possesses: their voice. Through their voice they can twist the world to make magic, and they can touch upon the minds of other to make them excel or to bend their wills. Vocalisers utilise the power of their voice in different ways; they take cues from the wizard who uses his understanding of magic to effect physical (and often destructive) changes in the world, and learn to modulate their voice and channel their power through it. Vocalisers often join wizards and sorcerers in a combat magic role, but their abilities cement their role as tactical support as they manipulate sound to create obstacles for their foes and grant advantages to their allies.

Vocalisers are amongst the most volatile of bards; training their voice to explode in magical expression colours their attitude, making them brim with contained energy, ready to be released.

Hit Die: d6.





Sleight of Hand (Dex), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Vocalisers are proficient with all simple weapons and two martial weapon. They are proficient with light and medium armour but not with shields.

Spellcasting: At every odd level, the vocaliser gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities and suchlike) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a vocaliser, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Music: The vocaliser continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability. To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, his bard and vocaliser levels stack. The character does not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Vibration (Su): The vocaliser starts affecting the physical world through his voice by singing directly against a weapon (consider it a range of touch). His voice sends vibrations across the weapon's length, increasing its potential damage without damaging it. At 1st level, the vocaliser can add a +1d6 sonic damage to any metallic weapon by spending one use of his bardic music ability. This bonus increases by an additional +1d6 at 3rd and 5th levels, lasting for two rounds per the character's vocaliser level.

Requirements

Abilities: Constitution 13 or higher, Charisma 15 or higher.

Skills: Bluff 6 ranks, Perform (singing, poetics or other vocal art) 8 ranks, Sense Motive 6 ranks.

Feats: Empower Spell, Heighten Spell, Persuasive, Spell Focus (any).

Other: Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The vocaliser's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Bluff (Cha), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Decipher Script (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Disguise (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Intimidate (Cha), Knowledge (all skills, taken individually) (Int), Listen (Wis), Move Silently (Dex), Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Sense Motive (Wis),

The Vocaliser

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+0	+0	+2	Sound dagger, vibration +1d6	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+1	+0	+0	+3	<i>Shattering voice</i>	
3 rd	+2	+1	+1	+3	Sonic ripple, vibration +2d6	+1 level of existing class
4 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	<i>Sound eater</i>	
5 th	+3	+1	+1	+4	<i>Wall of sound</i> , vibration +3d6	+1 level of existing class

Sound Dagger (Su): The vocaliser learns to focus his voice in one perfect line of sound that he can target against a single victim within 30 feet, plus ten feet per vocaliser level, modulating his pitch, tone and volume to confuse and disorientate. The vocaliser spends one use of his bardic music ability and may need to roll a Performance check (DC 10 + victim's level or HD) as described below. The vocaliser starts by knowing the precise harmonics to use against members of his own creature type plus an additional one, similar to the ranger's favoured enemies; when he targets creatures of these two types, he does not need to roll a Performance check. Upon gaining an additional level of vocaliser, the character learns to affect one additional monster type, including constructs and undead, for which he needs not make a Performance check. The victim makes a Will or Fortitude save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Con modifier), whichever is worse; failure results in the target being dazed for one round per the character's Charisma modifier. If the victim fails the save by ten points or more, he is stunned instead.

Shattering Voice (Sp): The intensity of the vocaliser's voice has the strength to shatter objects. The character can spend one use of his bardic music ability to use the equivalent of a *shatter* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of the same character level as the vocaliser.

Sonic Ripple (Su): Sound can be a very powerful force if handled correctly, and the vocaliser can experiment on very low pitches opposed to high ones. By spending one use of his bardic music abilities, the character sends a blast of sound against a single target. The character hits his target in an equivalent of a bull rush, making a Charisma check instead of a Strength check, but the victim opposes it normally. The character adds his vocaliser level as a bonus to this check, and may add an additional +2 bonus for every bardic music use that he spends at the same time as the first, up to a maximum equal to the character's Constitution modifier. The effects of the bull rush are calculated normally up to a range equal to 30 feet plus ten feet per vocaliser level.

Sound Eater (Sp): Once he learns that sound is a force like any other that he can manipulate, the vocaliser becomes capable of countering sound. The character spends one use of bardic music and targets a square ten feet across that must be within 60 feet plus 20 feet per vocaliser level. The targeted area is then affected as if by a *silence* spell cast by a cleric of the same character level as the vocaliser. The character must concentrate on this effect as a standard action, but he can change the affected area at the beginning of his turn every round.

Wall of Sound (Sp): The power of the vocaliser's voice reaches its peak as it comes to resemble a physical

obstacle. The character spends one use of bardic music to activate this ability, which works as the *wall of force* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of the same character level as the vocaliser, except that it is a sonic effect, not a force effect. Creatures within 20 feet of the wall can detect it as a low humming sound until they touch it, creating a loud clap that is otherwise harmless. Also, creatures on one side of the *wall of sound* cannot hear any sound coming from the other side, which cancels all sonic and language-dependent effects such as bardic music, and impedes verbal communication. The *wall of sound* fades five rounds after the character stops concentrating on it.

WANDERER

Walking around in the wilderness is the way of life of rangers and druids; bards may like to travel, but they prefer to walk the roads rather than blaze any trail. They travel because they want to go *somewhere*; their destination being the focus of their travel rather than the journey itself. Wanderers develop their inherent wanderlust into a series of talents that go from the merely physical to the outright magical. They know where they want to go and learn powers that will get them there, bypassing obstacles and making light of distance and terrain.

The reason for the wanderer's travels are up to the wanderer himself; he can be carrying news or a package, important messages or simply be passing through towards a more important destination. What truly matters to the wanderer is that he arrives. With time and practise, his ability grows in usefulness, not only opening new roads for himself but also to any companions, making the wanderer a real asset when a group has to travel anywhere with haste and safety.

Hit Die: d8.

Requirements

Skills: Knowledge (arcana) 9 ranks, Knowledge (local) 6 ranks, Perform 8 ranks, Survival 6 ranks.

Feats: Endurance, Run.

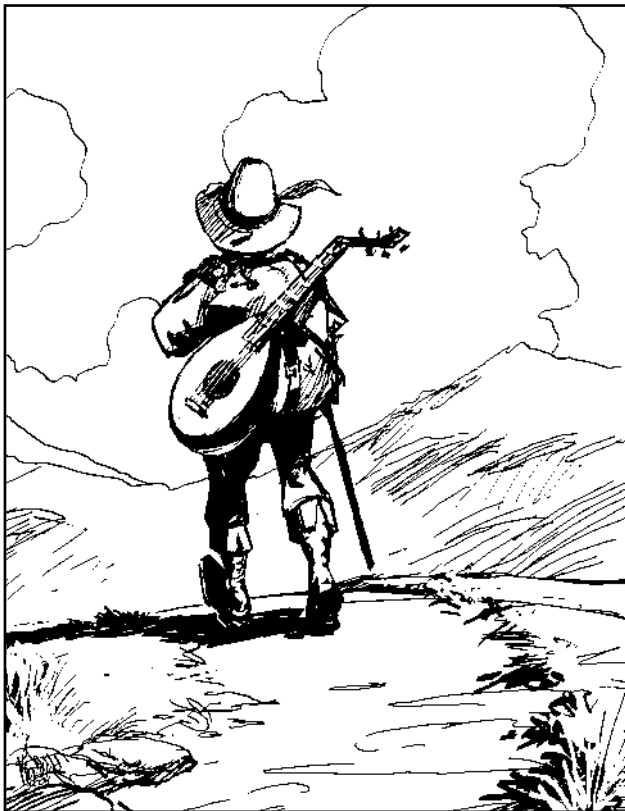
Spellcasting: Must be able to cast 2nd level arcane spells.

Other: Must have the bardic music ability.

Class Skills

The wanderer's class skills (and the key ability for each skill) are Balance (Dex), Climb (Str), Concentration (Con), Craft (Int), Diplomacy (Cha), Escape Artist (Dex), Gather Information (Cha), Hide (Dex), Jump (Str), Knowledge (arcana) (Int), Knowledge (local), Knowledge (the planes) (Int), Move Silently (Dex),





Perform (Cha), Profession (Wis), Speak Language (n/a), Spellcraft (Int), Swim (Str), Tumble (Dex) and Use Magic Device (Cha).

Skill Points at Each Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Class Features

Armour and Weapon Proficiency: Wanderers are proficient with all simple weapons as well as with all bows, the longsword, rapier and scimitar.

Spellcasting: At 1st level and every three levels thereafter, the wanderer gains additional spell slots as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. If he has a limited list of known spells, he also learns new spells as if he had gained a level in the spellcasting class he belonged to before adding the prestige class. However, he does not gain any other benefit a character of that class would have gained with level advancement (hit points, feats, special abilities and suchlike) beyond an effective level of spellcasting and additional spells known. If the character had more than one spellcasting class before becoming a wanderer, he must decide to which class he adds the new level for purposes of determining spells per day and spells known.

Bardic Music: The wanderer continues to advance as a bard in terms of his bardic music ability, albeit weakly.

To determine the number of times he can use bardic music effects, his wanderer levels count as half for the purposes of stacking with his bard levels. The character does not gain access to particular bardic music abilities that depend on bard level.

Fast Movement (Ex): The wanderer's focus on travel eventually quickens his footsteps as if he was lighter. A wanderer's land speed is faster than the norm for his race by +10 feet. This benefit applies only when he is wearing no armour, light armour, or medium armour and not carrying a heavy load. Apply this bonus before modifying the character's speed due to any load carried or armour worn.

Road Knowledge (Ex): The wanderer is always alert to news of roads and byways. He adds his wanderer level as a competence bonus to bardic knowledge checks, but only to facts somehow related to roads and travel, such as the conditions of the road, trading routes, secret paths, legends around a mountain pass, and similar matters. He only adds ¼ of his wanderer level to other kinds of knowledge.

Arcane Armour (Ex): The wanderer is an adept at making himself comfortable in his travels, and learns to adapt his movements to the rigours of wearing certain types of armour. The arcane spell failure chance of medium armours is reduced by 5% when worn by the wanderer, and he can sleep in light armour without suffering fatigue.

Predestination (Sp): The focus of a wanderer's journeys lie on their destination rather than on the road itself. The wanderer can concentrate for one full minute and gets a glimpse of one possible destination. The character makes a bardic knowledge check and, through his knowledge and mystical senses, he gains general knowledge about the location. The DC for this check is 20 if the place is the only and direct destination of the wanderer's current journey, 25 if it is one of many potential destinations to be chosen after gaining the information from this ability, and 30 if the wanderer is simply curious; the DC is further modified by how well-connected the destination is. This ability works similarly as *scrying* except that the character does not concentrate on a creature, but on a place. He is aware of major events and conditions affecting the destination and can actually see in his mind images of an area roughly the size of a thorp. This ability does not allow the wanderer to spy upon important personages, which means that he will never look at the conditions of a capital's castle unless entering the castle is actually his destination. The character can try to use this ability once per day at 3rd level, gaining additional uses per day ever three levels thereafter.



Destination	DC
Direct destination	20
Potential destination	25
Just curious	30
Well-known (appears on all maps, part of a main trade route, or similar)	-2
Common (appears on most maps, connected by roads)	+0
Uncommon (appears in a few maps, people have heard of it)	+2
Rare (seldom appears in maps, relatively isolated, few ever visit or travel from it)	+4
Unknown (does not appear in maps, few people have heard of it but never visited)	+6
Legendary (only exists in legends)	+10

Unblocked Passage (Su): When the wanderer sets his mind to travel, no obstacles will deter him. He starts to intuit the magical songs of travel that many barbarian tribes know from ages ago, each verse accompanying a section of the road, and the potency of his bardic soul lending power to them. The first step is to keep artificial barriers from blocking the journey. By spending one use of bardic music, the wanderer can unlock any door, gate or entrance that bars his passage. This power does not automatically open the door nor deactivate any trap, it simply removes any mechanism holding the passage shut. Entrances blocked by spells such as *arcane lock* require the wanderer to make a Perform check (DC 11 + spell's caster level) in order to cancel it. Five minutes after the wanderer crosses the entrance and if the door was closed, any mundane or magic lock is back in place, although deactivated traps remain deactivated.

Strider (Su): The wanderer's travelling songs have a unique effect on the travellers that hear it, lightening their footsteps, shortening travel times both in the

listener's minds as well as on the road itself. The wanderer spends one use of his bardic music ability and makes a Fortitude save (DC 20, +2 for difficult terrain or +4 for very difficult terrain). If he is successful, he sings for an entire day's worth of travel (approximately eight hours), doubling the walking speed of himself and one additional companion per wanderer level for the purposes of calculating overland travel times. A mount counts as a companion, and this speed does not stack with similar speed-increasing effects that last less than eight hours. The wanderer *must* rest at day's end; he must have a full night's sleep or he will not be able to use this ability again the next day.

Unblocked Road (Su): The wanderer is so accomplished in travelling songs that he can bypass more daunting obstacles than barred doors. This ability is similar to unblocked passage, but instead of removing mechanisms it creates a passage through physical obstacles similar to a *passwall* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of the same character level as the wanderer. The character spends two uses of his bardic music ability to create the passage.

Uncertain Presence (Sp): The wanderer can engage in a special travelling gait that allows him to take one step in this world and another in the next. The character uses the ability to use *blink* on himself for a number of rounds per day equal to his wanderer level plus his Charisma modifier. He does not need to spend all the rounds in the same use, but may spread the duration on several different uses, provided that he does not exceed the maximum duration in a single day. The wanderer can only use this ability as part of a move action. It does not work in a round in which he remains still or only takes a five-foot step (which makes the Spring Attack feat particularly attractive).

The Wanderer

Class Level	Base Attack	Fort Save	Ref Save	Will Save	Special	Spells per day
1 st	+0	+2	+0	+2	Fast movement, road knowledge	+1 level of existing class
2 nd	+1	+3	+0	+3	Arcane armour	
3 rd	+2	+3	+1	+3	Unblocked passage, <i>predestination</i> 1/day	
4 th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Strider	+1 level of existing class
5 th	+3	+4	+1	+4	Unblocked road	
6 th	+4	+5	+2	+5	<i>Uncertain presence</i> , <i>predestination</i> 2/day	
7 th	+5	+5	+2	+5	Trailblazer	+1 level of existing class
8 th	+6	+6	+2	+6	<i>Long step</i> , songpath	
9 th	+6	+6	+3	+6	<i>Predestination</i> 3/day	
10 th	+7	+7	+3	+7	Craft portal	+1 level of existing class



Trailblazer (Su): The wanderer reaches a point in his travel expertise that he can affect physical reality in favour of his friends and detriment of his foes. This ability works as a bardic music ability in that the character spends one use of it and starts singing, affecting all who hear him in a radius of 30 feet centred on him. While the song persists and five rounds after the wanderer stops singing, all allies within range gain +5 feet per the wanderer's Charisma modifier to their land speed, while opponents must succeed at a Will save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Cha modifier) or *reduce* their land speed by five feet per wanderer's Charisma modifier.

Long Step (Sp): A direct evolution of the *uncertain presence* ability, the wanderer can take his steps outside of distance, disappearing as he takes one step and appearing somewhere else for the next. The wanderer has a number of distance bonuses to tactical movement per day equal to 20 feet per wanderer character level. He can add any distance from this bonus pool (in five-foot increments) to any move action by spending one use of bardic music ability. When he does so, he bypasses the terrain between his starting point and his destination similar to a *dimension door* spell. The character must be able to see the destination of his movement by any means, including divination magic. For example, an 8th level wanderer has 160 bonus feet; he wants to add 30 feet to cross a wide chasm, adding them to his 40 feet speed for a total of 70 feet of distance that he can move with this ability.

Songpath (Su): The character becomes a master of travelling songs, letting music be his road instead of the earth beneath him. The character spends two uses of his bardic music ability and performs the songpath for up to one hour per Constitution modifier. While the songpath is active, there is *nothing* that can stand in the wanderer's way. He can walk through walls, cross gaping chasms, walk through enemy armies... he will be unmolested as he travels slightly apart from this world. He can take one companion with him per Charisma modifier. While in the songpath, neither the wanderer nor his companions can affect the physical world, and they only get glimpses of what happens in the world around them. While in the songpath, the wanderer can activate other wanderer abilities such as *strider*. The wanderer can only perform the songpath once per day, regardless of its duration.

Craft Portal (Su): The wanderer becomes a force in his world as he concentrates his ability to travel towards helping others make their journeys much easier. At 10th level, the wanderer learns *Craft Portal* as a special item creation feat with special requirements. A portal is a spot designated by the wanderer to connect to

another spot anywhere in the same plane of existence, teleporting without error any creature that steps through the portal and speaks a command word. The portal must have some sort of indicating feature; even a crude stone circle will do, but the wanderer must pay full price for the components of the ritual to link both ends of the portal.

To build a portal, the character first spends one full day designating the point of origin, paying half of the material costs. He then travels to the intended destination for the portal by any means except teleportation and planar transportation. During the voyage, the character is prohibited from spending experience for any purpose, including creating other items or as a component for costly spells; he also commits three uses of bardic music as well as a total of five spell levels (taken from any combination of the character's spell slots). If he ever uses the committed bardic music uses or spell slots, the careful process of laying down the portal's route is spoiled, and the wanderer must return to the point of origin.

Once he reaches the destination, he spends another full day linking the two points in the portal's route, paying the remainder of the material costs and finally spending the experience point cost. The base cost for the portals is 80,000 gp and 3,200 XP for a base distance of two miles per character level. Each additional mile costs 250 gp and 10 XPs.

Epic Wanderer

Hit Die: d8.

Skill Points at Each Additional Level: 4 + Int modifier.

Bonus Feats: The epic wanderer gains a bonus feat every two levels higher than 10th.

Spellcasting: Upon reaching 21st character level, the character stops gaining new spell slots and learning new spells; he must take the *Improved Spell Capacity* epic feat to gain new spell slots and the *Spell Knowledge* epic feat to learn new spells.

Predestination: The character can use this ability an additional time per day at every level divisible by three (12th, 15th and 18th).

Uncertain Presence and Long Step: These abilities add duration and distance respectively with every level gained. These additions are treated normally as per the ability's description.

Superior Tools

The most obvious tool of a bard is his musical instrument, but adventuring bards (and there are scant few bards who do not adventure) often find themselves in need of other kinds of tools not only to perform their many talents, but also simply to survive and lead a more comfortable life. Bard tools are more exotic than those of regular classes, often having a dual use to optimise space and cost. Sometimes, a bardic tool will look totally ill-suited for the task for which it was designed, as bards favour artistry as well as utility. Bards are capable of holding their own in a fight and so they develop unique weapons and armour, but their most distinctive tool is, and will always be, their musical instrument or other artistic prop.

COMBAT EQUIPMENT

Although not focused on combat, bards can enter the battlefield without totally shaming themselves. Weapons designed by and for bards show a uniqueness that will make other classes using them look ridiculous, but in the hands of a bard trained in their use will be a prop to a magnificent martial performance. Likewise with armour; bards are capable of using a limited number of armours without them interfering with their magical abilities, combined with the need they have to be protected without drawing attention to that fact (as is the case in many social gatherings), pushed some enterprising individuals to create superior versions of clothing and armour that bards find highly useful.

Weapons

Fan, Needle: This delicate apparel appears to be a normal fan, with a brocaded screen that comes in many

Exotic Artistic Weapons

Many of the following weapons are defined as exotic weapons for general classes, which means that a character may only learn them by taking the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat. Due to their artistic nature, however, bards have another alternative. The weapon's description will determine whether the bard can be proficient with the weapon by exchanging one of his martial expertises or his knowledge of the whip, or if he can use it by virtue of having a number of ranks in a particular Perform skill. This feature is exclusive of bards; other classes must still take the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat.

designs, some of them even custom-made to reflect their owner's personality. The needle fan is built upon a steel frame, and its prongs end in wickedly fine points capable of puncturing flesh. The needle fan is actually not a piercing weapon, but a slashing one. This weapon is normally used in pairs and as part of a performance of sorts, its points dipped in poison by discrete courtier-assassins that need only scratch their victims to accomplish their foul goals. A bard treats the needle fan as a simple weapon if he has at least five ranks in Perform (dance).

Fan, Shield: Similar to the needle fan except that its frame is not made for slashing and, instead of fabric or leather, its fanes are made from interlocking plates of metal that secure together when the fan is opened. The shield fan is a bludgeoning weapon that the wielder can also use as a buckler, granting a +1 bonus to AC, even in the round where it is used as a weapon. A bard treats the shield fan as a simple weapon if he has at least five ranks in Perform (dance).

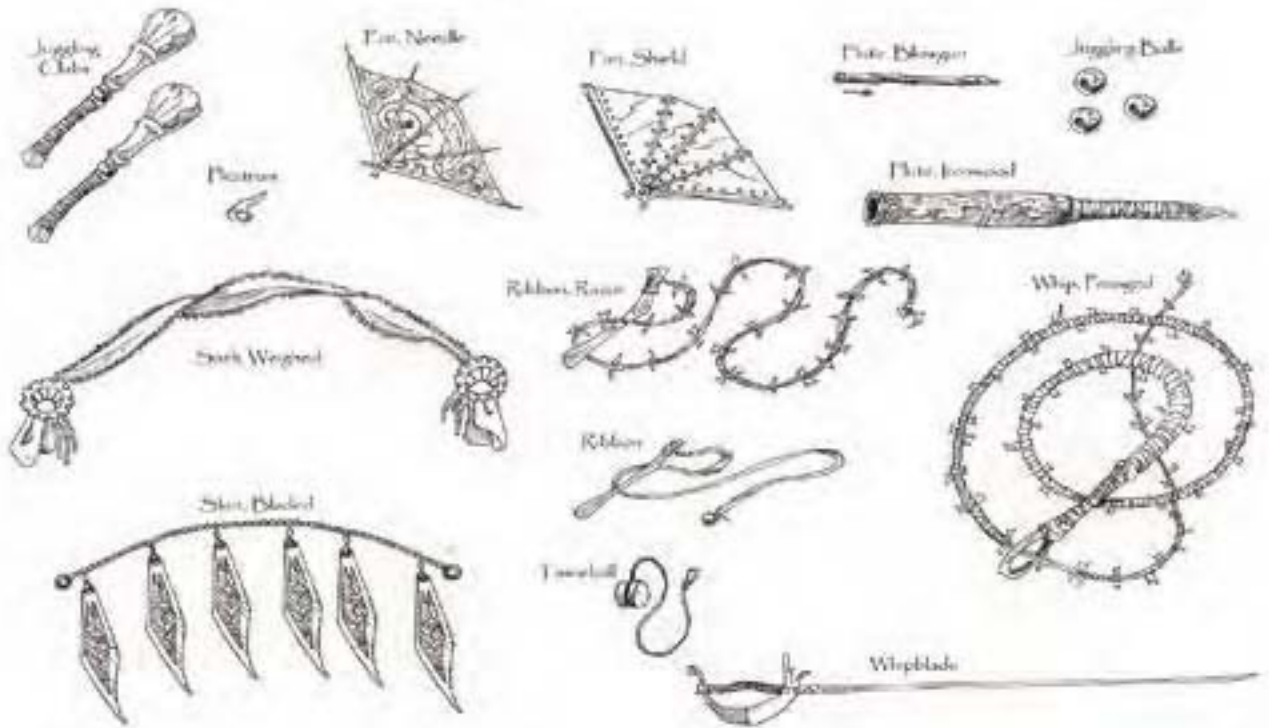
Flute, Blowgun: This metal instrument can be played like any other transversal flute, although it produces a strange sound unlike any normal flute, thanks to the rifling grooves inside its length. It takes one full round to plug all the holes in the flute to turn it into a blowgun, capable of a great reach thanks to its inner grooves. A bard does not gain any special proficiency to use this weapon even if he can play it as a flute. Like any other blowgun, the true potential of this weapon is in its delivery of poisoned darts.

Flute, Ironwood: Like other bardic weapons, the ironwood flute looks nothing of the sort. A long flute approximately three feet long and almost two inches thick, a bard plays it usually by sitting down and holding it between his legs or against the ground. The flute is made from especially treated darkwood, giving it the hardness and durability of steel. The flute can be used as a club (a simple weapon already) without risking damage to the instrument.

Juggling Balls: A trio of spheres slightly bigger than a fist. These weapons can be used as part of a normal juggling performance, or they can be thrown with force. A bard with five ranks in Perform (juggling) or three ranks in both Tumble and Sleight of Hand increases the balls' range increment by ten feet.

Juggling Clubs: A similar performance tool as the juggling balls, these clubs are perfectly balanced for





playing with them as well as for attacking with them in melee or ranged combat; juggling bards usually fight with one club in each hand, though they need to learn the Two-Weapon Fighting feat as normal. A bard with five ranks in Perform (juggling) or three ranks in both Tumble and Sleight of Hand increases the club's range increment by five feet.

Plectrum: A small triangular piece of bone or hard wood, bards use the plectrum to pluck the strings of lutes, guitars and other stringed instruments. A plectrum can be crafted so that it can be securely held between the fist's fingers, allowing the bard to fight with his fist as if he were armed. A bard with five ranks in Perform (string instruments) can deal 1d3 points of lethal damage with the plectrum.

Ribbon: A long strip of fabric made from strong silk tied to a thin handle on one end, weighed with a small iron or silver prong on the other, the ribbon is used by dancers and acrobats to enhance the visual aspects of their performance. A bard, who is also trained for combat, can turn the ribbon into a weapon. A ribbon handles itself exactly like a whip. Bards are automatically proficient with the ribbon, just like they are with the whip. A bard with five ranks in Perform (dance) can attack with a ribbon without provoking attacks of opportunity.

Ribbon, Razor: Just like a normal dancing ribbon, but the hems of the silk are sewn with thin razors. It works like a normal ribbon, except that it deals lethal damage,

is not impeded by armour or natural armour and does not provoke attacks of opportunity. Bards are automatically proficient with the razor ribbon, just like they are with the whip. A bard with five ranks in Perform (dance) threatens and attacks the spaces adjacent to himself as well as the ones at his maximum reach.

