

Bardic Characters

A Basic Fantasy RPG Supplement

Basic Fantasy Website: basicfantasy.org

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INTRODUCTION

This supplement describes different kinds of “Bards” to use with the Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game rule system. If you do not already have a copy of the Basic Fantasy RPG rules, please visit the website and download a copy.

DIFFERENT KINDS OF BARDS

The character archetype associated with Bards can be achieved by different methods or by associating the bardic abilities with different elements. For instance, one old-school reference utilizes bards as a combination of fighter, thief and druid elements, while a newer incarnation of a game seems to utilize bards as a hybrid of magical and roguish (thief) classes. And still some prefer a completely non-magical performer. In this supplement, we will approach the Bard archetype in a few different ways to give the Game Master and players a choice of the best method to suit their campaign and playing style.

The Basic Fantasy Community has a tradition of sharing various iterations of classes written by individuals. Each Game Master is the ultimate arbitrator of which (if any) classes or other supplemental material are used in his or her games. When there exists duplication or overlapping of such topics, there is no “right or wrong”, “official or unofficial”... as all such material is completely optional to begin with. When a supplemental option is desired in one’s game, the Game Master is strongly encouraged to choose one distinct incarnation of the topic in question and stick to it, rather than allowing multiple varieties of the same subject.



THE BFRPG BARD SONG MECHANIC

Regardless of the specific Bard option chosen, each version described here use the same game mechanics for their Bard Song ability.

Bards begin play knowing two different Bard Songs plus one additional song for each point of Intelligence Bonus. At 2nd level and each even level afterwards, the Bard receives additional song proficiency which he can use to learn an additional Bard Song or to improve his proficiency with a song already known. Song Proficiency may not be increased beyond the “maximum bonus” listed according to his level.

Listed below are the basic Bardic Songs available to Bard characters with an explanation of each song’s benefit. The player should be encouraged to come up with his or her own unique song names and perhaps even come up with some sample lyrics or melody for each. Of course, this is not necessary for actual play but may enhance the role-playing aspect of the campaign.

Songs that are played during the course of combat must be played continuously. Regardless of the Bard’s particular playing style, he may not utilize a weapon nor use a shield while playing. The Bard may move about defensively, but may not attack during a round that he is playing. If the Bard is struck in combat, the effect is immediately canceled until the Bard’s turn when he or she can resume playing, however, a Bard can choose to end a song (with flourish) so that the effect lingers one additional round. This allows the Bard to take advantage of the song effect himself on his next turn. When Bards are playing on opposing sides of a battlefield, all bonuses and penalties apply, sometimes creating a situation of a “net” bonus/penalty..

Sometimes Bards play together as a duet, quartet, etc. Each Bard must know the same songs to participate in such collective Bardic Song playing. The highest proficiency Bard forms the base bonus and adds one for each participating Bard, up to a maximum of +5 (added to the highest level Bard’s ability). However, any one Bard that is interrupted or fails to continue play will spoil the entire performance for all the Bards.

The Songs

The songs listed below are the most common sort of Bard Songs. Other more rare or unique songs may be developed over the course of play by the Game Master or intrepid players. Any new abilities should mirror the power levels shown by those listed here.

Alertness Song (rondo) – While playing this quiet tune, all allies within 10 feet are less likely to be surprised, reducing the die roll range by 1 (from 1-2 on d6 to a roll of 1 on d6). A second rank of proficiency reduces the chance further to a roll of 1 on d8, and a third rank modifies the roll to 1 on d10. Proficiency in this particular Bard Song may not be increased beyond 3 such ranks.

Battle Song, offense (march) – While playing all allies within 60 feet receive the benefit of +1 on attack rolls.

Battle Song, defense (strophic) – While playing all allies within 60 feet receive the benefit of +1 on Armor Class.

Charms Song (lullaby) – By playing lullaby, a Bard lulls those listening into a drowsy day-dreamy state. Allies are unaffected, but others have a -1 penalty on saves versus sleep, charms, illusions, suggestions and similar effects.

Funeral Song (requiem) – While playing this song, undead creatures (or vile beings from netherworld regions) are more easily turned by clerics or those with similar powers. The cleric receives a +1 to his or her Turning attempt.

Healing Rest Song (nocturne) – By playing periodically during the periods of rest, each allied character including the Bard, receives the benefit of an additional point of healing (see p.51 of core rules). A major disruption of the rest period will spoil the effect.

Laying of Hands Song (hymn) – While playing a song of divine inspiration, any divine spell casters within 60 feet receive an additional +1 point per die of healing spells.

Lock Picking Song (measures) – By this carefully timed piece, a Bard can assist in the concentration of roguish characters during attempts to Open Locks and in the Removal of Traps (but not location of such traps). The Thief gets a +5% bonus on such attempts for each rank of proficiency of the Bard. Any character with such abilities can benefit from the song's effect.

Magic Dampening Song (elegy) – When playing this tune, magical effects are easier to shrug off, granting a +1 to any saving throw versus a magical effect (typically Wands and Spells). However, this song affects all within 60 feet of the Bard; both allies and enemies equally. Only the highest proficiency Bard effect applies when multiple bards might play this song at same time.

Magic Destruction Song (crescendo) – When playing this tune, magical effects are much more destructive, granting a +1 to the effective caster level of damaging spells originating within 60 feet of the Bard, modifying spell effects such as range, damage, and/or duration. This song affects both allies and enemies equally. Only the highest proficiency Bard effect applies when multiple bards might play this song at same time. The empowered caster does not receive additional memorized spells or other level derived benefits, only increased effectiveness with their current allotment of damaging spells.

Morale Boost Song (polonaise) – While the Bard plays, allies within 60 feet have the benefit of +1 on morale or saves against fear effects.

Morale Killing Song (caprice) – While the Bard plays, any enemies within 60 feet have a penalty of -1 on morale or saves against fear effects.

Pied Piper Song (allegro) – While playing this song, natural animals (including giant varieties) are more easily befriended or calmed by druids or those with similar powers. The druid receives a +1 to his or her Animal Affinity (Turning) attempt. While the song is playing, any animal specific charm or control type spell (as determined by Game Master) has a -1 penalty to the animal's saves.

Recall Song (lament) – This calming tune aids concentration and contemplation, allowing a spell caster (including the playing Bard if applicable) to recall a previously cast 1st level spell after a period of 1 hour of meditation while the Bard plays. Neither the Bard nor the spell caster may be interrupted during this time. No one spell caster may benefit from this effect more than once per day, but multiple spell casters may benefit from the effect. Increased proficiency allows spells of higher level to be recalled (up to level 5 spells), but the spell caster may choose lower level spells if desired. Regardless, only one spell can be recalled.

Travel Song (barcarolle) – By playing a rhythmic tune during the majority of a day's traveling time, the allied group receives the benefit of +10% additional distance after all other factors are figured. Each additional level of proficiency increases this bonus by an additional +10% (up to +50% maximum).

BARD CORE CLASS

A Core Class is a distinct class like the four main classes found in the Core Rules (Fighter, Magic-User, Cleric, & Thief).

Bard (core class)

Lv	Exp. Points	Decip	Listen	Lore	Tumble	Songs (max)	Hit Dice
1	0	10	30	1	10	2 (+1)	1d6
2	1,750	14	34	5	15	3 (+1)	2d6
3	3,500	18	38	9	20	3 (+1)	3d6
4	7,000	22	42	13	25	4 (+2)	4d6
5	14,000	26	46	17	30	4 (+2)	5d6
6	28,000	30	50