Sash, Weighed: Similar to a ribbon except that it is a wide strip of silk, wrapped around the waist or torso in several fashions. Bards proficient with the weighed sash use it around their waist, with bands loosened around their sides. The weighed sash has two iron or silver balls on each end, which look ornamental until they reveal their purpose of striking at targets and anchoring the rest of the weapon's movements. The weighed sash cannot be identified as a weapon until it is used. The character can make trip and grapple attacks with the sash. If the character is tripped during his own trip attempt or fails his grapple check, he can drop the sash to avoid being tripped or grappled. When using a weighed sash, the character gets a +2 bonus on opposed attack rolls made to disarm an opponent (including the roll to avoid being disarmed if such an attempt fails). The character can use the Weapon Finesse feat to apply his Dexterity modifier instead of his Strength modifier to attack rolls with a weighed sash sized for the character, even though it is not a light weapon for him.

Twineball: This strange contraption is the work of a gnome inventor with too much time in his hands. The twineball is a roughly spherical object with a deep

Weapons

Simple Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
<i>Unarmed Attacks</i>							
Plectrum	5 sp	1d2	1d3	x2	—	—	Slashing
<i>One-handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Flute, ironwood	4 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	—	1 lb.	Bludgeoning
Juggling club	2 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	10 ft.	1 lb.	Bludgeoning
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>							
Juggling balls	5 sp	1d3	1d4	x2	10 ft.	1 lb.	Bludgeoning
Martial Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>							
Fan, needle	10 gp	1d4	1d6	19–20/x2	—	2 lb.	Slashing
Fan, shield	12 gp	1d4	1d6	x2	—	3 lb.	Bludgeoning
<i>One-handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Whiplade	18 gp	1d4	1d6	18–20/x2	10 ft.	2 lb.	Slashing
Exotic Weapons	Cost	Dmg (S)	Dmg (M)	Critical	Range Increment	Weight	Type
<i>Light Melee Weapons</i>							
Twineball	1 gp	1d3	1d4	19–20/x2	—	1 lb.	Bludgeoning
<i>One-handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Ribbon	1 gp	1d2 ¹	1d3 ¹	x2	—	—	Slashing
Ribbon, razor	3 gp	1d3	1d4	19–20/x2	—	1 lb.	Slashing
Whip, pronged	2 gp	1d2	1d3	19–20/x2	—	1 lb.	Piercing
<i>Two-handed Melee Weapons</i>							
Bladed skirt	6 gp	1d3/1d3	1d4/1d4	x2	—	4 lb.	Piercing or slashing
Sash, weighed	4 gp	1d3/1d3	1d4/1d4	x2	—	2 lb.	Bludgeoning
<i>Ranged Weapons</i>							
Flute, blowgun	1 gp	1	1	x2	10 ft.	1 lb.	Piercing

¹ Nonlethal damage only

central groove dividing it in two, with a heavy cord entwined around the resulting axis. Due to a mechanical effect of the cord, a skilled user can throw the ball and use the resulting spin to recoil the ball on its cord so it returns to the user's hand. Bards adopted this weapon as a performance tool for the various tricks a skilled artist can make with it. The character gains a +4 bonus to resist disarm attempts when using a twineball and a +2 to initiative due to the surprise attacks he can make with it. The twineball is a bludgeoning reach weapon that requires the Exotic Weapon Proficiency feat to use effectively. A bard can replace his proficiency with the whip with the ability to use the twineball or, if he has five ranks in Sleight of Hand and another five ranks in Use Rope, the twineball is considered a simple weapon.

Skirt, Bladed: A set of five to six blades three inches long hang from thick leather strips or thin chains, which hang from a belt. Proficient dancers can use this exotic

weapon by swirling around or by holding the foremost strips in their hands. Choosing the Exotic Weapon Proficiency allows a wielder to use the bladed skirt as a double weapon with two strips. The strips or chain allow the wielder to threaten an area up to ten feet away, but are too weak to allow trip attacks. A bard with five ranks in Perform (dance) considers the bladed skirt as a simple weapon. A bard with 12 ranks in Perform (dance) can make a special attack using all the blades at the same time as if he had the Whirlwind Attack feat.

Whiplade: Nothing as silly as tying a dagger to a whip, a whiplade is more like a rapier, except that it is slightly thinner and two palms longer. Of a more flexible frame, the whiplade is not a piercing weapon like the rapier, but a slashing one. The user slashes the whiplade, the tension in the metal causing it to whip about, striking in a blur of movement. The whiplade gives its user a +2 circumstance bonus to Bluff checks when attempting



feints. A bard can replace his proficiency with the whip with the ability to use the whipblade.

Whip, Pronged: This decidedly wicked weapon is a whip with metal prongs inserted along the length of the leather. The prongs are actually caltrops loosely interwoven within the leather's twists. A pronged whip does not provoke attacks of opportunity and deals lethal damage; all other characteristics of the whip apply. A bard is automatically proficient with the pronged whip but, if he has five ranks in Use Rope, he can use the weapon for a secondary ability. A proficient bard can make a trip attempt and, if successful, instead of tripping the target he twists the whip so that it leaves some of its prongs interred in the target's flesh, dealing one automatic point of damage every turn. This damage is cumulative with subsequent uses of the weapon's ability, as well as with other weapons with the wounding quality. The target can take a full-round action to remove all prongs on him, but he provokes an attack of opportunity while doing so. A pronged whip runs out of prongs after five successful uses, after which they must be replaced with five minutes of careful work. A bag of caltrops provides replacement prongs five times.

Armour and Clothing

Cape, Laden: This is a normal short cape worn over the shoulders and reaching down to the wearer's waist, usually favouring one arm. The laden cape has thin metal plates woven inside two layers of cloth (velvet versions cost double the listed price). Preferred by swashbucklers and other combatants who favour style over brute strength, the laden cape is a substitute for a shield when handled with the off hand, providing a +2 shield bonus to armour class instead of its usual +1 armour bonus.

Snagging Sleeves: This is an alteration that a skilled tailor can add to any piece of clothing, where fashionably

acceptable. The long sleeves hang low from the wearer's wrists and are favoured more by females than by males. A character using snagging sleeves can make disarm attempts with them with a +2 bonus to the opposed attack roll, their strong construction also adding the protection of a buckler if the off-hand is free.

Steelsilk: Steelsilk is a product of a particular breed of silkworm found deep underground, bred and used by dwarves to weave their finest clothes. Steelsilk garments are hideously expensive, but they are worth every copper as they are supple and highly resistant, ideal for those who like to have protection but do not want to appear armoured. With few exceptions, the bonus from steelsilk garments do not stack when worn one over the other; apply only the highest bonus. Steelsilk is a masterwork material and is ready for enchantment just like any other armour.

Steelsilk Cape: An elegant cloth hung over one shoulder and reaching to the waist, the cape provides a shield bonus instead of an armour bonus, so that its protection stacks with those of other steelsilk garments as well as with armour worn under it. This bonus also stacks with the bonus from a more traditional shield.

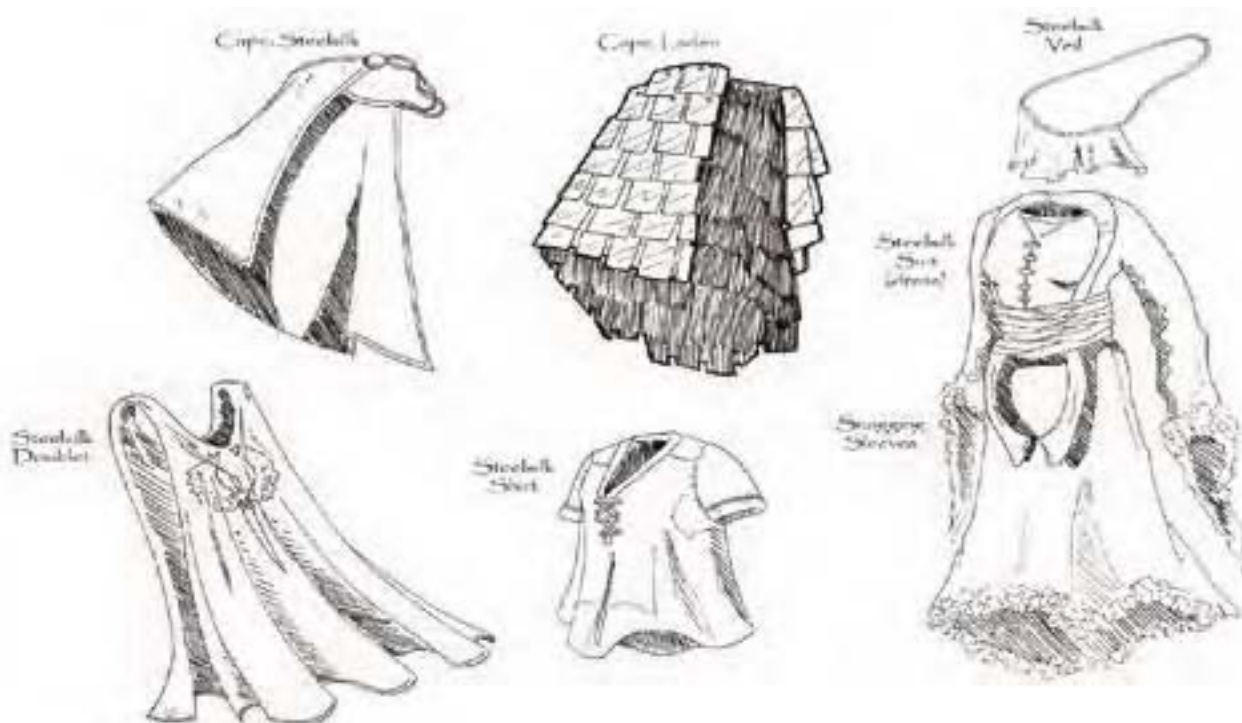
Steelsilk Doublet: A long shirt tied with a sash along the waist (and ideal for using a weighed sash), the doublet can be worn over a steelsilk shirt, but only provides a +1 stackable bonus. It cannot be worn under or over armour.

Steelsilk Shirt: A normal shirt made from steelsilk, it can be worn under armour.

Steelsilk Suit: A complete attire made of steelsilk, it can be tailored to comply with the fashion standards of any kingdom. It cannot be worn under armour.

Armour and Clothing

Armour	Cost	Armour / Shield Bonus	Maximum Dex Bonus	Armour Check Penalty	Arcane Spell Failure Chance	Speed (30 ft.)	(20 ft.)	Weight
<i>Light armour</i>								
Cape, Laden	6 gp	+1	—	—	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	2 lb.
Snagging Sleeves	+5 gp	+1	+8	-1	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	1 lb.
<i>Steelsilk</i>								
Cape	300 gp	+1	—	—	0%	30 ft.	20 ft.	2 lb.
Doublet	300 gp	+2	—	—	0%	30 ft.	20 ft.	2 lb.
Shirt	400 gp	+2	—	—	0%	30 ft.	20 ft.	1 lb.
Suit	500 gp	+3	—	—	5%	30 ft.	20 ft.	8 lb.
Veil	200 gp	+1	—	—	0%	30 ft.	20 ft.	1 lb.



Steelsilk Veil: A large and thin piece of cloth usually worn by females, it covers the head and the upper torso of its wearer. It can be used over armour or over a steelsilk suit, but not in conjunction with a cape.

EXOTIC INSTRUMENTS

As bards interact with strange cultures and explore the magical potential of their art, they start experimenting on the constructions of new ways to create music. The following are a few exotic instruments that bards of all races have created. While some require special material and processes, none of them are inherently magical and fall under one type of Performance skill or another.

Bellchord: A mix between a stringed and percussion instrument, the closest definition of the bellchord is a harp with tiny bells attached to the strings. The bellchord is a wooden frame with four strings at its centre, with different number of silver bells tied to it. Each bell can be struck separately, which still causes a tingle from its neighbouring bells, or a string can be plucked to cause all the bells to tingle. This instrument can be played with the Perform (stringed instruments) skill; its constant humming and tingling provides a +2 circumstance bonus to a bard's Perform check when using the countersong ability.

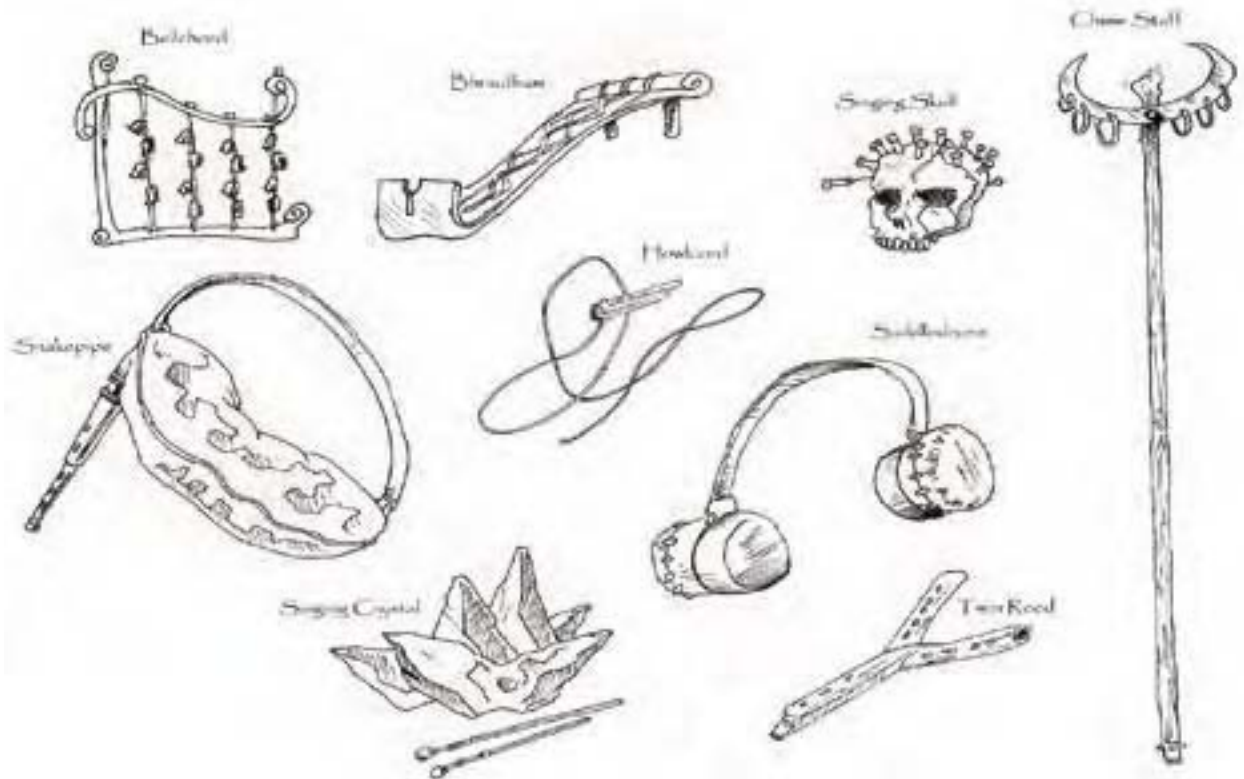
Bhriedham: The elves are rumoured to be responsible for this instrument, but it could just as easily be attributed to dwarves. The bhriedham is a wooden or stone board about one foot and a half in length and eight inches wide, with lines that are carved or laid down with a strange

gossamer material that is actually spun crystal. The lines run intricate patterns across the board's surface, crossing and twisting around each other. The instrument is played by running fingers across these lines, creating sounds of different pitches and tones. The bhriedham is an incredibly flexible instrument and already considered to be of masterwork quality, allowing a performer to play anything he wants. He gains a +3 circumstance bonus to all Perform checks while using this instrument.

Chime Staff: An instrument favoured by wandering religious men and women, the chime staff is a simple polished wood staff topped by metal rings that create a musical tingling when shaken. It can be used as a weapon with all the normal characteristics of a staff but, when used to underscore the rhythm of poetics, it grants a bard a +2 bonus to the DC of his *suggestion* ability.

Howlcord: This primitive instrument is not so much an instrument as a tool for meditation and concentration, but a canny bard can still make music with it. A howlcord is a simple piece of rope with a hollow tube tied to one end. The player takes one end of the rope and twirls it around with great force, the air pushed through the tube. The note played depends on the length of the rope from the player's hand and the speed by which it is twirled, which makes this instrument hard to compose music for. The howlcord may be used as a weapon that deals no damage but allows the character to perform trip attempts as a whip or spiked chain, and the character can also make feints with it.





Snakepipe: This instrument receives its name from its appearance, as it is a long leather bag that wraps around the player with the mouthpiece hanging loosely from one of its ends. Holes in the long mouthpiece allow a bard to regulate the sound to create the notes with one hand, while the other squeezes the bag by running its length upwards. Because of its additional 'air' capacity, the player can stop blowing for three rounds while the air in the bag provides the sound, during which a bard may speak, utter command words and cast spells without interrupting a bardic music ability. The character may not activate a second bardic music ability with his voice unless he has the appropriate ranks in Perform (singing) or Perform (poetics).

Saddledrums: Used mostly for war, the saddle drums allow a war chanter to raise the morale of an army

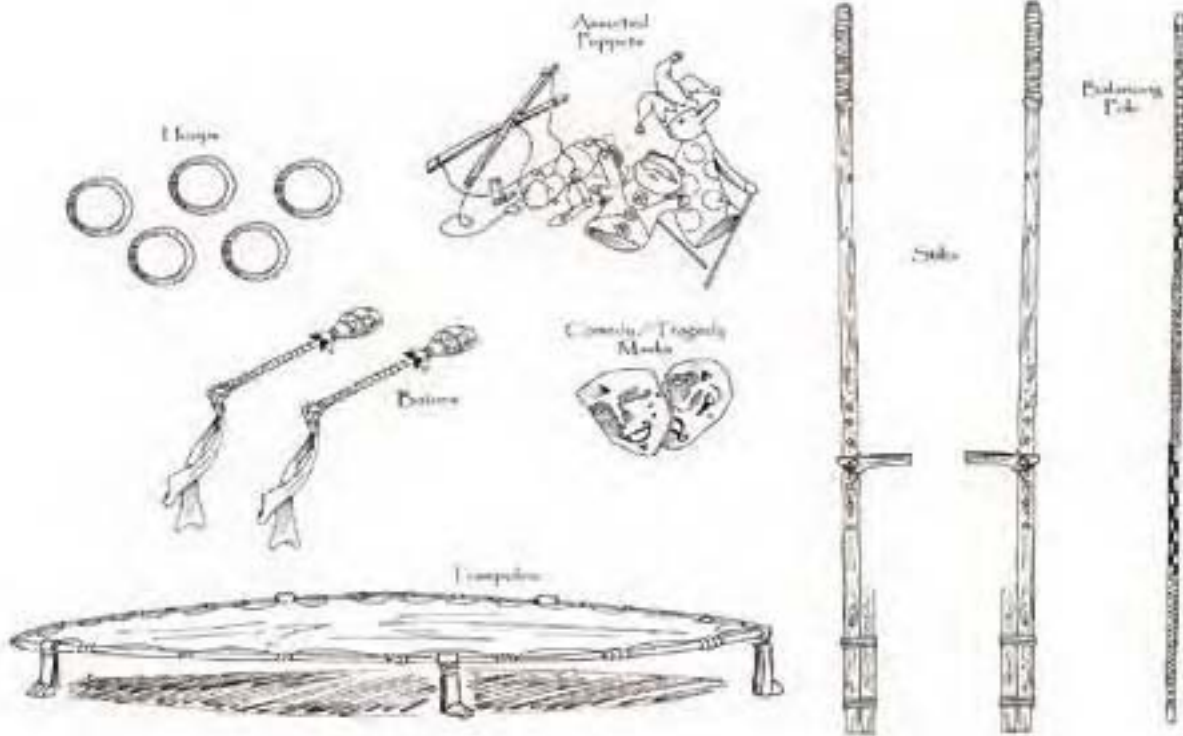
Exotic Instruments

Instrument	Cost
Bellchord	5 gp
Bhriedham	150 gp
Chime staff	2 gp
Howlcard	5 cp
Snakepipe	8 gp
Saddledrums	5 gp
Singing crystal	25 gp
Singing skull	70 gp
Twin reed	5 cp

through sounds while still functioning as a combatant, or at least able to manoeuvre in the battlefield. The saddledrums are a pair of large drums that fit on each side of a saddle, struck with a bare hands or drumsticks, depending on the effect desired. A bard can control his mount while playing the drums, although he first needs to make a Ride or Handle Animal check (DC 15) to avoid spooking the mount. The mount can be taught to withstand the music as a normal trick. Using the hands increases the duration of the inspire courage class ability to eight rounds after the character stops playing, while using the drumsticks does the same for the inspire greatness ability.

Singing Crystal: This strange item can be considered a percussion instrument as one generates sound by striking it. The singing crystal is crafted from a special mineral found in the depths of certain dwarven holds. It is mostly left in its natural shape which is similar to quartz with its hexagonal parallelepiped form topped in points, each of its six long surfaces carved with 'target' circles. The instrument is played by striking a thin metal rod to the target circles, which causes different notes to ring in a gentle humming vibration.

Singing Skull: No one is exactly sure who created this instrument, as it is as ghastly as its sound is haunting. The singing skull is made from the actual skull of a sentient being, typically that of a human, elf or dwarf, with the cranial cavity lined with strings that are entwined around each other in a complex internal spider



web. The skull is played by pulling on knobs on the cranium's exterior, which in turn pulls a string and rubs it against those it is connected to, creating a chilling violin-like melody. Playing this instrument requires the Perform (stringed instruments) skill and it gives the bard a +2 circumstance bonus to Intimidate checks and also to Perform checks to use *fascinate*, as the instrument provokes a morbid fascination.

Twin Reed: This is a simple wind instrument made from clay in the shape of a 'Y,' with the mouthpiece located on the single trunk. The player presses and depresses the holes in the twin reed's arms, producing a double sound. Capable performers can play the main melody on one of the arms and the accompaniment in the other or switch songs without stopping their music. Playing a twin reed allows a bard to activate a second bardic music effect while sustaining the first one. He can only sustain the first effect for one round further for every five ranks he has in Perform (wind instrument).

ENTERTAINMENT TOOLS

Bardic music is only a name to designate the bard's talent for magical performances, music and poetics being their main venue of artistic expression. However, many bards choose other less obvious paths to entertain others and make a living. Some of these performances evolve into magical styles unique to bards (see the Power

Performance chapter), which makes the performance tools they use into a vital piece of a bard's inventory.

Balancing Pole: A long staff used to aid a performer traverse spans on a narrow surface. It is mostly for show, but it does give a character a +2 circumstance bonus on Balance checks. A ten-foot pole is perfectly serviceable as a balancing pole, although travelling performers prefer to carry a shorter one.

Trampoline: This is a very hard tool to construct given a certain technological level, as the skin strung along a circular frame must be taut and flexible enough to propel a user upwards without breaking. The trampoline can be as small as a two-foot radius frame, one foot high or as large as a five-foot radius frame that is four feet high. Larger trampolines can be made from the membrane of a dragon's wing, but all hunters and scholars agree that this is a waste of a good dragon's wing. The trampoline provides a circumstance bonus to Jump checks (both vertical and horizontal) equal to +2 per foot of radius.

Batons: Used to complement dance numbers, the batons are tools that require fine control (Sleight of Hands five ranks or more). The performer twirls them around, throws them in the air and catches them, the movements matching the rhythm of a dance or becoming a dance of their own. Some batons have ends that can be lit on fire for added spectacle. The batons provide a +2 circumstance bonus to Perform checks to use the



fascinate bardic music ability when using dance as a focus.

Comedy/Tragedy Mask: A tool of actors and actresses, but also for storytellers who want to divorce from the audience's minds their own face from that of the characters they are speaking for. These masks are the symbol of the thespian arts and help performers to assume the role of any character they might be playing. Masks are also the main component of many magical items thanks to their inherent correspondence to trickery and deceit, but their mundane counterparts are still popular amongst performers. A masterwork mask will give its +2 circumstance bonus to the appropriate Perform skill (epic, storytelling, comedy, acting, and suchlike.).

Hoops: Metal rings around one foot in diameter, a performer can use a set for juggling and simple prestidigitation tricks. They are not really balanced for combat even if they can hurt when hitting someone's skull (treat as an improvised weapon). The hoops can be used to aid Sleight of Hand and even Tumble checks made for the purpose of acrobatic performances.

Puppets: This is a catch-all category to describe dolls that are controlled by the bard to tell a story or impress with his fine control of the puppet's movements. Puppets come in various forms, from the simple and crude sock puppets to true works of art that only need the divine breathe of life to resemble living beings. Puppets are divided in the way the bard controls them:

- ✦ *Hand Puppets:* These small tools are simple to use; the performer inserts his hand inside the puppet and controls some of its movements from there. Simple hand puppets are controlled with a finger per arm, plus the remaining ones controlling the head. More complex hand puppets allow the user to control facial features such as an opening mouth.
- ✦ *Rod Puppet:* An outgrowth of the hand puppet, this model has thin rods controlling the puppet's arms. The puppeteer must use both hands to control such a puppet, but this allows for more complex performances.
- ✦ *Marionette:* Unlike other puppets, the marionette is not controlled from below but from above as its limbs are controlled by strings that the puppeteer pulls and relaxes to mimic movement. While marionettes have more joints than other puppets and are thus capable of more lifelike (if jerky) movement, there is no way for the puppeteer to control facial expressions or other finer features.

- ✦ *Body Puppet:* A more experimental performance tool, the body puppet is a life-sized representation that the performer controls with his own movements. The audience can selectively 'ignore' that the puppeteer is there, but professionals dress completely in black to help the audience in that task. Magic-capable puppeteers simply cast *invisibility* on themselves.

Each type of puppet can be made in simple and masterwork versions; the masterwork versions grant the puppeteer a +2 circumstance bonus on Performance checks. Having five ranks in Sleight of Hand grants a +2 synergy bonus to Perform checks when using hand and rod puppets, which goes the same for Use Rope and marionettes as well as Tumble or Escape Artist (but not both) and body puppets.

Stilts: A simple tool consisting of two wooden poles to artificially lengthen the performer's legs, stilts require balance and control, requiring at least five ranks in Balance from a character in order to use them correctly. The stilts increase the character's height by up to five feet, but he can only move at half his normal speed. To attempt to walk at his normal speed, the character must make a Balance check (DC 15). Stilts are useful for crossing shallow bodies of water (or other hazardous liquids that will not eat into the stilts too much) or to reach switches, wall markings and other features too far from the ground.

Entertainment Tools

Tool	Cost
Balancing Pole	3 sp
Batons (2)	1 gp
Comedy/tragedy mask	20 gp
Comedy/tragedy mask, masterwork	80 gp
Hoops (3)	5 gp
Puppets	—
Hand	5 gp
Hand, masterwork	25 gp
Rod	8 gp
Rod, masterwork	30 gp
Marionette	10 gp
Marionette, masterwork	40 gp
Body	80 gp
Body, masterwork	200 gp
Stilts	1 gp
Stilts, iron	5 gp
Stilts, mithral	50 gp
Stilts, adamantine	80 gp

The Magical Bard

The bard is the weakest of the arcane spellcasters, his proficiency in magic diluted because of the power of his music and the sheer diversity of his talents. This does not stop many bards from pursuing the magical aspect of their talent. To bolster their weak power, bards depend much more on magical items, and are often talented in working out how to use items designed for others. Being spellcasters, nothing stops bards from creating their own tools and devoting their time to magical research, which results in the creation of unique magical items and methods devised specifically with the bard's characteristics in mind.

MAGIC WEAPONS & ARMOUR

The bard is not the most warlike of classes, but nonetheless he is capable of joining combat either with melee or ranged capabilities, which means that bards can definitely enjoy the benefits of enchantments on weapons and armour

Weapon Abilities

Hypnotic: A weapon with this enchantment reflects light in rainbow-coloured hues, even if the weapon is not made of metal. As a wielder handles and attacks with it, the weapon leaves multicoloured afterimages of itself, creating a kaleidoscopic pattern in the air that can mesmerise creatures the wielder is attacking. Creatures facing the character in melee combat must make a Will save (DC 13) on the first round of engagement or be placed into an altered state of consciousness by the weapon's movements. The target suffers a -2 penalty to attack rolls against the wielder as well as to its AC. This fascination continues until the wielder sheathes the weapon or the subjects are otherwise no longer able to see it, or until the end of combat. A creature that saves successfully against this ability is immune to further exposure for 24 hours. In addition to this ability, a mesmerised creature is in danger of being mentally manipulated by the wielder, who can implant a command in the creature as a standard action, with the effects similar to the *suggestion* spell. The creature makes another Will save (DC 15) to resist this ability. Whether the creature failed or succeeded this second saving throw, it breaks free from the previous fascination effect.

Faint enchantment and illusion; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *hypnotic pattern*, *suggestion*; Price +2 bonus.

Oscillating: A weapon with this enchantment appears to be made of a more supple material than a non-magical version, and it twists every time it strikes a target. Far from being a detriment, this characteristic reflects the weapon's power. Upon command, an *oscillating* weapon wobbles and vibrates, which has no effect on the wielder but transmits the vibrations to the target. An *oscillating* weapon deals +1d6 points of sonic damage on a successful hit. Bows, crossbows, and slings so crafted bestow the sonic energy upon their ammunition.

Moderate enchantment; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *sound burst*; Price +1 bonus.

Pulsating: A *pulsating* weapon functions as an *oscillating* weapon that also emits a powerful sonic pulse upon striking a successful critical hit. The pulse does not harm the wielder or his possessions. In addition to the extra sonic damage from the *oscillating* ability (see above), a critical hit can utterly destroy an object struck as per the *shatter* spell cast by a 16th level sorcerer; the wielder selects an item in the target's possession, and the target must make a Will save (DC 15) or the object is destroyed. Unattended objects struck get no saving throw. A *pulsating* weapon has an additional property: once per day, the wielder can gather all the weapon's power into a single powerful pulse that affects structures as per the *sympathetic vibration* spell for 1d8+1 rounds. Once this ability is used, the additional sonic damage and *shatter* critical effect are negated for the rest of the day.

Strong evocation; CL 16th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *shatter* and *sympathetic vibration*; Price +3 bonus.

Shrieking: A *shrieking* weapon can be highly irritating in combat, but it is also very effective for its purposes. When drawn and starting with the first round of combat, the weapon begins to shriek wildly and uncontrollably, mixing terror with savage excitement. The weapon's wielder is unaffected, but all creatures within five feet of the weapon suffer from discomfort from all the shrieking. This is a sonic, mind-affecting ability, so creatures that are deaf or mindless are immune to it. Affected creatures must make a Will save (DC 16) every round they are adjacent to the wielder or suffer the effects of *confusion* for that round. Allies within range run the risk of being affected.

Moderate enchantment; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *confusion*; Price +2 bonus.



Silencing: A *silencing* weapon is the bane of spellcasters and the friend of rogues and rascals everywhere. As a mixture of both, a bard will find a weapon with this enchantment to be a selective boon. A silencing weapon makes no noise when being sheathed or unsheathed nor does it ring or clang when striking targets. The true advantage of this ability is in its power to silence its targets. This ability works in two ways: if the wielder scores a critical hit, a wave of silence envelopes everything within 15 feet of the target; this area of silence is static and fades eventually, reducing its radius by five feet per round (making its duration three rounds). The second use is voluntary; three times per day, the wielder can cause the weapon to impose a *silence* effect on any target struck. Unwilling targets can make a Will save (DC 13) to negate this effect.

Faint illusion; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armour, *silence*; Price +1 bonus.

Tuning: This simple enchantment is ideal for bards as it provides some magical assistance to musical performances (although in many places a song and a brandished weapon hardly combine). A *tuning* weapon

'You didn't say there'd be guards!' Eldreen shouted as the siblings ran for their lives through the underground catacombs, a pack of hellhounds closing in fast.

'Nobody knew that she kept pets!' Eilan was running behind, not because he was slow, but because he was covering his sisters' retreat. They had snuck into the catacombs from the party held upstairs in order to discover what the manor's owner could be using to blackmail a neighbour. They definitely were not expecting hellhounds.

'Damn! Where is the exit?!' Eyra, running in front, yelled back as she saw a juncture coming closer.

Eldreen unwrapped a sling from her waist without slowing down, managed to put a bullet on it and spun it around. 'To the next open, most inconspicuous exit!' She gave the order as she shot ahead. The bullet became a globe of light that traced a line as it flew, turning towards the right corridor.

'Neat!' Eyra would have added some humour to her comment, but a rabid pack of fiendish canines was not the best audience for stand-up comedy.

hums melodically when struck even slightly, and a character can change the pitch by striking different parts of the weapon. This effect grants a +2 bonus to all Perform checks that have something to do with music. A bard using a *tuning* weapon enjoys greater advantages: he can deliver a bardic music ability through the weapon and makes a Perform check (DC 20) in addition to any other required check. If this check succeeds, the weapon reverberates with the music ability and returns it to the bard; the ability works normally as intended, but the character does not spend the use of the ability for that day.

Faint evocation; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; caster must be a bard, *sound burst*; Price +2 bonus.

Wayfarer: This enchantment can only be placed on missile weapons or ammunition. For the travelling performer, knowing which way to go is important, even more so if his travels take him to lost ruins, thick woods and dark caverns. Before firing a weapon or missile with this ability, the character states his intended destination, which may be relatively vague like 'out of these woods' or 'the nearest inn'. Instead of hitting a target, a weapon fired in this manner will travel up to its maximum range, following a path leading to the requested destination as efficiently as it can and tracing a line of light behind it. The line will remain until sunset or sunrise, depending on when it was fired, but will vanish as the character that fired it walks along the traced route.

Strong divination; CL 13th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *find the path*; Price +2 bonus.

Armour Abilities

Dissimulating: This ability gives a suit of armour an ability similar to a *glamered* armour in which it assumes the appearance of normal clothing upon command. The difference lies in that the illusion is somewhat 'smart'; the guise it assumes will *always* be a perfect fit for any social situation and purpose; along with the command word, the wearer speaks what kind of task he is undertaking (not the kind of disguise he wants) and the armour will appear as the ideal set of clothing. For example; if the bard announces he is attending a traditional celebration of the northern barbarian tribes, the armour will become a set of ritualistic clothing that will please said barbarians and, in the case that the barbarians consider it an insult for a foreigner to wear their clothing, the armour will pick this up and appear as a set of clothing that will not land the character in a major faux pas. In mechanical terms, the armour grants

a +2 bonus to all skill checks and saving throws related to social situations.

Faint divination and illusion; CL 11th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *detect thoughts*, *disguise self*; Price +6,700 gp.

Escaping: Many spellcasters are not very keen on being caught in the middle of melee, even the bard who can hold his own in battle. This armour or shield ability not only protects the wearer from being hit, but also provides him with a route of escape should he be trapped in the midst of his enemies. When the character is hit in combat by a melee attack, the wearer of this armour can make a Reflex save (DC 10 + half the attacker's attack bonus) before damage is rolled. If successful, the damage is negated and the wearer flickers for an instant, disappearing from the attacker's vicinity and appearing a distance equal to five feet away from the farthest space threatened by the attacker, counting from the space's edge. Since he is not moving out of his original space, he does not provoke attacks of opportunity. The armour or shield can only use this ability once per round, so if he is attacked more than once in the same round, this ability only activates once. The character can control whether the ability is activated or not at any given opportunity. Moderate conjuration; CL 7th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *dimension door*; Price +3 bonus.

Evading: A bard is responsible for providing support to his companions, which usually means that he must run from one end of the battlefield to the other, often getting in the way of many enemies. An *evading* armour not only increases the wearer's walk speed by +10 ft., it also negates all attacks of opportunity the wearer would provoke because of leaving threatened areas.

Faint transmutation and illusion; CL 5th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *haste*, *displacement*; Price +3 bonus.

Inviting: This ability works like *dissimulating* and *glamered* armour, but it has an additional effect. When the wearer would be restricted access to an event or a location by guards or sentinel creatures, the armour assumes the guise of an official or some other position that would be granted entry and sends a mental order to the guards to allow the character entry. Guards must make a Will save (DC 15) or let the wearer pass. The wearer may attempt to convince the guards to allow entry to companions, gaining a +2 circumstance modifier to Bluff, Diplomacy or Intimidate checks to that effect.

Faint divination, enchantment and illusion; CL 12th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *detect thoughts*, *disguise self*, *suggestion*; Price +7,500 gp.

Lightened: This ability is placed on suits of medium armour. A lightened armour is considered to be light armour for purposes of proficiency, its armour check penalty is reduced by two and its maximum Dexterity bonus increases by +1. The chance of arcane spell failure remains the same, although bards can ignore it as they do the penalty of any light armour.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *feather fall*; Price +1 bonus.

Loud: This ability was designed with bards in mind. The magic around the armour resonates with the power of a bard's music abilities and intensifies their volume. While wearing this armour, the range of all of a bard's music abilities doubles. This property only works on those abilities that include a range in their description, and includes optional abilities from other sources and prestige class features that depend on bardic music. As a general rule, any feat, power or ability that requires the character to spend one use of bardic music and has a range can be affected by this ability.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *whispering wind*; Price +1 bonus.

Mannerism: This ability can only be placed on suits of armour. A character wearing mannerism armour can use the enchantment to aid in his ability to impersonate others. The character needs only touch a target and mutter the command word, and the armour will 'record' the target's mannerisms, turns of phrase and other aspects of his behaviour. The armour can store one target's mannerisms for every +1 in its enhancement. Three times per day, the wearer can speak a second command word and the armour will guide and modulate his behaviour so that it matches that of a stored target. This is useful to make impressions during a performance, but it is much more useful when adopting disguises. This armour gives the wearer a +10 enhancement bonus to Disguise and Bluff checks when adopting the mannerisms of one of the stored targets; the mannerisms last for two hours per enhancement bonus. This ability does not confer the target's appearance or dress; that depends on the wearer's ability to disguise himself (usually through the *disguise self* spell), although the armour may present a problem unless it has the *glamered* or *dissimulating* abilities.



Faint illusion; CL 9th; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *dominate person*; Price +2,500 gp.

Melodic: This ability can only be placed on shields. The magic is inscribed by carving careful patterns that resemble a musical instrument, most commonly of the stringed kind but allowing almost anything musical. From that point onward, the shield is now an instrument that can be played, emitting notes and melodies just as if it was the instrument carved on its surface. In addition, it also applies its enhancement bonus to Perform checks when using it as an instrument.

Faint illusion; CL 3rd; Craft Magic Arms and Armour; *ghost sound*; Price +1,000 gp.

WONDROUS ITEMS

Coin of Cooperation: This magical coin is a boon for those that want to pass money around to facilitate their dealings, but do not have a bottomless purse. This coin always takes the appearance of the coin of the highest denomination in the realm it is located. It grants its owner a +5 bonus to Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather Information checks that involve the passing of money as bribes, extortion or other under-the-counter types of payment. When given as part of another collection of coins (to match the bribe's price), the owner makes a level check equal (d20 + character level, DC 15); if successful, the character recovers the money paid, including the *coin of cooperation* after two hours and without any repercussions. If the check fails, only the *coin of cooperation* returns and, if the roll results in a natural 1, the coin is also gone forever. The only way that a character can be parted from the *coin of cooperation* is that he gives it away willingly or when he uses it to pay for anything where payment is a legal, decent and expected thing, not part of a bribe or other illegal exchange of money.

Strong conjuration; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *instant summons*; Price 50,000 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Mask of Impersonation, Lesser: This simple velvet mask is studded with pearls along its edges, covering all of a wearer's face except the eyes. By wearing the mask and speaking a command word, the *lesser mask of impersonation* surrounds the character with a perfect disguise that is not merely a figment illusion, but a shadow illusion with partial reality. Clothes will feel real to the touch and weapons will deal damage. This mask is keyed to only one disguise, chosen at creation; no matter who dons the mask, he will be disguised as the same person every time its magic is activated, concealing the wearer's original race, gender and attire. The disguise persona is a humanoid creature of a size and race also determined at the creation stage, but the mask will create a properly sized disguise even if it looks odd (a Small half-orc mask worn by a halfling, for example). The disguise persona comes complete with the standard equipment for a 3rd level character. Equivalent equipment on the wearer's body will translate into their disguised versions to the wearer's advantage: if wielding a +3 *longsword* and the disguise includes a rapier, the weapon will *look* like a rapier but attack and deal damage as a magic longsword. The same goes for weapon proficiencies: should a disguise include weapon or armour with which the character is not proficient, they will act as the most similar weapons for which he is. Disguise armour does not provide any extra protection, and any prop in the disguise that leaves the wearer's body will turn to smoke in six hours or when the mask is removed. Only the most violent and close interaction (combat, intimacy, and suchlike) will elicit a Will save from the creature interacting with the disguise at a DC equal to the wearer's character level +5 or as an opposed save against the wearer's Disguise check +5. A *lesser mask of impersonation* cannot be made to replicate the appearance of a specific person unless the creator possesses an important personal belonging of the target to be mimicked.

Moderate illusion; CL 7th; Craft Wondrous Item, *shadow conjuration*; creator must have at least five ranks in Disguise and Perform (acting) each; Price 50,400 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Result	Effect
Less than 10	Disguise is generic and somewhat bland; wearer may need to make Disguise checks at a +5 bonus when interacting with others, at the Games Master's discretion.
10–14	Disguise is adequate and complete as per the <i>lesser mask of impersonation</i> .
15–19	Disguise is very good; it can include official badges and unique details; the DC for creatures' Will save increases by +2.
20–24	Disguise is great, it has no visible flaws and includes voice and physical mannerisms. The DC for creatures' Will save increases by +4.
25+	Disguise is excellent; it may emulate a specific individual at normal DCs and effects, or assume a generic disguise with a +6 increase to Will save DC when interacting with it.

Mask of Impersonation, Improved: This item works exactly as its *lesser* version, except that it allows the wearer to ‘improvise’ disguises instead of cloaking him under one predetermined appearance. The wearer chooses his disguise upon uttering the command word and makes a Disguise check, with the result determining the effectiveness of the illusory disguise as

Strong illusion; CL 13th; Craft Wondrous Item, *disguise self*, *greater shadow conjuration*; creator must have at least 5 ranks in Disguise and Perform (acting) each; Price 163,800 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Mask of Impersonation, Greater: The most powerful version of this disguise tool is not based on illusion, but on actually transforming the wearer. Like the lesser version, it has a predetermined disguise, but this disguise can be of any creature between Small and Large in size and of any race or even species. Only the outer form is changed as per a *shapechange* spell, but the wearer retains his Intelligence and special abilities that depend on his intellect as well as speech. Props included in the disguise are real, although they will default to the characteristics of the character’s own equipment if it is more convenient for him. Regardless of interaction, the disguise is perfect and creatures do not get any kind of save to pierce it; the character’s behaviour and acting ability will be the only indicator that he is an impostor. The disguise cannot, under any circumstance, emulate a specific character or individual creature, but it can emulate gaseous and incorporeal states.

Strong illusion; CL 17th; Craft Wondrous Item, *shapechange*; Price 275,400 gp; Weight 1 lb.

Candle of Inspiration: When a character works under the light of this candle, he finds ideas coming much quicker to him and his ability to implement them also increases. The candle shines for an indeterminate amount of time, not consuming the wax as it feeds from the creative energies of its owner. The candle grants all characters within the radius of its light (20 feet) a +5 bonus on all Craft, Forgery and Perform checks. Also, the time to create something through the Craft skill or item creation feats is halved. If the light is ever used for normal illumination its bonus is reduced by one for each hour, with the wax melting away. If the bonus reaches zero, the candle also loses its craft duration benefit. Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *fox’s cunning*, *fabricate*; Price 90,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

Companion Sash: This elegant silken sash is worn as any other piece of clothing; its brocade somehow always matching the rest of the character’s clothing. Upon command, the sash unfurls itself from its wearer and animates as a creature that obeys all of its owner’s

commands. Use the stats for a Medium animated object with the blind and constrict abilities. A second command calls the *companion sash* back to the owner’s body, doubling its speed as it returns. If the sash is ‘killed’ while it is animated, it is forever destroyed.

Moderate transmutation; CL 9th; Craft Wondrous Item, *animate objects*, *summon monster II*; Price 90,000 gp; Weight 2 lb.

Pendant of Understanding: One of the problems with knowledge is that it is packaged in language, and no one is able to speak every language under the sky. The *pendant of understanding* bridges the language barrier by providing its wearer the means to completely share understanding and comprehension with other beings. When wearing this pendant, a character can understand any language spoken in front of him and when he speaks, everyone can understand him no matter what language he speaks in. Moreover, the pendant grants the character a +10 enhancement bonus to Sense Motive checks so he can understand the motives behind others’ words, regardless of language. If he wishes, he can pass on this bonus to the people he is talking to so they can also be certain of the character’s intentions.

Faint divination; CL 3rd; Craft Wondrous Item, *detect thoughts*, *tongues*; Price 19,500 gp; Weight 1 lb.

MAGIC INSTRUMENTS

Certain classes have types of magic items that are most useful to them; fighters have weapons and armour, wizards have wands and staves, and the rest of the classes benefits from a host of wondrous items. Bards as a class can do a little of everything and can benefit from most magic items, but they have developed a method of enchanting their instruments.

Magic instruments are a new category of magic item with its own item creation feat, which a character has to learn before he starts crafting his own magic instruments.

Craft Magic Instrument (Item Creation)

You can craft a magic instrument and enchant it with power.

Prerequisite: Caster level 3rd, bardic music.

Benefit: You can create any magic instrument whose prerequisites you meet. Enchanting a magic instrument takes one day for each 1,000 gp in its price. To enchant a magic instrument, you must spend 1/25 of the item’s price in XP and use up raw materials costing half of this price.



Repairing a magic instrument costs half the XP, half the raw materials and half the time it would take to craft that item in the first place.

Some magic instruments incur extra costs in material components or XP, as noted in their descriptions. These costs are in addition to those derived from the item's base price. You must pay such a cost to create an item or to mend a broken one.

Using Magic Instruments

Just like any other magic item, a magic instrument must be activated. A magic instrument is use-activated, but its use has a special requirement in the form of a Perform check adequate for the instrument (stringed, wind, percussion, and so on) as the character starts playing. The DC of this check depends on the instrument's power, starting with a base DC 10 and increasing depending on the enchantments placed upon the instrument. The check to activate the magic instrument is a free action; once activated, the owner can use all of the instrument's enchantment for as long as he keeps playing the instrument.

Playing takes up a standard action, which means that a bard cannot perform any standard actions in a turn that he is playing a magical instrument, but that standard action is used to activate any of the instrument's powers as well as to use special abilities that depend on musical performance, such as bardic music abilities. Note that some abilities may overlap and still be sustained by the instrument's magic. If he stops playing, whatever effect coming from the instrument stops immediately unless the ability's description tells otherwise. The character must activate the instrument again if he wishes to use its abilities once more. While the instrument is not activated, its magic aura dims and becomes a faint version of its normal aura strength, but if the effect was faint to start with, it vanishes completely when inactive, making it easily confused with a mundane instrument.

Crafting a Magic Instrument

Creating a magic instrument is surprisingly similar to creating a magic weapon or armour. To create a magic instrument, a character needs a workshop with the tools and materials necessary for the instrument he wants to create, be it wood, metal, leather or stranger materials. Only a masterwork instrument can become a magic instrument. Additional magic supplies costs for the materials are subsumed in the cost for creating the magic instrument: half of its base price.

A magic instrument measures its power by an enhancement bonus similar to that of a weapon, although

they are applied differently (see below); the final cost of a magic instrument is based on this bonus, and the different abilities increase the cost by a certain bonus amount, just like magic weapon abilities.

Creating a magic instrument has a special prerequisite: the creator's caster level must be at least three times the enhancement bonus of the instrument. If an item has both an enhancement bonus and a special ability the higher of the two caster level requirements must be met. A magic instrument must have at least a +1 enhancement bonus to have any of the abilities listed on the Instrument Abilities table.

If spells are involved in the prerequisites for making the instrument, the creator must have prepared or must know the spells to be cast, but need not provide any material components or focuses the spells require, nor are any XP costs inherent in a prerequisite spell incurred in the creation of the item. The act of working on the instrument triggers the prepared spells, making them unavailable for casting during each day of the instrument's creation.

Creating some instruments may entail other prerequisites beyond or other than spellcasting. See the individual descriptions for details.

Magic Instrument Costs

Enhancement Bonus	Base Price	Activation DC modifier
+1	2,000 gp	+3
+2	8,000 gp	+4
+3	18,000 gp	+5
+4	32,000 gp	+6
+5	50,000 gp	+7
+6 ¹	72,000 gp	+8
+7 ¹	98,000 gp	+9
+8 ¹	128,000 gp	+10
+9 ¹	162,000 gp	+11
+10 ¹	200,000 gp	+12

¹ An instrument cannot actually have a bonus higher than +5. Use these lines to determine price when special abilities are added in.

Instrument Enhancement Bonus

Like magic weapons and armour, magic instruments have an enhancement bonus that goes from +1 to +5. Being neither weapons nor armour, the instrument's bonus does not apply to attack rolls or Armour Class and, being a bard's creation, it has more than one application.

- ✦ **Boost Performance:** The enhancement bonus counts towards all normal Perform checks, but every +1 enhancement bonus counts as a +4 competence bonus towards checks of this type (a +2 bonus equals +8, +3 equals +12 and so on). When a Perform check is necessary to activate a supernatural, spell-like or bardic music ability, the bonus from the magic instrument is not multiplied.
- ✦ **Increase Bonus:** The instrument's enhancement bonus is added to the bonus provided by abilities such as *inspire courage*, *inspire competence* and *inspire greatness*. However, the bonus is applied only to one target even if the character is of sufficient level to affect multiple targets at the same time.
- ✦ **Increase Targets:** The instrument's enhancement bonus allows the character to affect additional targets with bardic music abilities that only affect one target, and abilities that can add more targets as the character gains levels. A magic instrument with a +1 or +2 bonus adds one target, a bonus of +3 and +4 adds two targets and an instrument with a +5 bonus can add up to three targets.

Instrument Abilities

In addition to enhancement bonuses, magic instruments can have one or more of the special abilities detailed below. A weapon with a special ability must have at least a +1 enhancement bonus.

(Skill)-bonded: A magic instrument greatly aids musical performance, but it can also be enchanted to bolster uses of other skills, creating sounds and melodies that rhyme metaphorically with certain tasks. When making a *skill-bonded* instrument, the creator selects one skill; Knowledge, Craft and Profession must be chosen as per their individual specialties (arcana, weaponsmithing, cobbler, and so forth). A *skill-bonded* weapon can use the multiplied bonus from the instrument's enhancement bonus (as per boost performance above) to any *inspire competence* use related to the chosen skill. This is, a +2 *Diplomacy-bonded lute* will give a +8 bonus to all Diplomacy checks when using the *inspire competence* ability.

Faint transmutation; CL 3rd; Craft Instrument; *fox's cunning* or *eagle's splendour*; Price +1 bonus.

Accompaniment: While playing a magic instrument, the bard usually cannot use his concentration for almost anything else. If he plays with an *accompaniment* instrument, the bard can cast spells even while he plays. By spending a use of bardic music, the bard can cast spells through his instrument as if he were not playing it.

He still cannot use bardic music abilities and cast spells at the same time (see the *staccato* ability), but he is no longer constrained by a magic instrument's limitation of devoting his concentration to it.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Instrument; *haste*; Price +1 bonus.

Cross-fade: One of the greatest limitations of most instruments is that they can only play one song at a time. A *cross-fade* instrument lets a bard combine his abilities. He can start playing a different bardic music ability while maintaining a short amount of concentration on a previous one. For a number of rounds equal to the instrument's enhancement bonus, a previous bardic music ability is considered to still be played by the bard even if he starts using another. When this extra duration ends, the normal effects of stopping a bardic performance apply, whether the effect stops at once or lasts for a number of rounds afterwards.

Moderate abjuration; CL 10th; Craft Instrument; *freedom of movement*; Price +2 bonus.

Echo: The only damaging magic in a bard's arsenal involves sonic spells, but they can hardly reach the destructive potential of most attack magic. With an *echo* instrument, a bard can make his sonic spells be on a level comparable to the sheer might of other arcane spellcasters. A bard can cast sonic spells while playing an *echo* instrument and those that deal hit point damage roll twice the number of dice when cast through the instrument.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Instrument; *sculpt sound*; Price +2 bonus.

Enchanted: A enchanted weapon allows a spellcaster to store a single targeted spell of up to 3rd level in the instrument, provided that the spell has a casting time of one standard action. The performer can make a Perform check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast the contained spell through the music. Once the spell has been cast from the instrument, a spellcaster can cast any other spell of up to 3rd level into it. The instrument magically imparts to the performer the name of the spell currently stored within it. The instrument can have the *fortissimo* ability without needing the *accompaniment* ability, but its bonus only applies to bardic music and the stored spell.

Strong evocation (plus aura of stored spell); CL 12th; Craft Instrument, creator must be a caster of at least 12th level; Price +2 bonus.

Fortissimo: The bard's magic is often limited by his slow progression in magical expertise, resulting in low save DCs for his spells and, although not as affected, his music can also be easily resisted due to bad luck on a Perform check. This instrument *must* have the



accompaniment ability before adding *fortissimo* (or the *enchanted* ability for limited benefits). When he casts a spell through his magic instrument or performs a bardic music ability with a save DC, the bard increases the spell's or ability's save DC by an amount equal to the instrument's enhancement bonus.

Faint evocation; CL 4th; Craft Instrument, Spell Focus (any); *sound burst*; Price +1 bonus.

Muse: A normal magic instrument only enhances the mundane performance of its owner, but if enchanted with this ability, it can also receive a boost when using other magic abilities. A *muse* instrument adds twice its enhancement bonus to Perform checks related to magic abilities and their activation; in some cases, this will increase the save DC of some specific powers.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Instrument; *glibness*; Price +1 bonus.

Pianissimo: Through his arcane attunement, the bard can use his instrument to affect the magic of others. This instrument *must* have the *accompaniment* ability before adding *pianissimo*. He can use the countersong ability to reduce the save DC of a spell cast by a spellcaster or a spell-like ability used within 30 feet plus five feet per enhancement bonus. Instead of rolling a Perform check, the bard reduces the target effect's save DC by an amount equal to the magic instrument's enhancement bonus plus his Charisma modifier.

Faint illusion; CL 4th; Craft Instrument; *silence*; Price +2 bonus.

Reverb: Instruments and music are meant to soothe and entertain, but a *reverb* instrument can become a frightening weapon in the hands of a bard. This instrument is capable of causing a blast of sound directed at a single target. The blast creates a touch attack with a range increment of 20 ft. that deals 1d8 points of sonic damage and requires the expenditure of a bardic music use or a 1st level spell slot.

Faint evocation; CL 4th; Craft Instrument; *sound burst*; Price +1 bonus.

Reverb, Improved: This ability works just as *reverb*, except that the blast causes 3d8 points of damage. The damage does not stack with the normal *reverb* ability, but the higher bonus applies.

Moderate evocation; CL 10th; Craft Instrument; *shout*; Price +2 bonus.

Staccato: Bards must sustain their music to use it to their utmost potential, but possessing a *staccato* instrument can give them great flexibility. While using his bardic music abilities through this instrument, the bard can interrupt his performance for one round, during which he can cast spells, activate command word items or otherwise use his actions for other purposes. After the round has elapsed, he can resume the ability he had been using without needing to spend another use of bardic music. All effects resume as they had been in the previous rounds, including those that escalate over time. If the bard fails to activate his song after one round has passed, it is considered that he stops his concentration on it.

Moderate transmutation; CL 7th; Craft Instrument; *blink*; Price +2 bonus.

Sustain: Bardic music abilities last for a limited duration, but if the bard performs them with a magic instrument, they can be sustained for longer. All duration of bardic music abilities, or abilities that require the expenditure of a bardic music use, is increased by a number of rounds equal to the instrument's enhancement bonus. This means that an effect lasts extra rounds after the bard stops singing. This ability works even on abilities that stop the moment that the bard stops concentrating or singing, even when he stops using the magic instrument.

Moderate enchantment; CL 5th; Craft Instrument, Extend Spell; Price +2 bonus.

Instrument Abilities

Enchantment	Cost
(Skill)-bonded	+1
Accompaniment	+1
Cross-fade	+2
Echo	+2
Enchanted	+2
Fortissimo	+1
Muse	+1
Pianissimo	+2
Reverb	+1
Reverb, improved	+2
Staccato	+2
Sustain	+2

TRICKS OF THE TRADE

As people who study just a bit of everything, bards lack the sheer potency in fields which others dedicate their entire lives to master, be it combat, magic or trickery. Because of this, bards have developed a series of tactics, tricks and methods that concentrate their abilities into more focused areas or in a way so that they can pool their eclectic talent behind a single effort. Most of these tricks have something to do with the bard's ability to exert power through music and art, harnessing the power of inspiration, skill and force of personality to find roads that get around restrictions.

SPELLSONGS

Bards are best known for their musical abilities; after all, it is about the only true ability that is uniquely their own. Fighters battle better, wizards and sorcerers are better spellcasters and rogues are better tricksters. Those bards who study the mystical power of their performances with more depth are capable of linking their artistic talent, their skill with music, to the seed of inspiration that fuels their arcane magic abilities.

Spellsongs are a special bardic ability that combines bardic music with a bard's stores of arcane power. In a nutshell, a spellsong is a spell converted into a bardic music ability.

To convert a spell into its musical equivalent, the bard must study, work and experiment for long in order to unravel the inherent rhythm of a spell and translate it into something he can perform with his natural stores of inspiration rather than his arcane capacity and, even then, using a spellsong is not so easy that success is guaranteed.

Spellsong Characteristics

Spellsongs have various characteristics that they share with spells in describing the way they work; when converting a spell into a spellsong, the player should fill out a description to have in hand when the bard uses it. When converting a spell into a spellsong, the bard can customise some of the characteristics to make it easier to perform.

School, Sub-school: This is unchanged from the spell's original description. Most normal bardic music abilities are classified in the enchantment school, but spellsongs are a different matter.

Descriptors: In addition to the spell's normal descriptors, spellsongs receive a new one: 'musical'. This descriptor

actually applies to all bard spells, for musical spells depend completely from their verbal component, which cannot be eliminated or ignored by the Silent Spell feat. Sonic spells are not always musical and vice versa.

Complexity: Spellsongs do not have a spell level but a complexity level. This number is the Difficulty Class for a Perform check to activate the spellsong (see below). Since a spellsong does not have a spell level, it bypasses effects that protect targets from spells of specific levels such as *globe of invulnerability*.

Activation: Like any normal bardic music ability, a spellsong requires him to spend some of his daily allotment of bardic music uses. This field indicates how many uses of bardic music the character must spend to activate the spellsong.

Save DC: The save DC of a spellsong depends initially on the original spell's level, but the bard can make it easier or harder to save against, as described below. This field also subsumes the 'saving throw' field from the spell's description, indicating the type of save (Fortitude, Reflex or Will) and whether the effect is halved, negated, harmless, etc. These last characteristics are the same as those of the original spell.

Duration: This is the field that attracts most bards when converting a spellsong, for it forces effects into lasting for as long as the bard keeps singing and sometimes lingers a number of rounds after he stops, just as other bardic music abilities.

Effect/Area/Target: This remains unchanged from the spell, affecting the same number of targets, the same area or having the same effect.

Range: A drawback to converting a spellsong is a reduced range. A spellsong's range is always the original spell's close range (25 feet plus five feet per caster level) or 60 feet, whatever is shorter. This range can be altered when converting the spell.

Spell Resistance: Spellsongs are susceptible to being blocked by spell resistance under the same conditions as the normal spell.

Learning Cost: This is the price the bard had to pay to convert the spell into a spellsong. The player does not need to have this information listed, since it is a one-time expenditure, but spellsong descriptions the Games Master comes up with should have it to make it clear to the player.



Converting Spells Into Spellsongs

The process of converting a spell into a spellsong is relatively simple. For convenience's sake the process uses the concept of conversion points. Conversion points are bought and used to alter the spellsong's base characteristics to fit the bard's tastes.

Step One: Select the Spell

All spells are appropriate for conversion into spellsongs, but at different costs, depending from which spell list the bard draws the spell from.

Class Spell List: The bard can use spellsongs in order to circumvent his spellcasting limitations and, given his eclectic understanding of magic, he can apply the general principles of magic to adapt spells to his repertoire. Depending on what class spell list any given spell belongs to (bard, cleric, druid, paladin, ranger or sorcerer/wizard), converting it to a spellsong will require the bard to pay a number of conversion points (to be obtained later).

Converting Known Spells: The first and easiest way to go about creating a spellsong is by using a spell the bard has already mastered and is able to cast spontaneously. When a bard converts a spell he knows, the spell fades from his memory and is not replaced. This sacrifice awards the character with conversion points which he can use to alter the spellsong's parameters. If the bard does not wish to lose the spell and have it also as a spellsong, the cost is the same as per an unknown spell -1.

Converting Unknown Spells: Because converting a spell he has not mastered is considerably more difficult, a bard must pay extra costs. He must have the spell handy somehow, either in a scroll, a wand, a potion or a wondrous magic item whose prerequisites include the desired spell. An expendable item is consumed, a charged item loses one charge per spell level and a continuous item ceases to work for one day per spell level as the bard draws its energy to empower his song.

High-Level Spells: It is very possible for bards to convert spells they are not able to cast yet into spellsongs they may use, but it always carries a heavy price. First of all, a character must have the required Charisma score to cast the desired spell (10 + spell level). Secondly, it is recommended that he is of sufficient level to cast the spell in question; if he is not, add +3 conversion points for every level that he is missing. As an additional benefit of spellsongs, a bard can convert spells that he would never be able to cast, namely those between 7th



and 9th level. The base cost for these spells is +3 per spell level beyond the 6th, adding the normal price for the first levels and the base cost for an unknown spell.

Perform Prerequisite: Once the spell is selected, the bard must make sure that he has the skill to perform its spellsong version. The bard must have a number of ranks in the Perform skill depending on the spell's level and nature.

Spellsong Perform Prerequisite

Spell	Minimum Perform ranks
Spell level (0 th -2 nd)	5 ranks +1 rank per spell level
Spell level (3 rd)	9 ranks
Spell level (4 th)	12 ranks
Spell level (5 th)	15 ranks
Spell level (6 th)	18 ranks
Spell level (7 th -9 th)	7 ranks +2 ranks per spell level
Brd Spell	+0 ranks
Sor/Wiz Spell	+2 ranks
Clr Spell	+3 ranks
Drd Spell	+4 ranks
Pal/Rgr Spell	+5 ranks

Example 1: A 4th level bard can cast 2nd level spells and wants to create a song that puts people to sleep. Instead of creating a very boring melody, he converts the *sleep*



1st level spell he already knows into a spellsong (+0 for bard spell, -1 for known spell, -2 for spell level) which instead of costing him anything actually gives him 3 conversion points to alter the spellsong's base characteristics.

Example 2: A 6th level bard is able to cast spells up to 2nd level in power, but he wants to create a song that frees a target from all bonds and impediments, so he converts the *freedom of movement* 4th level spell into a spellsong. The bard is still not able to learn this spell, so it is unknown to him (+0 points for bard spell, +0 unknown spell, +4 for spell level, +6 for two missing spell levels) for a total of ten conversion points.

Example 3: A 9th level bard can cast 3rd level spells and wants to create a song that makes plants grow, so he converts the 3rd level druid spell *plant growth*, obviously unknown to the bard (+10 for a druid spell, +0 for unknown spell, +3 for spell level) for a total of 15 conversion points.

Example 4: A 15th level bard with Charisma 17 can cast 5th level spells and wants to create a song that drives a room full of people insane, so he converts the *insanity* 7th level spell into a spell song. The bard cannot cast a spell of such a high level and therefore it is unknown to him (+5 for sorcerer or wizard spell, +0 for unknown spell, +6 per first six spell levels, +3 for 7th level, +6 for two missing spell levels) for a total of 20 conversion points.

Spellsong Conversion

Spell List	Conversion points
Brd spell	+0
Sor/Wiz spell	+5
Clr spell	+8
Drd spell	+10
Pal/Rgr spell	+12
...is a known spell	-1
Known spell (1 st -6 th level)	-2 per spell level ¹
...is an unknown spell	+0
Unknown spell (1 st -6 th level)	+1 per spell level ¹
Unknown spell (7 th -9 th level) ²	+3 per spell level ²
Missing spell level	+3 per level

¹ This is in addition to the initial cost for the spell being known/unknown; it includes the cost of the 1st level, but 0th level spells have no additional cost.

² See description for the prerequisites of converting a high-level spell; must pay for the previous six levels.

Step Two: Determine Base Characteristics

The next step in the spell's conversion to determine the spellsong's base characteristics as follows:

Spellsong Base Characteristics

Characteristic	Base Value
Complexity	15 + spell level
Activation	1 bardic music use
Save DC	10 + half the character's spell level + Cha modifier + half the spell level
Duration ¹	Concentration (performance)
Effect/Area/Target	As the spell ²
Range	Close (25 ft. + 5 ft. per caster level) or 60 ft., whatever is shorter
Learning cost	Spell level x 100 XPs

¹ Spells with an instant duration are also instant spellsongs and their duration cannot be modified.

² The caster level for determining effect is equal to the character's bard level, plus any level in prestige classes that grant additional uses of bardic music.

Step Three: Customise Characteristics

After the bard knows how the spellsong will behave as well as how much conversion points it is going to cost, he can proceed to alter the base characteristics. Each alteration costs a number of conversion points the bard adds to the base total.

Spellsong Customisation Costs

Alteration	Conversion points
Decrease complexity	+1 point per -2 decrease
Increase save DC	+2 points per +1 increase
Duration	+2 points per round after the bard stops singing
Area	+3 points per +5 ft. per side/radius
Target	+3 points per additional target (target type cannot change)
Range	+2 points per +5 ft.

Step Four: Obtain Conversion Points

To complete the conversion process, the bard must somehow pay for the conversion points he accrued by the spell's nature and its original and altered characteristics. There are a number of methods to do this by altering



the spellsong's characteristics in a disadvantageous way. The character loses any conversion points obtained in excess of the spellsong's conversion cost.

Spellsong Conversion Points Gain

Method	Conversion points
Increase complexity	1 point per -2 increase
Increase activation	4 points per extra bardic music use
Decrease save DC	2 points per -1 decrease
Limited duration (3 rounds) ¹	5 points
Limited duration (4 rounds) ¹	4 points
Limited duration (5 rounds) ¹	3 points
Area	3 points per -5 ft. per side/radius
Target	3 points per each fewer target (target type cannot change)
Range	2 points per -5 ft.
Learning cost	1 point per 50 XPs

¹Spells with an instant duration are also instant spellsongs and their duration cannot be modified. The bard must still concentrate on the spellsong's performance; this limit only indicates a maximum duration.

Step Five: Learning the Spellsong

The final step is for the bard to actually sit down and learn the spellsong. He pays the number of experience points determined in the learning cost, and he needs one day per 100 XPs in the cost. At the end of this period, the full effects of the song apply.

Performing Spellsongs

Performing a spellsong works the same as using any of the other bardic music abilities. The bard makes a Perform check (DC equal to the spellsong's Complexity value) and spends one or more uses of his bardic music ability. Then the spellsong comes into effect with the characteristics the bard purchased for it.

While performing a spellsong, the bard cannot cast normal spells, use other bardic music abilities, activate command word magic items or speak. He may move normally with his move action, but maintaining the spellsong is a standard action each round that it continues working.

Dispelling Spellsongs: Because spellsongs are spell-like abilities, they can be dispelled by a regular spellcaster.

Dispel magic affects a spellsong just as it affects a spell but, instead of the dispelling character rolling a caster check against a single DC, a dispel attempt forces the bard to make an opposed Concentration check against the dispeller's caster check. Anti-magic affects spellsongs just as it affects spells.

Countering Spellsongs: A spellcaster can counter a spellsong with the same methods that he can counter a spell with: by readying a spell and making a Spellcraft check to recognise the spellsong (DC equal to the spellsong's Complexity). If the spellcaster has the spell that the spellsong converted, he can use it to counter the spellsong.

SCORES

Wizards can make many tools to aid them in their spellcasting – potions, rings, rods, staves and, of course, scrolls. Bards find such wizardly tools of very limited use even if they take the effort to learn how to make them, for no normal magic item can codify their music the way that scrolls codify spells. This is where scores come in, for a score is a special magic item unique to bards that serves the same purpose that scrolls do for wizards. It is a transcription of a bardic musical piece, bound onto paper by virtue of a creator's inspiration and life-force.

Score Characteristics

A score is basically the same as a magic scroll, except that it does not describe the process of casting a spell, but the performance of a bardic music ability.

Instead of spell level, a score uses another value to determine its difficulties, effects and costs. This value is the number of Perform ranks needed to learn it (countersong, *fascinate* and inspire courage need three ranks, inspire competence requires six ranks, etc.); this number will come up several times during the description of scores.

A score has a caster level just like any other magic item, although not all effects determine their results through such a value. The minimum caster level for a score is the same as the number of ranks needed to learn the ability it contains, minus three (minimum 1st level).

Using a Score

To use a score, the bard simply holds the parchment on which it is written and interprets the music or follows the instructions described there.



Like a scroll, a score must be activated to be used. Only bards or characters with access to bardic or similar abilities (those that are explicitly described as being akin to bardic music) can use a score. The Use Magic Device skill treats this as a class feature (DC 20 to checks).

Decipher: Before using a score, the reader must unravel the musical and arcane notations in the paper, for all bards have their personal methods for writing down the fruits of their inspiration. Deciphering a score requires a *read magic* spell, a bardic knowledge check (DC 10 + ability's required number of ranks) or a Spellcraft check (check (DC 15 + ability's required number of ranks)).

Deciphering a scored music ability does not activate its power. A character can decipher the writing on a score in advance so that he can proceed directly to the next step when the time comes to use the score.

Activate the Ability: Activating the score requires performing the music from it, which takes a standard action like a normal bardic music ability. The character must be able to see and read the writing on the score. The character makes a Perform check (DC 5 + ability's required number of ranks); if he fails this check, he miscasts the effect. The notation does not disappear with failure, but the character loses the turn in which he attempted to perform the score. A bard does not need to spend one use of his bardic music ability to activate a score.

To have any chance of activating a scored ability, the score user must meet the following requirements or pay the consequences:

- ✦ The character must have the bardic music ability or an equivalent from some other class. Using the score without bardic music ability demands the character to make a Use Magic Device check (DC 20) to simulate this class ability.
- ✦ The character must have ranks in the same Perform sub-skill that the score was written for. Using the score without ranks in the appropriate Perform sub-skill requires that the user adapt the notations to the Perform skill he is familiar with (such as singing the beat of a score written for a drum). The DC of the Perform activation check increases by +5.
- ✦ The caster must have as many ranks in Perform as the scored ability. Using the score without sufficient Perform ranks strains the character's skill, adding +1

to the DC of the Perform activation check for every rank he is missing.

- ✦ The character's caster level must be equal or higher than the one used to write the score; this includes abilities with a greater iteration at higher levels (such as inspire courage +2 as opposed to its +1 version). Using the score while being of a lower caster level stretches the character's inner power; he must make a caster level check (DC 5 + ability's required number of ranks) to perform the score successfully. If he fails, he must make a Charisma check (DC 5) or be afflicted with a short-lasting effect that twists his words and meanings, rendering him unable to communicate, activate command words or casting spells with a verbal component. This condition lasts for 1d6+1 rounds.

Determine Effect: An ability successfully activated from a score works exactly like the bardic music ability written on it. The user must keep performing the score, with all the normal effects as if he was a bard. The writing for an activated ability disappears from the score.

Unusual Performances: Several third-party products as well as this book's Power Performance chapter describes alternate artistic expressions that a bard can learn in addition to his music or poetics. These abilities can also be written in a score, using position diagrams and other kinds of guides rather than musical notes. If the performance depends on a skill that is *not* Perform (like Tumble and Sleight of Hand), the activation check and prerequisites use the ranks in the relevant skill instead of Perform.

Creating a Score

In order to create a scroll, a character must meet the following prerequisites:

- ✦ Must have the bardic music ability; there is no way around this restriction.
- ✦ Must have the Scribe Scroll feat.
- ✦ Must know be able to use the ability he wants to write.

To create a score, the character needs a supply of choice writing materials, with their cost included in the overall cost of creating the score (6 gp x ability's required number of ranks x minimum caster level). All writing materials must be fresh and unused for the process to



begin. While writing the score, the character must work in relative quiet for eight hours per day; he spends a use of bardic music while he writes, thus infusing the paper with the power of his inspiration. It takes a character one day per 1,000 gp in the score's base price to finish writing it. At the end of the process, he seals the power of his music by spending a number of experience points equal to 1/25th of the writing materials.

Completed scores for sale are uncommon, but when a bard sells them to his fellows or they are available, their price is 12 gp x ability's required number of ranks x minimum caster level. Studying an unusual performance from a score may allow a character to begin learning it (see the next chapter).

Score Costs

Ranks	Base price	Supplies' cost	XP cost
3	36 gp	18 gp	1
6	216 gp	108 gp	5
9	648 gp	324 gp	13
12	1,296 gp	648 gp	26
15	2,160 gp	1,080 gp	44
18	3,240 gp	1,620 gp	65

Prices assume that the score was made at the minimum caster level

Example: Score of Inspire Greatness (caster level 12th for two targets): Base price 1,728 gp (12 gp x 12 ranks x 12th caster level); supplies cost 864 gp; 35 XPs cost. Decipher with bardic knowledge (DC 22); decipher with Spellcraft (DC 27); Perform check to activate (DC 17).

METAMUSIC FEATS

Wizards spend a lot of time and effort developing ways to alter their arcane techniques. Bards are just as curious even if their craft is quite different, having developed techniques that change the way that they practise their mystical art. Metamusic is a field that few bards actively experiment in as it requires a more analytical bent that most of these wandering performers are willing to adopt; those who do, however, discover that they can improvise to customise not just the musical but also the magical effects of their performances.

Metamusic feats are like metamagic feats, except that they are focused on altering the characteristics of bardic music abilities. A bard learns metamusic feats by taking them normally as part of the feats he gains as a character. As an option, a Games Master may allow players of

bard characters to permanently sacrifice two skill ranks gained every level, reducing them to four per level, to gain a bonus metamusic feat (and *only* metamusic feat) at every 5th level. Wizards, who experiment with magic, gain bonus metamagic feats while bards, who would be assumed to experiment with their performance, should also have a way to gain metamusic feats more quickly.

Experienced bards have achieved such expertise that they seldom drain their mystical capability and thus prefer to experiment on ways to bolster each performance. Metamusic feats require that a bard spend more uses of bardic music in addition to the one necessary to activate an ability. Each feat's description states how many additional uses the bard must spend. Using a metamusic ability carries no additional cost.

Anchor Performance (Metamusic)

You can project your performance so that it seems to come from somewhere else.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 3 ranks.

Benefit: Through this feat, you can establish the centre of a performance to be any point up to 30 feet from your actual position. This can be a fixed or moving position. If set on a fixed position the effect will originate from that point for the duration of the performance. Anchoring the performance on a moving position requires that the character selects an object or creature from which the performance will originate. An unwilling creature cannot be made into an anchor, but its possessions can if it fails a Will save (DC 10 + half the character's level + Cha modifier). In both cases, you cannot move more than 60 feet away from the anchor, plus five feet per Charisma modifier; if you do, the effect snaps back to your own location but is not interrupted. You must keep performing normally. An anchored ability requires the expenditure of one additional use of bardic music for a fixed position, and two additional uses for a moving position.

Enlarge Performance (Metamusic)

You reach further audiences with your performance.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 3 ranks.

Benefit: You can alter a bardic music ability with a range expressed in feet to increase its range by 100%. An enlarged ability with a 60-foot range now has a 120-foot range. An enlarged ability requires the expenditure of one additional use of bardic music.

Eschew Performance (Metamusic)

You can project the power of a performance with your will alone.



Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 15 ranks, Silent Song.

Benefit: You have internalised the power of one particular bardic ability to an extent that you no longer need to actually perform it in order to use its power. Choose a single bardic music ability; from this point onwards you are able to use it as a spell-like ability without needing music, poetics or other type of performance to activate it. An eschewed performance still requires that the character concentrates on it for its duration. While he concentrates on maintaining an ability, he cannot cast spells or use other bardic music abilities, but he can speak and activate items with command words. An eschewed ability requires the expenditure of four additional uses of bardic music.

Special: You can take this feat multiple times; each time you choose a different bardic music ability.

Independent Performance (Metamusic)

You can make the effects of your performance sustain themselves.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 6 ranks.

Benefit: An independent ability can sustain itself after you perform it as a standard action. You select a target and other characteristics as normal, which remain the

same as if you were performing the ability normally, although it always originates from the point where you first used the ability; it does not move with you. An independent performance lasts one round per Charisma modifier and in some cases such as inspire courage the effect lingers for five rounds afterwards as normal. During an independent performance, you can act normally. Once this duration ends, the music fades just as if the bard had stopped performing. An independent ability requires the expenditure of two additional uses of bardic music, and for every extra use expended at activation, the duration is increased by two additional rounds.

Primordial Rhythm (Metamusic)

You can affect non-sentient creatures with your art.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 9 ranks.

Benefit: Most bardic music abilities are mind-affecting abilities that do not work if the target is immune to such effects or it simply has no mind to be affected. With this feat, you use a bardic music ability using rhythms that have existed for millennia and echo the most basic and powerful principles of magic. Mind-affecting abilities used through this feat can affect the behaviour of mindless or non-intelligent creatures such as constructs and lesser undead. A primordial rhythmic ability requires the expenditure of two additional uses of bardic music.

Quicken Performance (Metamusic)

You can reduce a performance to its essential minimum.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 12 ranks.

Benefit: A normal performance usually builds up as it gathers momentum. With this feat, you can dive straight into the chorus or climax of a performance to achieve its effects more quickly. You can use a quickened performance ability in the first initiative turn of an encounter before anyone has had the chance to act, even if their initiatives are higher than yours. You lose a standard action for that turn and use your move action in your normal initiative turn, and act in your normal turn in the consecutive rounds. A quickened performance ability requires the expenditure of two additional uses of bardic music.

Silent Performance (Metamusic)

You are able to use your art inconspicuously.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 12 ranks.

Benefit: You can use your bardic music abilities merely by humming them or just marking the movements of the performance. In addition to stealth issues, the



advantage of a silent performance is that allies or foes do not need to hear you to be affected by your power, but they must be able to see you, even if only a part of you. This bypasses areas of magical *silence* and imposes a -3 penalty on countersong checks. A silent performance ability requires the expenditure of three additional uses of bardic music.

Subliminal Performance (Metamusic)

You can insert hidden messages in any performance.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 6 ranks, Bluff or Intimidate 6 ranks, suggestion bardic music ability or spell.

Benefit: You can use your suggestion ability not only through a previous use of fascinate, but through any other bardic music ability or even through normal performances, becoming almost an independent bardic music ability in and of itself. When used through a beneficial bardic music ability, the target suffers a -4 to his Will save to resist the suggestion because he is already predisposed to accept your performance. Your enemies will find it strange that your music is actually inspiring them to greater efforts and can make a Will save opposed by your Perform check; if successful, they negate both the hidden suggestion as well as the beneficial effect. An unwilling target resists a disadvantageous ability as normal, resisting both the effect and the hidden suggestion. A subliminal performance ability requires the expenditure of one additional use of bardic music. Using this feat through a normal performance requires the expenditure of two uses of bardic music and the targets gain a +2 bonus to their saving throw against the ability's normal save DC.

Universal Understanding (Metamusic)

Your music transcends the language barrier.

Prerequisites: Bardic music, Perform 3 ranks, must speak three languages or know the *comprehend languages* or *tongues* spell.

Benefit: A few bardic music abilities, particularly suggestion, are language-dependent abilities that do not work if the target cannot understand the character. With this feat, you use a bardic music ability using an universal language of tones and intentions. Language-dependent abilities used through this feat are no longer language-dependant and can affect any applicable target. You cannot establish communication; the only advantage

lies in using abilities that would normally be restricted by the language barrier. A universal understanding ability requires the expenditure of one additional use of bardic music.

THE RUMOUR MILL

A Gather Information check involves spending some time with people, making them feel comfortable with one's presence so that they spill the beans. A canny character can devote this same attention and casual conversation towards planting information, rather than harvesting it. The character spends the evening interacting with people and makes a Gather Information check with a DC depending on how specific the information is.

Information ranges from general to scandalous and the DC increases accordingly for the type of information the character seeks to gather, as given in the table below.

Type of Rumour	DC
General	10
Specific	15
Alarming	20
Scandalous	25

General rumours concern local happenings, rumours, gossip, and the like. Specific rumours usually relate to a particular question or refer to particular people, places or events that are plausible. Alarming rumours include facts that would not generally be known and may be considered outlandish or easily disproved. Scandalous rumours are things that get people in an uproar towards the subject of the rumour, possibly ruining reputations and lives. If the character is successful, she has just introduced a rumour in the community's gossip mill, with effects to be determined by the Games Master.

A rumour spreads depending on the character's degree of success. For all types of rumour, the rate of propagation is an average of 20 persons per day, plus 20 persons more for each point that the Gather Information check result exceeds 15 (which is why successful scandalous rumours spread fast by default).

Power Performance

There is no other class except the bard that touches upon the magic nature of art. Being the generalists they are, most bards only scratch the surface of the amazing power to be found in the seeds and fruits of the human imagination. Those who devote their energies towards the exploration of this aspect of their talent discover that it is not only music and song that can affect the world when played with a wilful mind, and that inspiration and manipulation are not by far the only effects that art can power.

Power performance is a category of the bardic music ability, although many of the mystic arts do not qualify as 'music' at all. With power performances, the bard is able to explore different expressions of his artistic might, not only channelling encouragement and morale through music, but other sort of emotions through other art forms.

There are two categories of power performance: styles focus on music and poetics to cause different emotions, and art forms are powers derived from other performing arts such as acting, dance, puppetry and ventriloquism, acrobatics and even prestidigitation.

Learning a Power Performance

Bards have the knack of learning several different disciplines, their restless hearts ever exploring new things to try – and often subsequently discard. That they should be able to branch out in their artistic talent is almost expected of them, so they have a variety of methods to learn a new power performance.

Some power performances have additional prerequisites that a bard must meet in order to learn them, in addition to any normal requirement depending on the learning method chosen.

Starting Performance: Songs of Inspiration (see below) is the default performance that bards learn upon character creation, which includes the normal abilities of inspire courage, inspire competence and so forth. Upon character creation, the bard may choose to practise another power performance, replacing Songs of Inspiration with his new choice.

Parallel Performance: The bard's artistic power resides in his soul, and the Perform skill is only a channel for it. The bard assigns a new power performance to each of the performing art skills he knows. He gains automatic access to the performance's abilities as soon as he meets

the level and skill rank prerequisites, spending skill points to develop all skills on their own.

Concurrent Performance I: The bard can make the effort to learn different power performances and tie them up to the same performing skill. To do this, he learns the new Power Performance feat (see below) and gains access to the new abilities using the same skill ranks as the performance he learned at character creation. He chooses the feat again for additional power performances. If the performance depends on a different skill other than Perform, its ranks should be purchased separately.

Power Performance (General)

You have learned a power performance.

Prerequisites: Bard 1st level, related skill.

Benefit: By taking this feat, you gain access to the abilities listed under a power performance. The feat's name is the power performance's name, and the related skill in the prerequisite is the skill used to gain access to the power performance's abilities.

Concurrent Performance II: Bards are limited in character feats to expand their abilities and may not want to waste a feat choice on an ability they should be able to develop naturally. With the Games Master's permission, a player may spend experience points to acquire a new power performance. The price for this 500 XP multiplied by the character's level, and the character can only learn one power performance per level. After paying this price, it is as if the character had gained access to the performance through the feat.

Using a Power Performance

Once he has access to an ability in a power performance tree, the bard can use it freely by spending one daily use of bardic music. Some abilities may require a skill check at a set DC or more than one use of bardic ability, but this is the exception more than the rule and it will be noted in the ability's description.

Access and Stages: The abilities of each power performance are organised in stages. Regardless of the characteristics of each power performance, they all grant access to their abilities through different stages. To gain access to a stage, the character must meet its



prerequisites both in class level and skill ranks. The class level usually refers to bard levels only, but some prestige classes or alternative core classes grant an equivalent to bardic music ability. As a general rule, any class that adds its levels to the number of times the character uses his bardic music ability can be considered, with the Games Master's permission, to count towards meeting the prerequisite of a stage. The skill rank prerequisite is more selective, requiring a minimum amount of ranks in the skill related to the power performance. In most cases this will be an undefined Perform skill, but some power performances have very specific prerequisites such as Perform (dance) or Perform (acting). The players or Games Master can create new power performances based on any performing skill or even on Tumble and Sleight of Hand. Each power performance will state which skill it requires to meet the stage's prerequisites.

Once the bard gains access to a power performance, he gains the abilities of all the stages for which he meets the prerequisites in both level and ranks in the appropriate skill.

Power Performance Stages

Stage	Level Prerequisite	Skill rank prerequisite
1 st	1 st	3
2 nd	3 rd	6
3 rd	6 th	9
4 th	9 th	12
5 th	12 th	15
6 th	15 th	18
7 th	18 th	21

Saving Against a Performance: The standard save DC against a bard's power performance ability is ten plus half the character's level plus his Charisma modifier. Some abilities may have a set DC, in which case the ability's description will state so.

Duration: A power performance ability lasts for as long as the character keeps performing it, which requires a standard action spent in concentration and performance

Using Scores

If you are using the rules for writing magical scores as detailed in the Tricks of the Trade chapter, the abilities in a power performance *can* be codified into such a magical item. Simply treat them like any other bardic music ability and follow the instructions. A bard may justify learning a new power performance by stumbling across a magical score detailing its use.

(singing, acting, dancing and suchlike.). Most abilities maintain their effects for five rounds after the character stops performing, in which case the description will state it. When a duration is not specified, assume that the effect lasts for as long as the character concentrates on it and performs it.

STYLES

Styles are just a slight variation on focus rather than whole reinterpretations of the bard's artistic power. The styles are still musical or poetical in nature, requiring the bard to use his voice, and instrument or a combination of both and therefore not such a great intuitive leap. Styles can be performed with any music- or poetics-related skill so it does not matter whether a bard is a singer, a lute player or an orator; he can use his talent to activate all the abilities of the power performance style.

Songs of Inspiration

Skill: Any sound-dependant Perform skill.

Abilities: 1st stage – countersong (Su), *fascinate* (Sp), inspire courage (Su); 2nd stage – inspire competence (Su); 3rd stage – *suggestion* (Sp); 4th stage – inspire greatness (Su); 5th stage – *song of freedom* (Sp); 6th stage – inspire heroics (Su); 7th stage – *mass suggestion* (Sp).

This is the standard power performance that all bards learn if they do not take special steps towards learning another one. It uses the power of voice and music to inspire hearts to greater heights by bolstering their morale through supernatural means. As such, most of its abilities are sonic, mind-affecting and language dependant. The abilities of this power performance are fully described in *Core Rulebook I*.

Dirges

Skill: Any sound-dependant Perform skill.

Abilities: 1st stage – verses of life (Su), verses of death (Su), requiem (Su); 2nd stage – *voice from the crypt* (Sp); 3rd stage – mourning (Su); 4th stage – *song of life* (Sp); 5th stage – *song of return*; 6th stage – funeral (Su); 7th stage – *reaper's rhyme* (Sp).

This power performance was developed from traditions of haunting dirges and funereal mourning chants. These 'songs for the dead' are a collection of requiems and laments that sound eerie and melancholic to most listeners, but which resonate strongly with undead beings.

Abilities

1st Stage – Verses of Life (Su): The bard can recite verses that remind allies about what it means to truly be alive in the face of death. He can use his music or

poetics to counter supernatural and spell-like abilities used by undead creatures, although it does not affect normal spells cast by undead spellcasters. He makes a Perform check every round that he has this ability active. All living creatures within 30 feet of the bard, including himself, that are affected by any supernatural or spell-like abilities from undead creatures may use the bard's Perform check in place of their own saving throw if the Perform check proves to be higher. If a creature within range of the verses of life is already under the effect of a continuous ability (such as a *dominate person* spell-like ability), it gains another saving throw against the effect each round it hears the music, using the bard's Perform check result for its save. The verses of life have no effect against effects that don't allow saves. The verses of life last for up to ten rounds per use of bardic music spent.

1st Stage – Verses of Death (Su): The bard's music is capable of touching the corrupt souls of the undead, entrancing them with its morbid melody. The bard can affect one undead creature, plus one additional undead creature for every two bard levels, but all targeted creatures must be within 90 feet and able to see, hear and pay attention to the bard. The bard must also be able to see the creatures. Mindless undead do not make a saving throw to resist, but intelligent undead can make a Will save at the standard DC to avoid the music's effect. Affected creatures stop their movement to listen to the bard's performance, taking no other actions for as long

as the bard continues to play and concentrate (up to a maximum of one round per bard level). While listening to the verses, a target takes a –4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Listen and Spot checks. Any potential threat allows the creature a new saving throw, while any obvious threat (such as someone drawing a weapon, casting a spell or aiming a ranged weapon at the target) automatically breaks the effect.

1st Stage – Requiem (Su): The bard's song speaks of the rest that awaits beyond death, reminding restless dead that they should not be walking the world. This ability works exactly like a cleric's turn undead, except that the bard makes a Perform check instead of a Charisma check using the following table.

Perform Check Result	Most Powerful Undead Affected (Maximum Hit Dice)
6 or lower	Bard's level – 4
7–9	Bard's level – 3
10–12	Bard's level – 2
13–15	Bard's level – 1
16–18	Bard's level
19–21	Bard's level + 1
22–24	Bard's level + 2
25–27	Bard's level + 3
28–30	Bard's level + 4

The turning damage for requiem is 2d6 + half the character's level + Charisma modifier. At every fourth level, the bard also gains an additional +1 bonus to the damage check.

2nd Stage – Voice from the Crypt (Sp): The bard's voice sound as if it is coming from deep beyond the mortal coil; this resonance compels undead to follow the bard's command. The bard can target one undead creature that is within 60 feet and affect it as if by the *suggestion* spell, ignoring the usual immunity to mind-affecting spells possessed by undead. Mindless undead do not get a saving throw but can only comply with the simplest commands. Intelligent undead get a saving throw and can follow more complex suggestions. For every stage in Songs for the Dead that the bard reaches after the second, he can affect one additional creature with the same use of bardic music.

3rd Stage – Mourning (Su): The bard's music brings solace to the living against the forces of death. The bard targets one ally with his music; the target must be within 60 feet and able to see, hear and pay attention to the bard. The bard must also be able to see the target. Affected allies gain a +4 bonus to all saves against death effects as well as against any other effect that uses negative



energy or imposes negative levels. This protection stops the moment the bard stops singing. For every stage in Songs for the Dead that the bard reaches after the third, he can affect one additional creature with the same use of bardic music.

4th Stage – *Song of Life* (Sp): The bard's mastery over uplifting music reaches a point where it can start countering the malicious effects that negative energy has on living beings. With one use of bardic music and a full round of singing within 60 feet of a single target, the bard can remove two negative levels or restore 1d4 ability points lost to the attack of an undead creature. The effect is instantaneous and the bard does not need to concentrate on it after the healing takes effect. For every stage in Songs for the Dead that the bard reaches after the fourth, he can affect one additional creature with the same use of bardic music, but no creature can be more than 20 feet away from another, nor more than 60 feet away from the bard.

5th Stage – *Song of Return* (Sp): At this point in his career, the bard understands the powers of life and death to such an extent that he can part the veils separating the worlds of life and death, reaching out for the soul of a creature who has perished. The bard can use this ability only once per day, and it costs him one use of bardic music per round that he sings. He touches a creature that must have not died more than one day earlier per Charisma modifier and must be physically whole – the corpse may have suffered injuries but it must not have lost limbs or only be partial remains. As he sings, his voice calls the soul back to its body. The song infuses the target's body with negative energy to open the gateways of death, imposing a number of negative levels equal to the target's original levels and/or Hit Dice. Each round that the character sings, he removes one of these negative levels. When the character stops or all the negative levels are removed, the target awakens with full hit points. All ability score damage, poisons and diseases remain. If the bard stops his song before all negative levels are removed, the target must make a Fortitude save (DC 15) to remove each of the remaining ones at the end of the day. These levels cannot be removed either by the *restoration* spell or the mourning ability, only by the *greater restoration* or more powerful spells.

6th Stage – *Funeral* (Sp): By singing the dirges and elegies for an undead creature, the bard can force it closer to the eternal rest of true death. The bard spends a single use of bardic music and focuses on a single target within 60 feet, which must be able to see and hear the bard and vice versa. The character makes a Perform check (DC 10 + the creature's Fortitude or Will save bonus) and, if successful, surrounds the targeted

creature with a nimbus of positive energy to impose 1d4 positive levels on undead targets. If the creature has at least as many positive levels as HD, it crumbles to dust, and its soul (or remnants of one) is free to pass on. Each positive level gives deals 5 points of damage and gives an undead creature a –1 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, an undead spellcaster loses one spell or spell slot from his or her highest available level. Positive levels stack. Assuming the subject survives, it loses its positive levels after a number of hours equal to the character's bard level (maximum 15 hours). A living creature targeted by the nimbus instead gains 1d4x5 temporary hit points for one hour.

7th Stage – *Reaper's Rhyme* (Sp): The pinnacle of the Songs for the Dead grants the bard the ability to echo the music of final rest, calling upon the Grim Reaper to collect the stranded life-forces of the undead and take them to their final rest. The bard must spend two uses of his bardic music ability to activate the reaper's rhyme, forcing all creatures with the undead type within 60 feet of the bard to make a Will save or have their corrupted souls taken away. Success still imposes a number of positive levels on all undead creatures equal to the character's Charisma modifier, which may still destroy weaker undead. Incorporeal undead are fully affected and become corporeal for a number of rounds equal to the bard's class level. All undead who fail their saves suffer a number of positive levels equal to half the character's bard level. Survivors of this attack continue to gain one positive level every round that they remain within 60 feet of the bard and he continues to play, until they leave or are destroyed. Liches and other undead who normally reform after apparent destruction are allowed another Will save to resist their final demise but, if they fail, their souls are forced to the other side to receive their final judgement, never to return to their accursed shape.

Rhythm of the Heart

Skill: Perform (percussion)

Abilities: 1st stage – life's pulse (Su), *rhythmic trance* (Sp), set the beat (Su); 2nd stage – *rhythm of life* (Sp); 3rd stage – *slow* (Sp); 4th – fever beat (Su); 5th – beat of the warrior (Su); 6th stage – healing rhythm (Su); 7th stage – *mass slow* (Sp).

Amongst tribal people, many ancient traditions are inextricably tied up with the rhythmic music of the drum. Without the drum, there can be no gathering of elders to make decisions. Without the drum, there can be no celebration of friendship or community, no 'honour'

songs paying tribute to bygone leaders, and no sacred dance rituals at the change of seasons. Without the drum, there is no heartbeat. This heartbeat rhythm monitors the health of the tribe and protects its members.

Abilities

1st Stage – Life’s Pulse (Su): This is a simple rhythm on the drum that can both emulate and stimulate the hearts of the bard’s allies. In fact this rhythm can be used to counter the effects of life force and lifeblood slipping away to serious wounds. Each round that the bard is performing the life’s pulse rhythm, he makes a Perform check against DC 15 for each ally within 60 ft. that is at negative hit points and is losing hit points. If the check is successful, the ally immediately stabilises as if through the first aid use of the Heal skill. The bard may keep up the life’s pulse for ten rounds.

1st Stage – Rhythmic Trance (Sp): The rhythmic beat of the bard’s drum can have a calming, meditative effect on creatures. This beat can cause one of more creatures to enter a trance. Each creature to be affected must be within 90 ft. of the bard and able to hear the rhythm of the drum. The bard must also be able to see the creature. The distraction of nearby combat or other dangers prevents the rhythmic beat from affecting the creature. For every three levels beyond 1st the bard may affect one additional creature (two at 4th, three at 7th and so on). To use this ability, the bard makes a Perform check, the check result becoming the DC for each affected creature’s Will Save. If a creature’s saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to entrance the creature again for 24 hours. If the saving throw fails, the creature becomes entranced by the rhythm. While entranced the creature has a –1 penalty to Armour Class, a –5 ft. penalty to movement and –2 penalty to initiative. This effect lasts for as long as the bard performs to a maximum of one round per level.

1st Stage – Set the Beat (Su): The bard playing this rhythm can set a tempo for himself and his allies. Any ally within 30 ft. of the bard who can hear him count out the tempo is bolster to maintain the tempo indicated. An affected ally gains a +5 ft. morale bonus to speed and a +1 bonus on initiative checks. At 8th level and every sixth level beyond, the allies gain an additional +5 ft. movement and +1 on initiative. This is a mind-affecting ability.

2nd Stage – Rhythm of Life (Sp): Besides stimulating the hearts of allies the rhythm of the bard can be used to resonate with each of his allies biorhythms. Any ally who is within 60 ft. of the bard, can be seen by the bard and is able to hear the rhythm can be affected by this ability. Those allies affected are treated as though

the bard is performing a *deathwatch* as per the spell. This allows the bard to closely monitor the health of his comrades and help co-ordinate aid as necessary. This ability lasts as long as the bard concentrates plus five rounds.

3rd Stage – Slow (Sp): A bard performing at this level of skill is able to *slow* one creature that has fallen under his *rhythmic trance*. Using this ability does not break the bard’s concentration on the *rhythmic trance* effect. Slowing a creature does not count toward the bard’s daily limit of performances. A Will saving throw (DC 10 + ½ bard level + Cha modifier) negates the affect. This ability will last as long as the rhythmic trance is maintained. This ability only affects a single creature at a time.

4th Stage – Fever Beat (Su): The heart is a powerful organ that not only circulates nutrients and oxygen but also carries within it powerful agents to combat poison and disease. A fever beat is a fast moving rhythm that helps the bard or an ally strengthen these preventive agents as long as they are within 30 ft. of the bard. The rhythm bolsters the ally’s resolve to survive and adds a +4 morale bonus to saving throws made to resist poison or disease. This rhythm can be performed up to a maximum of five minutes. This is a mind-affecting ability.

5th Stage – Beat of the Warrior (Su): A warrior intent on protecting his friends and loved ones is driven by the power of emotions to heights of fury and determination. The beat of the warrior taps into this primal instinct of protection and allows the warrior draw on hidden reserves of strength to protect his friends. One ally can be affected by this ability provided that he is within 30 ft. of the bard and can hear the rhythm clearly. This bardic rhythm provides a morale bonus to attack and damage on any creature threatens another ally which increases as the rhythm moves forward. In the first round the bonus is +1, in the second round it is +3, in the third round it is +5 and so on. This rhythm can be maintained for a number of rounds equal to ½ the bard’s level. At the end of the rhythm both the ally and bard are fatigued from the intensity of the beat for one minute.

6th Stage – Healing Rhythm (Su): Sometimes the body can be gently relaxed into a rhythmic biofeedback that speeds their recovery from injury. This ability can only affect a person once per day, as the body cannot be coerced to strain its inner reserves further. Performing this rhythm takes two minutes, with any interruptions disrupting the performance. At the end of the rhythm the bard and any allies within 30 ft. who can hear the bard’s performance are healed a number of hit points



equal to their level plus the bard's Charisma modifier, and up to two points of ability damage.

7th Stage – Mass Slow (Sp): This ability functions as the *slow* ability, except that the bard can make the slow simultaneously to any number of creatures that he has already entranced. This is a mind-affecting ability.

Songs of Despair

Skill: Any sound-dependant Perform skill.

Abilities: *1st stage* – weaken resolve (Su), *torment* (Sp), *instil dread* (Su); *2nd stage* – distraction (Su); *3rd stage* – *confusion* (Sp); *4th stage* – inferiority (Su); *5th stage* – *madness* (Sp); *6th stage* – inspire ruin (Su); *7th stage* – *bedlam* (Su).

The stereotypical bard is a happy-go-lucky individual that lifts the spirit with his song and helps his allies with well-timed magical support. Not all bards feel so inclined. Some nurse burning hatred in their hearts rather than uplifting inspiration, their music oozing negativity and despair. Rather than helping others, the songs of such bards are focused on spreading gloom, despair and madness.

Abilities

1st Stage – Weaken Resolve (Su): By spending one use of bardic music, a bard can sing or recite tales of woe that describe all of the many horrible fates that will befall listeners without them able to do anything about it. Every round the character makes a Perform check, and all opponents (or all creatures, depending on the bard's intentions) within 60 feet must make a Will save with the Perform check result acting as the DC. Those who fail become assailed with self-doubt, and suffer a –2 penalty to all saving throws while within 60 feet and the bard continues singing. The bard may spend an additional use of bardic music to force a creature within the area to re-roll a successful saving throw in hopes that it will fail the second time, but may only do this once per round.

1st Stage – Torment (Su): By spending one use of bardic music, the bard can devote his attention to awaken the pain and suffering in a single target that only music can evoke. The creature to be tormented must be within 90 feet, able to see and hear the bard, and able to pay attention to him. The bard must also be able to see the creature, and any threat of imminent danger against a target prevents the ability from working. For every stage a bard reaches beyond 1st he can target one additional creature with a single use of this ability. To use the ability, a bard makes a Perform check, with the result becoming the DC for each affected creature's Will save

against the effect. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to torment it again for 24 hours. If its saving throw fails, the creature begins agonising over his past mistakes and faults, doubting his abilities and power. Affected targets must make Concentration checks to cast spells or use abilities (DC 15 + spell level, or DC equal to ability's save DC +5). Affected targets must also make Concentration checks in order to use feats (DC 15) and to move at more than half speed (DC 12). The targets remain affected for as long as the bard continues to perform and concentrate, up to a maximum of one round per bard level.

1st Stage – Instil Dread (Su): The bard can fill the hearts of his enemies with an unknowable dread with words of death and loss. To be affected, a target must be able to hear the bard sing. The effect lasts for as long as the target hears the bard sing and for five rounds thereafter. An affected creature suffers a –1 morale penalty on saving throws against charm and fear effects and a –1 morale penalty on attack and weapon damage rolls. At 8th level, and every six bard levels thereafter, this penalty increases by one (–2 at 8th, –3 at 14th, and –4 at 20th).

2nd Stage – Distraction (Su): The bard's music is far from soothing and relaxing; instead, it becomes increasingly distracting. The effect extends for 60 feet around him and affects everyone inside, friends and foes alike. Targets must be able to hear the bard and be able to pay attention to him. All creatures in the area must make a Will save against the standard DC to avoid being affected. Creatures who save successfully cannot be distracted by the bard in this way for 24 hours. Creatures that fail their save find it very hard to focus and concentrate on what they are doing. All Concentration checks automatically fail, and all other skill checks suffer a –2 circumstance penalty. During his performance and as a free action, the bard can spend an additional bardic music use to force one affected creature to re-roll a successful attack roll. The targets remain affected for as long as the bard continues to perform and concentrate and five rounds after he stops.

3rd Stage – Confusion (Sp): The bard can sing maddening verses to the ear of a single victim he is already tormenting with his bardic music ability. The chosen victim makes another Will save against the standard DC, with failure meaning that the victim is affected by a *confusion* spell as if cast by a sorcerer of the character's bard level.

4th Stage – Inferiority (Su): Most bards know songs and epics that uplift the spirit of those that hear them, pushing them to strive for greater glory. A bard who knows the Songs of Despair can do exactly the opposite;

he can convince others of their worthlessness, singing songs of great deeds not to serve as an example, but as an unfavourable comparison. The bard can demean a single target within 30 feet, stripping him of his morale to diminish his fighting prowess. For every stage the bard reaches beyond the 4th, he can target one additional target with a single use of this ability (two at 5th stage, three at 6th, four at 7th). To impose inferiority, a bard must sing and the target must hear him sing. The effect lasts for as long as the target hears the bard sing and for five rounds thereafter. The target must make a Will save against the standard DC or be demeaned by a sense of utter inferiority. A creature demeaned with this ability suffers 12 points of nonlethal damage that vanish when the effect ends, but count towards incapacitating the target; the target also suffers a -2 competence penalty on attack and damage rolls and a -1 competence penalty on Fortitude saves.

5th Stage – Madness (Sp): The bard's ability to induce conflicting emotions grows to frightening levels. The bard can affect all opponents (or all creatures if he so desires) within 30 feet; the targets must be able to hear him as well as to understand him, and he must be able to see them in return. The character must make a Perform check every round, with his result becoming the DC of the target's Will save. Success in the save is not a guarantee of safety, for the creatures must save every round they are inside the bard's range. Failure means that the target hears all sort of obscene incantations in his mind and he suffers one point of Wisdom damage. The damage increases every round that the target fails to save, with the damage in Wisdom equal to the number of times the target has failed a save, so that in the second failure he suffers two points of damage, and the third time he suffers three for a total of six points of damage in three rounds. The damage need not be consecutive. In addition, every round that the target suffers Wisdom damage, he is affected by a *confusion* effect for that round only. If any target is reduced to 0 Wisdom at any point, it becomes insane and falls to the ground, babbling and useless.

6th Stage – Inspire Ruin (Su): The bard relishes in spreading ruin in the minds of his targets, painting such vivid pictures of misery that they cannot help but lose all hope that they will succeed. He can target a single creature within 30 feet. For every stage the character reaches beyond 6th, he can inspire ruin in one additional creature. To inspire ruin, a bard must sing and the target must hear him for a full round. A creature so discouraged suffers a -4 morale penalty on saving throws and a -4 penalty to AC. The effect lasts for as long as the target hears the bard sing and for up to five rounds thereafter.

7th Stage – Bedlam (Su): The amount of damage that the Songs of Despair can unleash is evident with its 7th stage ability. The bard must first use the torment ability before using bedlam. All creatures currently affected by torment are victims of the music's maddening influence when the bard activates this ability. In addition to the torment penalties, they suffer the *confusion* effect and, due to their mad thrashing about, are denied their Dexterity bonus to AC.

Songs of the Wild

Skill: Any sound-dependant Perform skill.

Abilities: 1st stage – *calm animals* (Sp), counter fey (Su), gentle music +3 (Su); 2nd stage – song of friendship (Su); 3rd level – *charm animal*; 4th stage – *song of capture* (Sp); 5th stage – song of fury (Su); 6th stage – song of the protector (Su); 7th stage – *mass charm animal* (Sp)

To some bards, the roar of the crowd is not as pleasing as the gentle songs of the natural world. Some can even mimic such wild music in an attempt to encourage the world to be more responsive to him. The natural world offers the greatest tapestry of sounds and the bard who comes to understand the songs of the wild seeks only to enrich that fabric.

Abilities

1st Stage – Calm Animals (Sp): The lyrical sound of birdsong has a soothing affect on all animals that hear the bard. Each creature to be calmed must be within 90 ft. of the bard and able to see and hear him. The bard must also be able to see the animals to be calmed. The bard may affect one animal whose HD does not exceed his level by more than his Charisma modifier. The affected animal remains where it is and does not flee or attack. It is not helpless and will defend itself if attacked. Any threat will break the effect immediately. For every three levels a bard attains beyond 1st, he can target one additional creature with a single use of the ability (two at 4th, three at 7th and so on). The effect lasts for as long as the bard continues to perform plus five rounds.

1st Stage - Counter Fey (Su): The music of the bard is so beautiful that it can overcome and negate any supernatural or spell-abilities within 30 ft. that is possessed by fey due to their magical nature, unnatural beauty, or artistic mastery. The bard makes a Perform check each round and this value can be used as a saving throw against the abilities of the fey by the bard and his allies. This ability can be sustained through concentration for a maximum of one round per level.



1st Stage – Gentle Music (Su): With a few quiet words and gentle music, a bard can make the animals within 60 ft. more responsive to him or one of his allies. The animals and the ally must be able to hear the bard's performance. When the bard is using this ability the bard or his ally gains a +3 morale bonus to all handle animal and ride checks. This benefit lasts as long as the bard is able to continue performing. At 8th level this bonus increases to +6, and increases by an additional +3 for every six levels beyond 8th.

2nd Stage – Song of Friendship (Su): A bard performing the song of friendship attempts to make an animal have a more favourable attitude toward him. The bard makes a Perform check to affect the animal's attitude just like a Diplomacy check made to improve the attitude of a person. This is a mind-affecting ability.

3rd Stage – Charm Animal (Sp): A bard is able to use *charm animal* as per the spell on any animal that has previously fallen victim to the bard's *calm animal ability*. Using this ability does not break the bard's concentration on the *calm animal* ability. Attempting to *charm animal* does not count toward the bard's daily uses of bardic music. A Will saving throw (DC 10 + ½ bard's level + cha modifier) negates this affect. This ability only affects a single creature. This ability is a mind-affecting ability.

4th Stage – Song of Capture (Sp): This song of the bard does not reach out to the beating heart and wild emotions of the animal world, but instead to the tangled roots and gnarled bark of the plant kingdom. Through the gentle coercion of this song, plants with 120 ft. of the bard are encouraged to *entangle* opponents as per the spell. This effect will last for as long as the bard performs plus five rounds. The Reflex save DC to resist this effect is 10 + ½ bard level + Cha modifier.

5th Stage – Song of Fury (Su): This ability works exactly like the inspire greatness ability that is normally possessed by bards except that it only affects animals and initially the bard can inspire greatness in two animals plus one additional animal every three levels. This is a mind-affecting ability.

6th Stage – Song of the Protector (Su): While the bard is playing this song, lasting a maximum of one round per level, the bard and all animal allies within 30ft. gain a +3 morale bonus to Armour Class, Fortitude saves and Will saves. This song is an inspirational tune that lets the animals know that no harm will come to them. This is a mind affecting ability.

7th Stage – Mass Charm Animal (Sp): This ability functions like the *charm animal* ability previously

discussed however the bard may now affect all opponents that have fallen victim to the intimidating display. *Mass charm animal* is a mind-affecting ability.

ART FORMS

Art forms differ greatly from styles in that they are not the 'standard' way that bards channel their inspiration and skill. Like their name says, art forms are expressions of the same talent that powers music abilities, given alternate forms through alternate arts that are no less inspiring and influential for the difference in their performance.

Blinding Blade

Skill: Perform (weapon display)

Abilities: 1st stage – counter form (Su), *intimidating display* (Sp), instructive display (Su); 2nd stage – disarming display (Su); 3rd stage – *terrifying display* (Sp); 4th stage – blinding display (Su); 5th stage – *graceful display* (Sp); 6th stage – rhythmic display (Su); 7th stage – *mass terrifying display* (Sp)

A weapon can be as beautiful as any music instrument with its movements fluid and precise. The blade master is an artist in the deadliest yet most beautiful manner, becoming one with their blade in a personal expression of skill. This performance alternative helps the bard gain insights into combat strategies that can be used to hamper opponents and strengthen allies.

Abilities

1st Stage – Counter Form (Su): A bard can use his weapon display to hamper the combat effectiveness of opponents he threatens. Creatures threatened by the bard must make a Will save against the DC 10 + ½ class level + Cha modifier. If the save fails then the creature will be unable to make attacks of opportunity or cleave on any opponent while the display is being maintained and they are threatened by the bard. The bard also gains an additional +2 dodge bonus to AC when fighting defensively or with the total defence action while he is using the counter form ability. The bard may keep up a counter form for ten rounds.

1st Stage – Intimidating Display (Sp): A bard skilled in the intimidating display can cause one or more creatures to be intimidated by him. Each creature to be intimidated must be within 30 ft., and able to see the bard and pay attention to him. This ability works even if the creature is engaged in combat. For every three levels a bard attains beyond 1st, he can target one additional creature with a single use of the ability (two at 4th, three at 7th and so on). To use the ability, a bard makes a Perform (weapon display) check with the result as the DC for

the affected creature's Will save against the effect. If the creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to intimidate the creature again for 24 hours. If the saving throw fails, the creature begins to question its own prowess when compared to the skill demonstrated. The demoralized creature takes a -2 penalty to attack rolls, ability checks, and saving throws as long as the bard performs this display (maximum 1 round per bard level). Intimating display is a mind-affecting ability

1st Stage – Instructive Display (Su): A bard can use this display to instruct his allies to better defend themselves from injury. To be affected, the ally must be able to hear the bard's instruction and the whirling of his blade. The effect lasts as long as the bard continues with the display and for 5 rounds afterwards. Both the bard and the affected ally receive a +1 morale bonus to all Reflex saves to avoid damage and a +1 competence bonus to their AC. At 8th level and every six levels thereafter this bonus increases by +1. (+2 at 8th, +3 at 14, +4 at 20th). Instructive Display is a mind-affecting ability.

2nd Stage – Disarming Display (Su): The speed and fluidity of the bard can inspire an ally to disarm an opponent. The ally must be within 30 ft. of the bard and be able to see and hear him. The bard must be able to see the ally in order to give him a quick demonstration that will allow him to disarm his opponent. Both the bard and the ally gain a +2 bonus to any attempts at disarming any opponent and do not draw an attack of opportunity doing so. This benefit lasts for five rounds.

3rd Stage – Terrifying Display (Sp): A bard is able to *scare*, as per the spell, any creature that has previously fallen victim to the *intimidating display*. Using this ability does not break the bard's concentration on the *intimidating display*. Attempting to *scare* an opponent does not count toward the bard's daily uses of bardic music. A Will saving throw (DC 10 + ½ bard's level + Cha modifier) negates this affect. This ability only affects a single creature, and is a mind-affecting ability.

4th Stage – Blinding Display (Su): A bard can spin his blade so fast that an opponent is unable to detect the blade at all. The target creature must be able to see the bard for this ability to have any effect. The bard makes a perform check each round and the result become the DC against which the opponent must make a Will save. If the opponent fails the bard can make one attack, for which the opponent is considered blinded for the purpose of defending against it. The bard may continue the blinding display for one round per level. This is a mind-affecting ability.

5th Stage – Graceful Display (Sp): When the bard begins his weapon display he is grace personified to his

allies. A single willing ally with 30 ft. who can see the bard gains the benefit of *cat's grace* as per the spell. This benefit lasts as long as the bard concentrates on his graceful display plus five rounds.

6th Stage – Rhythmic Display (Su): The bard counts off a rhythm as he enters this display form. One ally within 30 ft. of the bard who can see his display and hear the rhythm gains a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls against his opponents. This bonus increase by +1 for every two rounds as the tempo of the rhythm increases. (+1 for rounds one and two, +2 for rounds three and four, and so on). The bard can maintain the rhythm for one round per level. This is a mind-affecting ability.

7th Stage – Mass Terrifying Display (Sp): This ability functions like the *terrifying display* ability, except that the bard may now affect all opponents that have fallen victim to the intimidating display. *Mass terrifying display* is a mind-affecting ability.

Idle Hands

Skill: Perform (juggling) or Sleight of Hand

Abilities: 1st stage – juggling jumble (Su); *dazzle* (Sp), deflective juggle (Su); 2nd stage – juggling distraction (Su); 3rd stage – *blindness* (Sp); 4th stage – juggling disruption; 5th – juggling concealment; 6th stage – deflective juggling II; 7th stage – *mass blindness* (Sp)

Juggling is an ancient form of physical training and entertainment. In the hands of a bard, juggling balls and clubs can be used to dazzle audiences, knock objects out of the air and even wield them as unexpected weapons. For the purposes of this power performance, it is assumed that a bard possessing any of the stages may juggle a number of items equal one plus his skill ranks in Perform (juggling) or half his number of Sleight of Hand ranks. The juggler must have at least one more object than hands used for juggling, and can juggle any light weapons and suitably small items (such as juggling balls, flaming torches or vials of alchemist's fire). A bard with the Quick Draw feat is able to add or replace objects he is juggling with as a free action without stopping his juggling, provided he is carrying appropriate items on him. A bard may also catch items thrown to him by allies to replace lost items with a Dex check (DC 10), and this trick does not stop the bard from continuing to juggle.

Abilities

1st Stage – Disorientate (Su): When a performer is juggling his simple clubs or balls, arcane spell-casters able to see the performance can become mesmerised and disorientated by the display and their own movements



and gestures become a confused jumble. While the bard uses this ability, any arcane spell-caster who is trying to cast a spell with a somatic component who can see him must make a Will save opposed by the bard's Perform check or be unable to cast the spell intended. The spell-caster loses his action for the round but not the spell. A bard may maintain this ability for one round per level. This is a mind affecting ability.

1st Stage – Dazzle (Sp): A bard who is juggling may attempt to *dazzle* one or more creatures with 90 ft. of him. The creature must be able to see the bard and the bard must be able to the creature. This ability works even if the creature is engaged in combat. For every three levels a bard attains beyond 1st, he can target one additional creature with a single use of the ability. (two at 4th, three at 7th and so on). To use the ability, a bard makes a Perform (juggling) or Sleight of Hand check with the result as the DC for the affected creature's Will save against the effect. If its saving throw fails, the creature becomes dazzled and takes a –1 penalty to all attack rolls as well as Search and Spot checks as long as the bard performs plus five rounds. If the bard uses light-producing objects, such as flaming brands or daggers with the *flaming* enchantment, the Will save DC is increased by two due to the hypnotic and distracting effect of the moving lights. Dazzle is a mind-affecting ability.

1st Stage – Deflective Juggling (Su): While the bard is performing deflective juggling, once per round as a free action the bard may attempt to deflect one ranged attack that is directed at himself or an ally within 30 feet. To deflect an attack the bard opposes the attack roll with a Perform (juggling) or Sleight of Hand check and if successful the attack fails. At 8th level and each additional six level after that the bard may make one additional deflection per round. If the ranged attack is targeted against the bard and is a conventional missile of some form (such as a dagger, arrow or throwing axe), then the bard can snatch the weapon out of the air on a successful deflection and add it to the items he is juggling. If this occurs, the bard may immediately throw one item he is juggling straight back at the attacker as an attack of opportunity. This could quite possibly be the missile that was thrown at him in the first place (arrows, crossbow bolts and similar missiles are treated as daggers for the purpose of calculating range penalties, damage and suchlike). This ability can be used as long as the bard concentrates or until he runs out of objects to juggle.

2nd Stage – Juggling Distraction (Su): The bard juggles not only to entertain, but also to distract the attention of his patrons from the activities of his companions. While the bard is employing this performance (max one round/

level) one ally with 60 ft of the bard gain a +4 morale bonus to Move Silently checks, Sleight of Hand checks and on checks made to Tumble through threatened or occupied squares. This is a mind-affecting ability.

3rd Stage – Blindness (Sp): A bard is able to use *blindness* as per the spell any creature that has previously fallen victim to the *dazzle*. Using this ability does not break the bard's concentration on the *dazzle*. Attempting to inflict *blindness* on an opponent does not count toward the bard's daily uses of bardic music. A Will saving throw (DC 10 + ½ bard's level + cha modifier) negates this affect. This ability only affects a single creature. This ability is a mind-affecting ability.

4th Stage – Juggling Disruption (Su): While performing this juggling technique the bard threatens all creatures within 30 ft. Any action that would provoke an attack of opportunity allows the juggler to throw one of his juggled objects at the creature using a Perform (juggling) or Sleight of Hand check for his attack roll. This ability is often used to disrupt spell-casters. This ability lasts as long as the bard continues to juggle or until he runs out of objects to juggle.

5th Stage – Juggling Concealment (Su): The bard can provide himself or an ally with 5 ft. with 20% concealment while juggling. This benefit can be switched between people each round by the bard taking a move action to bring concealment to a new ally. This ability last as long as the bard is juggling up to one round per level.

6th Stage – Deflective Juggling II (Su): This ability works the same as deflective juggling and does not cost an additional bardic music to use. However once the bard has reached this level of mastery the bard may also deflect any spell or spell-like ability that requires an attack roll that falls under the same conditions as deflective juggling.

7th Stage – Mass blindness (Sp): This ability functions like the *blindness* ability previously discussed however the bard may now affect all opponents that have fallen victim to the intimidating display. *Mass blindness* is a mind-affecting ability.

Staged Magic

Skill: Perform (stage magic) or Sleight of Hand

Abilities: 1st stage – *amaze* (Sp), sway disposition (Su), the hand is quicker than the eye (Su); 2nd stage – where did it go? (Su); 3rd stage – *colour spray* (Sp), 4th stage – watch me pull a rabbit out of this hat (Su); 5th stage – *unbreakable rings* (Sp); 6th stage – *swords into plowshares* (Sp); 7th stage – *mass colour spray* (Sp).

The art form of prestidigitation is much more than a simple assortment of parlour tricks to the bard; it is a study into how the mind processes images and sound. Through the use of illusion and conjuring techniques the bard is able to trick the audience into believing the unlikely or even impossible. The performance elements of this bard can impress the common folk, amuse children and brighten dreary lives.

Abilities

1st Stage – Amaze (Sp): When the bard is performing acts of legerdemain one or more creatures may become amazed by the performance. Each creature to be amazed must be within 90 ft. of the bard, able to see and hear the bard, and able to pay attention to him. The bard must also be able to see the creature. The distraction of nearby combat or other dangers prevents this ability from working. For every three levels the bard gains after 1st he can attempt to amaze one more creature with a single use of this ability (two at 4th, three at 7th and so on). To use this ability the bard makes a Perform or Sleight of Hand check. His check result is the DC for the affected creature's Will save against the effect. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to amaze the creature again for 24 hours. If the saving throw fails, the creature becomes enthralled by the tricks performed and has trouble concentrating on what they are doing as they try to figure out how the tricks work. While amazed the creature suffers a -4 penalty to Concentration and Sense Motive checks and is unable to complete any full round actions without making a concentration check of DC equal to the bard's perform check. This effect lasts for as long as the bard performs to a maximum of one round per level.

1st Stage – Sway Disposition (Su): The prestidigitation show has a remarkable effect on all who see it. Each round of a performance to sway disposition, the bard makes a Perform check. Any creature within 30 ft. of the bard that can see and hear the bard and is not currently in a combat may find them selves entertained by the tricks. The Perform check that the bard made can be used by the bard to improve the attitude of the creatures in place of the traditional Diplomacy check. The bard can affect one creature each round with a use of this ability. The performance can be maintained for ten rounds. When the performance ends the creature's attitude remains at its new level unless affected by other actions. This is a mind-affecting ability.

1st Stage – The Hand Is Quicker Than The Eye (Su): The bard using this performance is able to enhance the stealth abilities in his allies by drawing their opponents attention away. Any allies gain a +3 morale bonus to Bluff, Hide and Sleight of Hand checks against any

opponents within 60 ft. of the bard who can see and hear his performance. This ability cannot be used while the allies or opponents are engaged in combat. This ability lasts as long as the opponents are within range and can see the bard perform as well as for five rounds after the performance ends. At 8th level and every six levels beyond that the bonus increases by +3. The hand is quicker than the eye is a mind-affecting ability.

2nd Stage – Where Did It Go? (Su): With the expenditure of one of the bard's bardic music uses the bard is able to plant a small item on another creature within 30 ft. by making a Perform or Sleight of Hand check against DC 20. If successful the bard may place an object weighing no more than two pounds on another ally or opponent. If the target is not an ally the creature may make a Spot check opposed by the bard's Perform or Sleight of Hand check to notice an item has been planted but not who planted it. This has many applications such as letting the bard pass a healing potion to an ally across a crowded battlefield, or planting a blood-stained dagger on an opponent then announcing to all that they are the real killer and even have the bloody knife to prove it.

3rd Stage - Colour Spray (Sp): At this stage of development the bard may use *colour spray* as per the spell, with minor modifications, on one creature that has already been amazed by the bard's performance. Using this ability neither breaks the bard's concentration on the *amaze* effect nor allow a second saving throw against that effect. Using *colour spray* does not count against the bard's daily limit of bardic magic performances. A Will saving throw (DC 10 + 1/2 bard level + Cha modifier) negates the effects. This ability will only affect a single creature, rather than the usual area effect of *colour spray*.

The other modifications to the spell are as follows:

- 1) A Creature with HD equal to or greater than the bard's class level may be stunned for one round
- 2) A Creature with HD one or two lower than the bard's class level may be blinded and stunned for 1d4 rounds and then stunned for an additional round.
- 3) A Creature with HD three or more lower than the bard's class level is unconscious, blinded, and stunned for 2d4 rounds, then blinded and stunned for 1d4 rounds, and then stunned for an additional round.

4th Stage – Watch Me Pull A Rabbit Out of This Hat (Su): At this stage the bard's skill at sleight of hand has improved to such a degree that he is able to take a small object from another creature at a range of 30 ft. This performance takes a full round action for the bard as he reaches into a pouch, pocket, backpack or hat of his own and can take a item or items weighing less than two pounds from an ally or opponent. There are



several conditions to this ability. First the bard must have a good idea what item he is interested in, such as a small glass vial from an ally's backpack, not along the lines of rooting around to see whether there's something interesting in an enemy's pockets. Secondly the bard must make a successful Perform or Sleight of Hand check against DC 18 for items carried in containers on the person, a DC of 22 for items worn, or a DC of 30 held in extra-dimensional spaces such as bags of holding. Thirdly, unwilling targets may make a Spot check opposed by the bard's Perform or Sleight of Hand check to notice that an object is missing. Magic items are often resistant to this ability and are allowed a saving throw using a bonus of ½ their caster level against a DC of 10 + ½ bard level + Cha modifier.

5th Stage – Unbreakable Rings (Sp): There is a common magic trick when a performer takes two or more solid metal rings perfect in all ways that even though unbroken they are able to pass through each other and become linked. A bard of this level has learned how to apply this technique to the battlefield and by performing for two full rounds he is able to join together the armour, clothing, weapons or hide of two adjacent creature within 60 ft. At the end of the two rounds the bard must make a ranged touch attack against each creature to be entangled. If the bard succeeds at these attacks the creatures become *entangled* as per the spell. The creatures can attempt to break free as per the spell description, however doing so damages their equipment. Any armour, clothing, or hide damaged inflicts a –2 circumstance penalty to armour class until the items are repaired or healed, or if weapons were joined together and then broken apart it inflicts a –2 circumstance penalty on attack rolls until repaired or healed. This effect lasts for five rounds after which the combatants clothing and armour return to their original shape unless they were damaged in escape attempts. At 15th level and every three levels after that the bard may affect one additional creature.

6th Stage – Swords into Plowshares (Sp): A bard at this stage has perfected the illusion of the bending of metal objects such as spoons. The bard makes it appear to a creature that the weapon they are wielding has been bent into an unusable and worthless shape. The opponent must be able to see the bard's performance and hear his voice as well as being within 60 ft. The creature is allowed a Will saving throw (DC 10 + ½ bard level + Cha modifier) to resist this mind-affecting effect. If the save fails the creature will see his wielded weapon as a twisted and useless mass of metal and drops the weapon, refusing to use it. This effect lasts for as long as the bard concentrates (maximum one round / level). At the end of this time the illusionary change ceases and the creature may resume using the weapon as normal.

The bard may affect one additional opponent for every two levels he gains beyond 15th.

7th Stage – Mass Colour Spray (Sp): This ability functions as the *colour spray* ability, except that the bard can make the *colour spray* simultaneously to any number of creatures that he has already amazed. This is a mind-affecting ability.

Touch of Thespis

Skill: Perform (acting) or Bluff (they do not stack).

Abilities: *1st stage – disguise self* (Sp), mimic voice (Su), method acting (Su); *2nd stage – disguise others* (Su); *3rd stage – cue* (Sp); *4th stage – personification* (Su); *5th stage – archetypal command* (Su); *6th stage – mass personification* (Su); *7th stage – immortal words* (Su).

Acting is the art of becoming someone else, of immersing one's self into the role of a character. A thespian can forget who he really is and assume not only the appearance, but the very nature of a new persona. The characters of a play are immortal, for they will never truly die, and a bard who specialises in acting draws upon the power of this eternal nature as well as from the artistic inspiration inside his heart.

Abilities

1st Stage – Disguise Self (Sp): The bard can assume the guise of a different person as per the *disguise self* spell. To activate it, the bard spends one use of bardic music while assuming the role of the disguise. The character can maintain the disguise for as long as he acts in character. This requires a Perform check (base DC 10) to assume the disguise, plus another check made every hour, with the DC increasing by +1 for every hour after the first. If the bard acts out-of-character unintentionally, the disguise fades in five rounds, but voluntarily dropping it makes it disappear instantly.

1st Stage – Voice Mimic (Su): The bard's acting takes on the ability to mimic voices and accents with almost perfect accuracy. The character activates this ability with a normal use of bardic music and a Perform check (DC 10 for members of his own species, 12 for creatures of the same type and 15 for creatures of a different type). Failure to activate the ability does not spend the daily use. He can maintain this performance for ten minutes, at which point he must roll another Perform check with a +1 to the DC. If he fails, he can maintain the performance with another use of his bardic music abilities. Success prolongs the duration for another ten minutes up to a maximum of ten minutes per character level. The bard imitates the voice of another creature perfectly, even if it belongs to a different gender or even species. He can

make animal calls as well as sound as an ancient wurm, although he does not gain knowledge of any different language. In practical terms, the character gains a +5 bonus to Disguise and Bluff checks that intend to fool others. A bard can use this ability at the same time as other bardic music abilities, and he can only imitate one voice at a time. If he wants to imitate another different voice, he must end the effect and activate it again. Also, when he speaks with his normal voice, the bard breaks the effect.

1st Stage – Method Acting (Su): A thespian's craft has three elements: look like a persona, sound like a persona and *think* like a persona. With this basic ability, the thespian bard can now assume the personality of any character he assumes. The character activates this ability with a normal use of bardic music and a Perform check (DC 10). Failure to activate the ability does not spend the daily use. The bard can maintain this performance for one hour, at which point he must spend another use of bardic music. While this ability is in effect, the bard can feign that his alignment is other than what it really is. He registers as his new alignment to magic, including magic items that only function properly in the hands of a character of said alignment. He succeeds in all Bluff checks to convince others of false intentions related to his faked personality. At first, the bard can only affect himself, but for every stage he reaches after the 1st he can affect one other creature, although third parties only enjoy the benefits of alignment concealment, not recognition by magic items nor bonus to Bluff checks.

2nd Stage – Disguise Other (Sp): This ability works exactly as *disguise self* but the character can target one other creature. The target creature does not roll a Perform check, but the disguise is assumed automatically and lasts for one hour per two bard levels. For every stage that the bard reaches after the 2nd, he can affect one additional target.

3rd Stage – Cue (Sp): During a play, it is as important to have some chemistry with the co-stars as it is to give a convincing performance. With a normal use of bardic music, the character can roll a Perform (acting) check, with the result becoming this ability's save DC. The bard can affect one creature standing no further than ten feet away, plus one foot per character level. The target makes a Will save, success meaning that it cannot be affected by this ability for 24 hours. Failure means that the target complies with one short order from the bard. This order must be a short standard action and cannot be one that forces the target to injure or place himself in immediate danger. This ability is useful in battle to force an opponent to take an unwanted step backwards to get it out of range of an ally or stop it from launching a full-round attack, but in social situations it can be doubly

The three bards had escaped the hellhounds successfully, escaping right through an abandoned access that they doubted that the catacomb's owner knew existed. However, they had emerged in one of the seediest parts of the city, and they were still dressed adequately for a rich woman's ball dance.

'Not that I'm complaining...' Eyra was catching her breath, 'but that sling could have picked a better way to escape the dungeon.'

'You're welcome to look for another one,' Eldreen panted. 'We still have to get back to the manor.'

'Leave it to me,' Eilan winked and concentrated. He needed them to look the part of rowdy citizens, so he conjured in his mind the mental images he had of characters from a play. The play was written by his own mentor, so every word was etched in his mind. He got in touch with that image and wove the appearance of three of the play's minor characters; three hoodlums that would be right at home in these surroundings. He hunched a little, furrowed his brow and pictured himself as the character. And there he was. He extended his concentration and, when he finally opened his eyes, his sisters were also transfigured, disguised by a careful illusion.

'Now play your parts, you wusses,' he cursed and spat, just as the character in the play would do.

useful, as it can force a target to say things in response to the actor's 'script', potentially ruining negotiations or social standings.

4th Stage – Personification (Su): The bard that follows the path of the thespian can assume the looks and behaviour of another persona with flawless skill. Activating this ability costs three uses of bardic music, but the character need not roll a skill check. While under this ability, the bard looks, sounds and behaves exactly like another person, which can be of any alignment that registers as such. The bard has two choices when activating this ability: impersonate a specific, existing individual or create an entirely new persona. The bard can only impersonate creatures of his same type and size and it takes him ten minutes to assume such a guise.

By using the personification ability to duplicate another particular creature, the character gains a +30 bonus to Disguise and Bluff checks, and gains minor insights that allow him to answer correctly questions that would prove him an impostor, but any knowledge gained by



this does not remain with the character once he gives the answers. If the character's true identity is tested by magical measures, he is entitled to a Will save at the DC the spell would normally have, even if it clearly states it cannot be saved against. The duration of this version of personification is one hour per character level.

To create a new persona, the bard must invest some energy into it. He decides the new persona's race and class as if the player were creating a new character. The character spends a number of experience points equal to 100XP per the new persona's character level, which cannot be higher than the bard's class level. The player purchases the persona's equipment according to the wealth by character level table in *Core Rulebook II*, and can buy magical equipment provided the bard himself has magical equipment, but he cannot purchase mounts, familiars or other pets. When the bard assumes the new persona, he becomes it completely as per an *alter self* spell that also affects his equipment. Even divination magic will register him as a different person that bears no relation to the bard's original self, since this ability also creates a false history and background for the persona. While in his different persona, the bard is dimly aware that this persona is just a character created by his original mind, so he does not gain any of the class abilities of the persona's class. All his statistics remain the bard's original. The bard can maintain this guise indefinitely. He must spend one bardic music use indefinitely. A bard can create as many as one persona per Charisma modifier and can become each one at will by paying the requisite three uses of bardic music. The bard can dismiss any persona to make room for another, but the experience points spent are lost.

5th Stage – Archetypal Command (Su): The bard's acting ability grows to the point that he can fake having an ability his characters possess but that he lacks. When assuming a persona through the personification ability above, he can spend one use of bardic music and make a Perform (acting) check with a varying DC. Success means that the character gains one feature of the persona's class or race. This faked ability is only good for one use and with a duration equal to the ability's original duration or a number of minutes equal to the bard's class level, whichever is less. The mimicked ability responds to the general archetypes that a persona conforms too, so it can only imitate skill checks, general feats and core class abilities. For spellcasting, the bard can imitate the spellcasting ability of another class, but not cast or learn *any* of that class's spells; he can only use spell trigger and spell completion spells normally as if he were a member of that class. When imitating core class abilities, the persona's level *must* be high enough so that the persona can actually have it. For example, a bard creating a 12th level bard creating an 8th level

druid persona can spend one use of bardic music for archetypal command to imitate the *wild shape (Large)* ability for 12 minutes while he assumes that persona, but he could not use it to imitate venom immunity (a 9th level druid ability).

Ability	Perform check DC
Skill	Equal to the task's DC +5
Feat	15 + number of prerequisite feats
Base attack bonus	Bonus + 10
Base save bonus	Bonus +15
Class feature	Earliest class level +5
Arcane spellcasting	12
Divine spellcasting	15

6th Stage – Mass Personification (Sp): The character can extend his personification ability to several creatures, masking the true selves of an entire troupe with a number of targets equal to the half the bard's class level, not including himself (although this effect does change the bard, he merely does not count against his limit). By spending two uses of bardic music, this ability gives targeted creatures a new appearance, voice and alignment but, unlike the normal personification ability, these are woven with shadow illusion magic instead of being a true transformation. Affected creatures gain a +10 bonus to Disguise and Bluff checks to pretend to be the people they are disguised as, and creatures that interact with them gain a Will save (DC 10 + bard levels + Charisma modifier) to notice the deception. The illusion lasts for ten minutes per bard level. The bard can spend three uses of bardic music so that he can assume one of his created personas or adopt a perfect disguise, but the personas of the other affected targets remains illusory.

7th Stage – Immortal Words (Su): A playwright once wrote that a character in a play is immortal, for he truly never dies as his story is performed again and again; a thespian bard definitely agrees. This ability is automatic and does not require the bard to spend any points nor use it actively. If the character is killed while under the guise of a created persona as per the personification ability, only the persona is dead, not the character. The bard drops to the ground and appears dead for all purposes except for turning him into an undead creature. He can remain 'dead' for as long as one day per Charisma modifier. At the time of the player's choosing, the persona's image vanishes and the bard's original self awakens with one hit point and two points of damage to all abilities, which he can recover normally. He can no longer assume the guise of the dead persona unless he spends experience to create it again.

Vortex Dance

Skill: Perform (dance).

Abilities: *1st stage* – quick step (Su), long routine (Su), mesmerise (Su); *2nd stage* – choreography (Su); *3rd stage* – follow (Su); *4th stage* – primal urge (Su); *5th stage* – dancing lead (Sp); *6th stage* – unrestrained dance (Su); *7th stage* – dimensional routine (Su).

Dance is the art whose instrument is the body itself. A dancer conveys subtle messages through the movements of his body, using the infinite positions that it can adopt along with the different ways that it can take. Sometimes music is part of the dance, other times the dancer needs no other rhythm than the beating of his heart. Dance is one of the oldest art forms as well, and it possesses a primal power that more refined art forms lack.

Abilities

1st Stage – Quick Step (Su): Dancing through the floor has its own rhythm, and the bard can wilfully change that pace. When he activates this ability, the bard can quicken his step so that the distance he covers with a five-foot step doubles with a graceful half-jump. All the rule for five-foot steps remain in effect, the only thing that changes is that the bard covers ten feet. He can maintain this ability as a free action every round, but he cannot use other bardic music abilities while he does so.



At 1st stage he can only affect himself, but for every stage he reaches beyond the 1st he can affect one additional creature with the same use of bardic music. This effect stops the moment that the bard stops performing it.

1st Stage – Long Routine (Su): Certain dance routines have the dancer crossing the floor from one point to the next through one rapid, fluid movement. When activating this ability, the bard's movements are performed as a quick and fluid dance that weaves through the battlefield unimpeded. The character can do this for a number of movements (whether a single move action, a hustle or a run, provided he does not stop) equal to his Charisma modifier in a single encounter and with a single use of his bardic music ability. Every time that he provokes an attack of opportunity for moving through and out of threatened areas, the character can make a Perform (dance) check, using his result as his Armour Class for that attack if it is higher than his actual AC. While this might not always be enough to avoid being struck, it may well increase the bard's chances of doing so.

1st Stage – Mesmerise (Su): This ability works like the *fascinate* ability of the Songs of Inspiration, but affected targets sway to the dance's rhythm.

2nd Stage – Choreography (Su): A proficient dancer can adapt to the movements of even the most inept partner and, with his own sense of rhythm and stage presence, he can make others fall in step with him. The bard marks his movements with strong steps to be heard by all allies within 30 feet and then makes a Perform (dance) check against DC 15; for every point that the check result surpasses the DC, the dancer gains a dance point (maximum of ten). He can distribute dance points amongst allies that can hear or see him and that he can see in return. During the same round during which he received the points, an ally can translate a dance point into one of the following bonuses:

- +2 to initiative place
- +1 to attack
- +2 to AC
- +1 to Reflex saves
- +5 feet to movement

The bard must make a new Perform check every round and he can maintain this choreography for a maximum of ten rounds. He can keep and use dance points that he does not distribute.

3rd Stage – Follow (Su): The bard gains a keen sense of the rhythm by which creatures move, adapting his own to match theirs. By spending one use of bardic



music outside his turn, the character can move up to five feet per Charisma modifier either away or in the same direction as a designated target. The bard makes a Perform (dance) check (DC 10 + target's Ref bonus) and, if he succeeds, he moves at the same time as a target. He can use this ability to avoid engaging in melee combat or to keep a target from escaping. This extra movement does not affect the character's normal movement options, but it is performed as an attack of opportunity (a character may not perform more than one attack of opportunity per round, unless he has the Combat Expertise feat). The use of bardic music is only spent on a successful movement.

4th Stage – Primal Urge (Sp): Dancing awakens something in everyone who participates and even on those who only watch. A bard that has reached the 4th stage in the Vortex Dance can awaken such feelings in one target. He can only try to affect a creature that is already suffering from his mesmerise ability. He does not spend another use of bardic music, but the targeted creature can make a second Will save against the standard DC). Failure means that the target begins dancing and is affected by one of the following effects as if cast by a sorcerer of half the character's level: *good hope*, *irresistible dance* or *rage* at the bard's choice. The condition lasts for as long as the dancer keeps performing and stops immediately when he ceases to dance. For every stage that the character gains beyond the 4th, the bard can affect one additional victim with the same use of bardic music. He affects all targets with the same effect; if he wishes to affect one target with a different ability, he must perform either dance with the new effect, but interrupting the previous one.

5th Stage – Dancing Lead (Sp): Just as he can adapt to follow a dancing lead, a bard that knows the Vortex Dance can turn the tables and become the lead. He spends one use of bardic music and targets one creature that is no further than 30 feet. He then makes a Perform (dance) check opposed by his target's Strength check. If successful, the target is pushed back or pulled forward five feet plus another foot for every point that the Perform check exceeds the Strength check. The bard must move with his target either forward or backwards, maintaining the same distance to the target, and limited to his normal movement.

6th Stage – Unrestrained Dance (Su): Mastery of the Vortex Dance grants a bard with superhuman agility. The character moves in mystical patterns that seem to touch upon the basic structure of the world. Once he spends one use of bardic music, the dancer doubles his

move speed and is under the effects of the *spider climb* spell except that he does not need to have his hands free. In addition, he gains a +4 circumstance bonus to AC against ranged attacks due to his rapid and confusing dancing routine. He can maintain this ability for ten minutes per bard level.

7th Stage – Dimensional Routine (Su): A master dancer not only dominates his own body, but also dominates the space through which he moves it. When he spends a bardic music use for this ability, the bard's dancing takes his next step to another location without really crossing the space between. He makes a Perform (dance) check and takes a step outside space, disappearing from his location and appearing at any destination up to five feet away for every point in the Perform check result. If he spends five uses of bardic music, his step does not cross space, it crosses the planar barriers into the Ethereal Plane. He can dance into the Astral Plane by spending ten uses of bardic music. He can make the return trip from those planes to the Material Plane by spending the same number of bardic music uses that would take him there.

Words of the Wise

Skill: Perform (oratory)

Abilities: 1st stage – counter charlatan (Su), *interrogation* (Sp), a word of caution (Su); 2nd stage – a time to act (Su); 3rd stage – *zone of truth* (Sp); 4th stage – tale of the righteous (Su); 5th stage – rally the troops (Su); 6th stage – *wisdom of the planes* (Sp); 7th stage – *mass zone of truth* (Sp).

Throughout the backrooms of courts and the halls of power a successful leader will often surround themselves with educated men to provide wise counsel in times of uncertainty. A wizard well studied and rich in years occupies this role in most kingdoms but amongst some fortunate few the position is filled by a bard skilled in the art of oratory. A skilled orator can discern hidden truths, uncover strange secrets and rally troops to their banner.

Abilities

1st Stage – Counter Charlatan (Su): As a counsellor, the bard endeavours to protect his allies from being misled. As such he has developed the ability to listen and analyse to such an extent that even small flaws in a person's story shine out as huge errors to be exploited. The bard can begin to cross-examine creatures that are engaged in the telling of a story by making a Perform check each round. This result can be used by any ally

within 90 ft. who can hear the bard's questions and the creature's responses in place of any Diplomacy check or Sense motive check that is required to negotiate with the creature or detect the presence of lies. This ability can be maintained as long as the bard is able to continue to concentrate on his cross-examination. This is a language-dependent ability.

1st Stage – Interrogation (Sp): The interrogative drive of the bard can have a debilitating effect on creatures. This speech can cause one of more creatures to become befuddled. Each creature to be affected must be within 90 ft. of the bard and able to hear his questions. The bard must also be able to see the creature and communicate with it. The distraction of nearby combat or other dangers prevents the interrogation from affecting the creature. For every three levels beyond 1st the bard may affect one additional creature (two at 4th, three at 7th and so on). To use this ability, a bard makes a Perform check, the result of which becomes the DC for each affected creature's Will Save. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the bard cannot attempt to interrogate the creature again for 24 hours. If the saving throw fails, the creature becomes befuddled. While befuddled the creature has a –4 penalty to all Bluff, Diplomacy and Gather information checks. This effect lasts for as long as the bard performs to a maximum of one round per level.

This is a mind-affecting, language-dependent ability.

1st Stage – A Word of Caution (Su): The skill and experience that any bard possesses could fill many libraries, but bards rarely stop in one place to write it all down. Such wisdom is not lost to the sands of time though, because a bard skilled in oratory can bolster his allies with tales of danger from his past. To be affected by this ability the allies must be within 30 ft. of the bard and able to hear him recount his dangerous exploits. All allies who meet these criteria take his words to heart gaining a +2 morale bonus to Listen, Search and Spot checks needed to find traps or be on guard against surprise. This bonus increases by +2 at 8th level and every six levels beyond. The effect lasts for as long as the bard can recount dangerous adventures plus an additional five rounds.

2nd Stage – A Time to Act (Su): There is a time to talk and a time to act. This truism is known and accepted by bards across the world. If the bard has the undivided attention of an ally for one full round he can offer practical combat suggestion to that character, granting them a +1 morale bonus to attack and damage rolls and

a +4 morale bonus to confirm critical hits. This benefit lasts for ten rounds and is a mind-affecting ability.

3rd Stage – Zone of Truth (Sp): A bard with this level of oratory skill is able to affect a creature with a *zone of truth* as per the spell, provided the creature has fallen under his *interrogation*. Unlike the spell, this ability only affects the creature targeted rather than an area. Using this ability does not break the bard's concentration on the *interrogation* effect. Affecting a creature with the *zone of truth* does not count toward the bard's daily limit of performances. A Will saving throw (DC 10 + ½ bard level + Cha modifier) negates the affect. This ability will last as long as the *interrogation* is maintained.

4th Stage – Tale of the Righteous (Su): This speech by the bard can inspire greatness in an ally to end the ways of those likely to break their word or conceal their true intentions. This ability functions in as *inspire greatness* does in the Songs of Inspiration, although with two changes. The first is that the effect only works if the allies are fighting creatures with a chaotic or evil component to their alignment, and the second is that the effect will last for as long as the bard continues his speech plus eight rounds.

5th Stage – Rally the Troops (Su): While the bard's allies are engaged in combat the bard may recount events that happen in the party's favour to emphasise their ability to overcome. Any ally within 30 ft. will be rallied by this good news and strive to top their previous exploits. This benefit allows allies to gain a +1 bonus to attack and damage rolls against opponents that they have previously damaged. This bonus will increase by one in each round when they damaged an opponent in the previous round. If they did not damage an opponent in the previous round this bonus remains at its current level. The bard may continue to rally the troops for one round per level. At the end of the duration all allies affected and the bard become fatigued. This is a mind-affecting ability

6th Stage – Wisdom of the Planes (Sp): By spending a bardic performance, once per day the bard may *contact other plane* as per the spell to gather information that he needs.

7th Stage – Mass Zone of Truth (Sp): This ability functions as the *zone of truth* ability, except that the bard can affect any number of creatures that he has already befuddled. This is a mind-affecting, language-dependent ability.



SURVIVAL TACTICS

The main problem with playing a bard is that there is so much that he can potentially do that he ends up falling into the cliché of ‘jack of all trades, master of none’. A bard can put up a decent fight, he knows useful spells, knows an above-average number of skills and has unique abilities that can bring unexpected support to allies. Such generalisation can hurt a character horribly in a normal d20 game, where specialisation is the quickest route to great power.

The player of a bard character is faced with many choices from the start: how to distribute skill points amongst the many class skills, which spells to choose given the bard’s meagre selection and which feats to prepare to. The character’s music abilities depend on how high his Perform rank is, leaving the character with a false choice between several performance styles, which are useless to him as it would dilute his advancement. Despite the many apparent disadvantages, a bard can be the saviour of the day if he makes his choices carefully and exploits his diversity to the maximum.

GENERAL OPTIONS

Bards are more than a pretty face and a haunting voice; they need a foundation in the form of their personal interests, personality and actual character before they start building their diverse characteristics around their core being.

Choosing Skills

The only class with more skills than the bard is the rogue, the undisputed skill master. This sheer amount and diversity can work greatly in the bard’s favour if he chooses his skills around a concept. A bard can be many things just like the rogue, but he must balance the things that he can do with skills and the things he can achieve with the rest of his talents.

The most important skill area for the bard is Perform. As mentioned before, bards are faced with a false choice by having different sub-skills available separately. If they invest skill points in more than one mode of Performance, they are wasting their time, as only their highest ranks will determine their access to bardic music abilities (unless the group is using the power performances alternatives in the previous chapter). The only situation where it is useful to have more than one Perform skill peaked up is if the bard fears he will not have an instrument available to him to play... which is



easily remedied by taking the singing sub-skill or simply learning *summon instrument*.

Next come the social skills in order to exploit the bard’s usually high Charisma score. The Charisma-based skill that is most useful for a bard who wants to become the party’s spokesperson is Diplomacy. Bluff and Intimidate can be equally useful, but the bard should carefully choose the situations where he applies either, for the results of a failed check can range from someone that agrees to disagree to someone willing to punch the bard’s face in. Sense Motive is a good way to gauge such situations. Gather Information is an immensely useful skill that complements the bard’s bardic knowledge ability by acquiring updated information that his hearsay knowledge may not cover, and thus becomes vital for any bard specialising in the provision of useful intelligence.

Last in the bard’s main platter is knowledge. The bard and the wizard are the only classes that have all the Knowledge skills as class skills, reflecting their respective interests in information and study. However, the bard has another powerful tool: bardic knowledge.

Players should consult with their Games Master what will be his take on the lore available to bardic knowledge, a mish-mash of loose information that can cover the Knowledge sub-skills of local, nobility and royalty, and very possibly history. This should tell the bard that, if he is to focus skill-usage on lore, he should be better off buying skills in arcana, religion, the planes and other more esoteric fields of study.

The player should consider the concept for his character before assigning skill points. A bard should assign points in skills that reflect somehow his personal interests and upbringing. A seeker of lost lore will have more ranks in Decipher Script than an action-oriented bard, who will focus more on Concentration and Tumble. A character who relishes in the tasks of exploration will have Climb, Jump, Survival and Swim as well as the ever-useful Listen and Spot, which in turn are also useful for the sneaky bard who also chooses Hide and Move Silently

Feats

The bard does not gain any bonus feats, limited merely to the feats that all characters gain normally through their progress. This makes it even more important for the bard to know what he wants to focus on, for it is in the choices of feats that bards can really be hurt from generalising. Given that they will not have much chance to explore feat trees, a bard should go as deep as the third or fourth feat in a tree and keep the rest of his choices to cover other aspects of his career.

The skill-boosting feats are not so useful for the bard, who has many skill points available to max out any skill he is interested in, although Skill Focus (perform) is nothing to scoff at if he has choices or abilities that somehow depend on a Perform check result (such as save DCs, durations and suchlike).

Combat feats wholly depend on how the character wants to carry himself in a combat situation. The ranged combat tree (Point Blank Shot and its derivatives) is useful for a bard who prefers to not get in the middle of melee and has a high Dexterity (always a choice in any case), while the tricky styles derived from Combat Expertise are better for the support bard. Improved Feint is a valid option for the bard, whose high Charisma complements having Bluff as a class skill in order to deprive targets of their Dexterity bonus to AC.

On the matter of magic, bards cannot be too careful when choosing feats; a limited choice of spells coupled

with a limited choice of feats can create unfortunate combinations. In general, Spell Focus and Heighten Spell are good options for a bard to have, since they increase the effectiveness of their spells, which they acquire at a much slower rate than other more focused spellcasters so that the character ends up with spells with a lower save DC than a wizard or cleric of the same level, even if their caster levels are the same. Other metamagic feats are definitely up to the player's tastes; anything that boosts a spell's effects because of a comparatively low caster level is a good thing.

Bards that dedicate themselves to making magic items are rare but not unheard of. With a low spell count, a bard is well-served by making his own spellcasting tools, such as potions, scrolls and wands. If the bard maxes out Use Magic Device, he could even create magic items using spells he does not know or even that he normally cannot cast by reading them from a scroll during item creation, although he will need Use Magic Device to utilise them once they are done.

Roleplaying Bards

Bards are the ultimate roleplaying class. Their talents and specialties lend themselves to interacting with Non-Player Characters all the time, which is made much more interesting through roleplaying than simply rolling social skill checks. Because of this potential venue, the player of a bard should have his character's personality well defined so that he can project it during play.

The bard's personality will reflect the skills and powers he has learned. A good samaritan will have ranks in Heal as well as learning the different *cure* spells, a manipulating trickster will have lots of Bluff combined with *charm person*, while a daring would-be-warrior will take combat feats as well as spells like *shout* and *invisibility*.

One of the first things to justify with roleplaying a bard is why he knows something about so many things. The stereotypical bard is a wanderer that visits villages, towns and cities, peddling his way into main plazas and rulers' courts. Yet a bard can be much more, as exemplified in the Career Paths chapter of this book as well as in Character Concepts in the first volume of *The Quintessential Bard* (now compiled in *Ultimate Character Concepts*). A bard can be a shadowy intelligence agent, an adventuring scholar or a criminal mastermind. Why the character chose such a diverse profession can colour the way that he reacts with the rest of the world.



Another important aspect of a bard's personality is present in all members of the class: the power of their inspiration. Unlike wizards who study their magic and sorcerers who tap into their blood, bards are true self-taught spellcasters that devise their spells by a mix of empirical experimentation with inspired improvisation. That they come up with the same results as wizards and sorcerers is only a mechanical construct of the d20 rules; in roleplaying terms, a bard's magic is as different from a wizard's as is a cleric's.

Whatever they do, bards are *artists*; they are moved by creative and emotional drives lacking in any other class, for their inspiration not only creates beautiful performances, it also empowers magic. As artists, bards can run the gamut from enthusiastic visionaries to angst-ridden soul-searchers, but there is always something in their souls pushing them forward, giving the image of restlessness that many have come to associate with travel, but can just as well drive the bard in other types of endeavours. Whatever the case, bards are always on the move; they are dynamic forces and that is why they cannot have a lawful alignment.

GENERALISING VS. SPECIALISING

One of the problems with the d20 rules system is that it hardly rewards a diverse character who learns a little of everything and is good at many things, but great at none. Because generalisation is built into the bard class, his best chance of survival in a dangerous campaign world is by travelling with others, which is where bards come unto their own. A bard can be the perfect glue for a party by serving as backup for *all* a party's members. He can heal when the cleric goes down, improvise a magic effect when the wizard is disabled, come up with a needed skill when the rogue is off exploring and also grant much-appreciated combat bonuses to fighters.

The road to specialisation is never a full one for bards; their built-in limitations (six skill points instead of eight, maximum spell level 6th and so forth) stunts their potential at some point, forcing them to branch out as is the class' design philosophy. To make sure that he is the best at something while remaining useful in other areas, the bard should choose one area of pseudo-specialisation and devote 60 to 70% of his resources towards building it up. The fields that a bard can specialise in are combat support, magic support, leadership and coordination, information gathering and social relations. Each field

carries within itself a collection of skill, feat and spell choices that emphasise a bard's role in a party.

Character creation is a very important phase when choosing between generalising and specialising, and in the second case, where to focus that specialisation. A bard's player must check with the other players and with the Games Master to know what holes in a party's composition need filling. Should the party lack a rogue, the bard should take Search and Disable Device; if it lacks a cleric, the *cure* and other remedy spells are a priority. This involves metagaming, which many consider distasteful but is nothing more than playing *with* the rules of the game. This should be allowed during character creation, for a more coherent and rounded party gives the Games Master a greater choice of stories and challenges that he can present the players, sure in the knowledge that they can find a way to solve most situations.

OPTIMISING BARDIC MUSIC

Bardic music is the staple ability of the bard just like turning undead is the cleric's, and even more so since no other class has anything like it (unlike turn undead, which is also available to paladins). If the players are not using optional and additional powers found both in this book and other d20 products, bardic music is limited to a set number of effects that depend both on the character's level as well as the number of ranks in Perform. This is where the system punishes diversity and rewards specialisation in the bard's terms. A multi-talented artist who could play a guitar, the flute, sing and be a master storyteller would be dividing his skill points amongst four different skills and, while the bard certainly can keep all of them maxed out so that he can use bardic music with all of them, the truth is that it is not worth the other sacrificed skills.

A way around this is to interpret the rules so that, regardless of how many ranks each sub-skill has, only the highest one counts towards qualifying for bardic music abilities, which become available to all subsets of the Perform skill. This can still hurt a character in abilities like *fascinate* which use a skill check to determine the ability's save DC.

Just like he should be well-versed with the details of the spells he knows, so should the bard become familiar with how his bardic music works so that he does not

waste its limited times of activation per day. This is truer in the first five or six levels than it is later in the character's career, when he can have the luxury of using his bardic music ability in more frivolous ways. Range and line of sight are the most important consideration when using abilities that explicitly state that targets must be able to hear *and* see the bard, and vice versa. A keen tactical mind will help the bard know where he should be standing so that his music affects all possible allies.

Unless involving too many tough opponents, a combat usually lasts between five to ten rounds, allowing the bard to use around two different abilities that will help his allies for the entire scene if the first ability he uses continues to work five rounds after he stops performing it in order to concentrate on the second. Sometimes a situation will demand that the character stops his singing in order to use a spell or another better needed ability, but the bard can trust that his inspire courage ability will linger long enough to make a difference while he does other things, and he may resume it with a second use of the ability if he wants.

GET SMART

A cleric can ask his god and a wizard can consult a crystal ball, but when it comes to finding out small yet important details, the bard can simply ask the people. A bard is an excellent intelligence broker not only because he is likeable enough that people will spill their guts to him, but also because he has a knack for picking up all sorts of facts, represented in the bardic knowledge check. This knowledge is not the bard's only source of information; he can combine a variety of methods to track down a piece of data that he and his party may need to accomplish any task in question. An *analyse dweomer* spell can tell him of an artefact sword's properties and *legend lore* will provide background information, but neither will reveal the location of its companion scabbard. The bard can consult his stores of mundane knowledge for legends regarding such specific questions, and keep narrowing his search down to Decipher Script checks to figure out the instructions of an ancient map as well as Diplomacy and Intimidate to get the exact location of the ruins from a scared militia soldier.

The many options a bard has for obtaining information make him a party's ideal intelligence agent, freeing wizards and clerics to do what they do best (blow things up and cure people). From Gather Information checks to *charm person* against an unfriendly informant, the

bard needs a day or two while the party relaxes at the inn to milk a settlement of all possibly useful information. The Games Master should use this capacity to plant plot hooks and story seeds and urge the bard's player to do some legwork. The adventures the party embarks on because of the information one of its members picks up actively will feel more natural than being hired by the local dark stranger at the tavern to investigate some ruins. The adventurers will also feel more at ease when going on quests they found out on their own, for they will not owe anything to any potential employer and can trust that they are not being manipulated to some nefarious end.

SUPPORT YOUR FRIENDS

Even in his diversity, the bard is a support specialist. Because he can double as a lesser version of most roles in a party, he can find himself in the position of bolstering a true specialist's efforts with his own. This is true not only during combat, but also on other types of situations and tasks.

In combat, the bard's average base attack bonus and his ability to use light armour without ruining his spellcasting enable him to join front-line fighters in melee or act as mobile ranged support. A bard *can* get himself in the middle of combat and not fear so much for his life as a wizard does, and being in the thick of things allows him to use his special abilities to help his allies or his spells to hinder his enemies. Canny bards use their proficiency with the whip to trip opponents so that a fighter can finish them or skim the outskirts of melee to coordinate flanking attacks with rogues.

The five-foot step becomes the bard's greatest ally. This very useful tactical movement helps all spellcasters get out of an enemy's immediate threat area so they can cast their spells unhindered, without needing to take the chance of failing due to casting defensively.

Despite their limitations, bards are arcane spellcasters, which also lets them hang behind with wizards and sorcerers providing tactical complications for opponents while the heavy artillery pummels them with *fireballs* and *lightning bolts*. A bard never goes wrong when learning *dispel magic* when the party is facing a spellcasting foe; their caster level is the same as any other spellcaster, and they do not have to worry about preparing it in advance in addition to being able to use it multiple times, becoming an enemy spellcaster's worst nightmare. Their magic knowledge couples with the



Use Magic Device skill to grant bards the use of magic items like scrolls and wands to complement their poor amount of spells known and limited spell list. They can fill the role of a magician's caddy, supporting a focused spellcaster in his efforts.

Synergy is the name of the game for bards that wish to cooperate with their fellows' task resolution activities. While it is more likely that the bard will have more ranks in a given skills than any other class except the rogue, his scattered focus can have him prepared to help in any activity simply by taking the aid another action when permissible for any given skill so that they only need to beat a DC 10 to successfully give more chances of success to a friend.

SPELL SELECTION

A bard has a very limited choice of spells both because of a limited spell list as well as a small number of spells known, plus slower access to spell levels. This makes spell selection a very important task for the advancing bards. A method for determining which spell to learn is to classify them by purpose and to choose those that best fit what the bard wants to achieve with his magic. These purposes overlap the classification of spells by magical school, but they most often cross school boundaries. Some of those purposes are:

General Combat: These spells have dual offensive and defensive purposes, but are generally useful in combat and cannot be classified only as offensive or defensive.

Spells: *Animate objects, blink, displacement, glitterdust, summon monster I-IX, summon swarm.*

Direct Harm: Direct harm spells see most of their uses in battle, but depending on the kind of spell, it could be used for secondary uses.

Spells: *Blindness/deafness, shadow evocation, shatter, shout, greater shout, sound burst, sympathetic vibration.*

Crippling and Indirect Harm: After general combat and direct harm spells, crippling spells begin to see more uses outside of actual combat situations. Crippling spells make for excellent tools for making threats during interrogations or other interactions; merely mentioning *blindness/deafness* is enough to scare many into cooperating.

Spells: *Animal trance, blindness/deafness, cause fear, confusion, confusion, lesser, crushing despair, daze,*

'Here we are, back were we started,' Eilan said as they approached the noble district, their disguise disappearing as he stopped playing the part of a poor vagrant.

'We should come back tomorrow,' Eldreen said. 'At least to give me time to locate a barrier spell or something to deal with those hounds.'

'Don't you know any spell that can do that?' Eyra whined.

'What do I look like? A wizard?' Eldreen straightened up. 'I can't conjure up anything I want. You're the illusionist; you could have make them believe there was a barrier.'

'And I could have blinded them.' Eilan spoke as the one whose magic was geared to more tactical concerns. 'But if we start flinging spells left and right, we are going to attract all sorts of attention.'

'Fine, fine... let's try it to do it Eldreen's way, then.'

daze monster, deep slumber, dispel magic, greater dispel magic, enthral, eyebite, fear, flare, glitterdust, hideous laughter, hold monster, hold person, hypnotic pattern, hypnotism, irresistible dance, lullaby, mind fog, nightmare, rainbow pattern, scare, shatter, sleep, slow, song of discord.

Tactical: By their very nature, tactical magic has many different applications, with the most common being changing the nature of the battlefield to the advantage of the spellcaster's party, the detriment of the enemy or pulling of the feat of achieving both at the same time.

Spells: *Alarm, darkness, dominate person, ghost sound, grease, pyrotechnics, see invisibility, sepia snake sigil, silence, suggestion, mass suggestion.*

Deception and Concealment: Some spells seem ideally developed for combat situations, like *invisibility* which grants a number of advantages to an attacker, but most of them are actually more useful when used outside of combat, in situations that require stealth and secrecy. Sometimes, even the use of deceptive and concealing spells point at something suspicious; spellcasters should

take steps to use these spells in as opportune a way as they can manage, especially if other spellcasters are present to detect the effects.

Spells: *Alter self, disguise self, erase, false vision, ghost sound, hallucinatory terrain, invisibility, greater invisibility, invisibility sphere, magic aura, major image, minor image, mirage arcana, misdirection, mislead, obscure object, permanent image, persistent image, programmed image, project image, sculpt sound, secret page, seeming, silent image, undetectable alignment, veil, ventriloquism.*

Enhancers: Because their relatively short duration, many enhancer spells are useful in combat or for completing simple tasks that do not require too much time. A spellcaster should consider what his companions can already do, and judge whether to prepare spells to give them new abilities or strengthen the ones they already have.

Spells: *Cat's grace, mass cat's grace, eagle's splendour, mass eagle's splendour, fox's cunning, mass fox's cunning, good hope, haste, heroes' feast, heroism, greater heroism, rage.*

Prevention and Protection: Although most preventive protection spells are geared towards warding off conditions encountered in combat, those same conditions also appear in non-combat situations.

Spells: *Blur, delay poison, mirror image, repel vermin, resistance.*

Healing and Remedy: Bards are the only arcane spellcasters who have a decent number of these kinds of spells, which are geared towards restoring characters from disadvantageous or harmful conditions such as plain damage, curses, spells, poison, disease and suchlike.

Spells: *Break enchantment, calm emotions, cure critical wounds, cure light wounds, mass cure light wounds, cure moderate wounds, mass cure moderate wounds, cure serious wounds, heroes' feast, neutralize poison, remove curse, remove fear.*

Communication and Information Gathering: Espionage, reconnaissance, coordination and other tactical concerns are the purview of communication and information gathering spells, but they play a role

so unique that they deserve to be separated from other tactical enchantments. Whenever the party or the spellcaster needs to find something out, and relay it so that the information becomes more useful, he must resort to the spells of this kind.

Spells: *Analyze dweomer, animal messenger, clairaudience/clairvoyance, comprehend languages, detect magic, detect scrying, detect secret doors, detect thoughts, dream, identify, illusory script, legend lore, locate creature, locate object, magic mouth, message, read magic, scrying, greater scrying, speak with animals, speak with plants, tongues, whispering wind.*

Non-Combat Interaction: These spells are used in social encounters mostly, and for a great variety of effects that go from removing obstacles to doting out punishment or paving the way for making new allies.

Spells: *Charm monster, mass charm monster, charm person, lesser geas, geas/quest, glibness, modify memory, suggestion, mass suggestion, zone of silence.*

Movement and Travel: This magic has two different purposes, which can be served in one way or another by any of the spells in the list: those purposes are bypassing obstacles (a reactive use) and reaching a goal (a proactive approach); both purposes sometimes overlap.

Spells: *Dimension door, expeditious retreat, find the path, freedom of movement, gaseous form, know direction, phantom steed, shadow walk.*

Utilitarian: These spells have too many applications to count. Even a single utilitarian spell can have many applications, even during combat.

Spells: *Animate rope, dancing lights, daylight, feather fall, heroes' feast, light, mage hand, magic mouth, mending, open/close, prestidigitation, secure shelter, summon instrument, tiny hut, unseen servant.*

All-Purpose: Spells that serve too general a purpose, and whose use depends on the spellcaster's imagination.

Spells: *Dispel magic, greater dispel magic, shadow conjuration, shadow evocation.*



The siblings were once again at the party, trying to find some way to enter the catacombs without attracting the hellhounds. They could see that the manor's security had been stepped up, the watch had been called and at least one of the city's certified wizards was making sweeps with magic-detecting spells through the party's area. Luckily, Eyra had quickly shrouded their magical equipment's aura before somebody thought to examine the 'entertainment'.

'What are we going to do?' Eyra whispered as they got ready to perform again.

'I think it's time to ask someone in the know...' Eilan whispered while preparing his lute. 'Eldreen, Eyra... give me some room to manoeuvre.'

The elder siblings began to play as the youngest danced to their melodies. Eyra's hypnotic movements were strengthened by Eldreen's mesmerising voice. In the space of minutes, the audience was rapt and oblivious to anything except the two performers. Eilan saw his chance and slipped away, leaving an illusory double of himself. He did not have much time. Unnoticed, he located the target of the blackmail and went to his side, raising his hand so that Eldreen could see him. The elder sister nodded, and the lyrics of her song changed slightly, directed at the man next to Eilan. The verses spoke of trust and spilling secrets to the nice man standing right behind.

'I have a book,' the man whispered to Eilan. 'I am not supposed to have it, and Eloise knows, so she has my daughter in her part of the catacombs. I must give her the book in exchange for my daughter.'

Eilan nodded and cast a spell to carry his whisper through the air to his sister's ear. The lyrics changed once more, telling how one should reveal the location of important secrets. Eilan received a very succinct but complete description of where he kept the book.

'And now you forget,' Eilan grinned and cast another spell to steal the memory of this conversation from the man's head.

He returned to his position, as stealthily as he could; he dismissed the illusion as he took his place. They finished their number and gave their obligatory interaction with people wanting to congratulate them, hire them or take them to bed. Almost an hour had to pass before they could slip off to the servants' quarters to 'get something to eat'. Once they were alone, Eilan made some signs with his hands. The sisters nodded and began fidgeting inside their robes

'You want to rescue the daughter,' Eyra giggled and poked her brother's arm while her other hand busied with something. 'I have no problem with that, but I know Eldreen wants to take the book first.'

'And we do want to accomplish both.' Eldreen smiled and ruffled her sister's hair. 'If someone who keeps hellhounds and hires mages to scan the place wants something with that book, it must be worth something.'

'I think I have an idea,' Eilan said, eyeing one door behind them. 'We can sneak into the dungeon only to take a look at this girl. Then I disguise myself as her and go 'home' to 'dad' while you arrange an exchange and I steal the book. When the lady's people get the girl out of her prison, we snatch her and return her home and get the hell out of this city.'

'There's a problem with your plan, boy...' A man emerged from the door Eilan had been watching and followed by another four. 'We knew we had intruders and moved the little girl to a safer place.'

'That must be the safe room in the western tower, where servants were taking food and drink tonight, while all family members are in the hall,' Eilan grinned and gave the signal. Smoke bombs, thrown by the sisters, went off on the new arrivals' side of the room as the brother erected a wall of wind to protect the trio. 'Thank you so very much; we were not sure if you had noticed us.' The three bards nodded and ran at top speed to the direction their previous research had revealed as a nice holding place.

DESIGNER'S NOTES

This is one of the hardest books I've written for the Mongoose, and not because the subject was in any way complicated but because this marks my swan song from the stable of staff writers. And let us not mention that my computer blew up the hardest in its history, requiring one full month in the vendor's tech support offices for it to come back to me. I think it was a sign of something.

Despite the complete hassle that finishing this book became, I can confess that I cheated; one of my favourite amongst characters I've played is a bard, and me and my Games Master got together often to swap ideas that would enhance the bard. This has been happening since the 2nd Edition of the game, so when I had to write about bards I had years of musing and house-ruling to fall back upon. Spellsongs are the most direct result of those discussions, while several of the prestige classes and the performances are my own direct explorations of an old idea for the *Encyclopaedia Arcane* series that never got off the ground, the power of magical art. It would have been solely dedicated to bardic magic, but instead it became the seedling of many ideas for this book.

Career Paths and Multiclassing are routine chapters ever since I first wrote them for *The Quintessential Fighter II*; they were an exercise in coming up with new and valid concepts for bards to explore. Once again, I thought about my own bard character, whose game has been on hiatus for about two years now, thinking about how I would want her to advance. She is a fighter/bard in any case, so the warrior aspects of bards were the easier to think about.

Creating the prestige classes allowed me to explore the different roles a bard can play in a party, given his diversity of talents. Then I just pushed the envelope so they could be options for higher-level characters that could see them as a comfortable road towards epic levels. I must credit Patrick Younts with the shadow puppeteer; it was his idea in the first place even if he wanted to make it into a career path rather than a prestige class, if I remember our brief exchanges correctly.

Superior Tools provided an interesting challenge. I had seen several examples of musical instruments made into weapons in other products and sources, and I kept thinking that there was something just too silly about a bard swinging his +2 *guitar of string-cutting*, despite the large body of reference in CD covers of heavy metal bands. So I went for weapons that would be weapons, but which could be used artistically; after all, martial arts *do* have 'art' in their names. For actual instruments, I could not take the short cut of including a long list of ethnic instruments from around the world. Not only do they not have any impact on how the bard uses his ability, but are also a copout. I wanted to give bards what other books gave their dedicated classes so, if a fighter book listed weapons that can only exist in fantasy, why not do the same with musical instruments?

The Magical Bard and Tricks of the Trade are the chapters where I poured most of my ideas regarding bards. They are

created from a wish list of what I would like *my* bard to do but never had the chance to develop or write down. Spellsongs remain as one of my favourite concepts, and credit also goes to my Games Master, who helped me devise a simple system back then to convert spells into songs, so that the bard's talent became slightly more unified mechanically as they were conceptually. Scores was frankly an idea waiting to happen, and it would surprise me if no one out there had thought of it before. Wizards should not have all the fun in writing down abilities so they can use them later without draining their resources, and composers can feel so intensely about the piece of paper where they are rendering their inspiration.

All in all, this was one book with enormous ups and downs. From one side I could explore some of my favourite concepts in one of my favourite character classes, on the other the process of writing was a true ordeal that tested my patience and sanity (as it will no wonder do the same to the editor and line developer... this book was *late!*). But I blame that I was without a computer for a full month after losing *all* the contents of my hard drive. I could have had a better time writing my last work as a Mongoose employee, but then again, it could also have been much worse. I want to thank all the crew in the UK and scattered across the world for letting me taste the joys and hardships of professional RPG writing. I am hooked thoroughly and I will still be around haunting bookshelves.

Alejandro Melchor



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The Advanced Quintessential Bard

CHARACTER _____
 CLASS _____
 CHARACTER CONCEPT _____
 RACE _____
 PATRON DIETY / RELIGION _____
 STYLE/ART FORM _____

PLAYER _____
 LEVEL _____
 CAREER PATH _____
 ALIGNMENT _____



ABILITY SCORES

	SCORE	MODIFIER	TEMP SCORE	TEMP MODIFIER
STRENGTH				
DEXTERITY				
CONSTITUTION				
INTELLIGENCE				
WISDOM				
CHARISMA				

HIT POINTS

[]	
SUB DMG	[]
HIT DIE	[]
DAMAGE REDUCTION	[]

ARMOUR

ARMOUR SHIELD DEX WIS SIZE NATURAL MISC

○ = 10+

[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]
ARMOUR TYPE							

CLASS

AC WHEN FLAT-FOOTED	AC VERSUS TOUCH ATTACKS	MISS CHANCE	MAX DEX BONUS	ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY	ARCANE SPELL FAILURE	SPELL RESISTANCE
[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]	[]

SAVING THROWS

	TOTAL	BASE	ABILITY	MAGIC	MISC	TEMP	MODIFIERS
FORTITUDE (CON)							[]
REFLEX (DEX)							[]
WILL (WIS)							[]

COMBAT BONUSES

	TOTAL	BASE	ABILITY	SIZE	MISC	TEMP	MODIFIERS
INITIATIVE (DEX)							[]
MELEE (STR)							[]
RANGED (DEX)							[]

WEAPON AND ARMOUR PROFICIENCIES

WEAPONS

WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE	TYPE	SIZE	HARD	HPS
NOTES								
WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE	TYPE	SIZE	HARD	HPS
NOTES								
WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE	TYPE	SIZE	HARD	HPS
NOTES								
WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE	TYPE	SIZE	HARD	HPS
NOTES								
WEAPON	ATK BONUS	DAMAGE	CRITICAL	RANGE	TYPE	SIZE	HARD	HPS
NOTES								

MAX RANKS = LVL +3 (2) CROSS CLASS KEY ABILITY TOTAL ABILITY RANKS MISC

APPRAISE ✓	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
BALANCE ✓★	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
BLUFF ✓	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
CLIMB ✓★	Y / N	STR	[]	[]	[]	[]
CONCENTRATION ✓	Y / N	CON	[]	[]	[]	[]
CRAFT ✓ ()	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
CRAFT ✓ ()	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
CRAFT ✓ ()	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
DECIPHER SCRIPT	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
DIPLOMACY ✓	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
DISABLE DEVICE	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
DISGUISE ✓	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
ESCAPE ARTIST ✓★	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
FORGERY ✓	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
GATHER INFORMATION ✓	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
HANDLE ANIMAL	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
HEAL ✓	Y / N	WIS	[]	[]	[]	[]
HIDE ✓★	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
INTIMIDATE ✓	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
JUMP ✓★	Y / N	STR	[]	[]	[]	[]
KNOWLEDGE ()	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
KNOWLEDGE ()	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
KNOWLEDGE ()	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
LISTEN ✓	Y / N	WIS	[]	[]	[]	[]
MOVE SILENTLY ✓★	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
OPEN LOCK	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
PERFORM ✓ ()	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
PROFESSION ()	Y / N	WIS	[]	[]	[]	[]
RIDE ✓	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
SEARCH ✓	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
SENSE MOTIVE ✓	Y / N	WIS	[]	[]	[]	[]
SLEIGHT OF HAND ★	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
SPEAK LANGUAGE	Y / N	NONE	[]	[]	[]	[]
SPELLCRAFT	Y / N	INT	[]	[]	[]	[]
SPOT ✓	Y / N	WIS	[]	[]	[]	[]
SURVIVAL ✓	Y / N	WIS	[]	[]	[]	[]
SWIM ✓★★	Y / N	STR	[]	[]	[]	[]
TUMBLE ★	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]
USE MAGIC DEVICE	Y / N	CHA	[]	[]	[]	[]
USE ROPE ✓	Y / N	DEX	[]	[]	[]	[]

✓ CAN BE USED WITH 0 RANKS. ★ ARMOUR CHECK PENALTY APPLIES. ★★ DOUBLE NORMAL ARMOUR CHECK PENALTIES APPLY.

SPELLS KNOWN

SPELL SAVE DC	LEVEL	SPELLS PER DAY	BONUS SPELLS
<input type="text"/>	0	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	1 ST	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	2 ND	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	3 RD	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	4 TH	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	5 TH	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	6 TH	<input type="text"/>	<input type="text"/>
<input type="text"/>	SPELL SAVE DC MOD		

**CHARACTER CONCEPT
BONUSES & PENALTIES**

**CAREER PATH
BONUSES & PENALTIES**

SPELLSONGS

SPELL	MODIFIERS & ATTRIBUTES	PERFORM DC

BARDIC KNOWLEDGE

TOTAL BONUS (BARD LEVEL + INT MODIFIER):

DC	TYPE
10	Common, known by at least a substantial minority of the population.
20	Uncommon but available, known only a few people in the area.
25	Obscure, known by few, hard to come by.
30	Extremely obscure, known by very few.

HENCHMEN / COHORTS / FAMILIAR

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														
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

ENEMIES, CONTACTS AND PAST ACQUAINTANCES

BACKGROUND & FURTHER NOTES

ALLIES

RESOURCES

BARDIC MUSIC

USES PER DAY:

STYLE/ART FORM:

1st stage:

1st stage:

1st stage:

2nd stage:

3rd stage:

4th stage:

5th stage:

6th stage:

7th stage:

STYLE/ART FORM:

1st stage:

1st stage:

1st stage:

2nd stage:

3rd stage:

4th stage:

5th stage:

6th stage:

7th stage:

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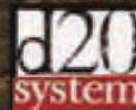
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THE QUINTESSENTIAL BARD II Advanced Tactics

There is magic in poetry and in stories, the way they can inspire people to reach towards impossible goals. Music has its own brand of magic, the manner in which it can mix a mere twelve notes and create pure emotion, talking to the heart and mind without need of words. Such is the magic of the bard, a singer of songs and teller of tales, a jack of all trades who finds his knowledge and power not in the dusty halls of a library or the obscure heritage of a strange bloodline, but in the whim of inspiration and the freedom of the roads. The diversity with which he approaches life makes him capable of tackling almost any situation, not as well as a specialist but with sufficient expertise to come out on top.

With the help of this sourcebook, any character choosing the bard class will find many alternatives and options for expanding his range of abilities. With Career Paths, bards can customise their advancement with their chosen branch of training. The Legendary Bard offers an expansion of character features that elevates the bard to epic levels and beyond. Multiclassing gives advice on to how best integrate two classes, while Superior Tools ensure that his performance is unparalleled. The Magical Bard offers a new range of magical items while Tricks of the Trade provides new rules for Spellsongs, Scores and Metamusic feats. Power Performances broadens the bardic music ability even further, opening up a large number of new art forms and styles for a bard to pursue. Finally, Survival Tactics covers how best to build a bard character for a number of different roles.

Inside You Will Find:

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|------------------------|------------------------------------|
| Career Paths | New Styles & Forms of Bardic Music |
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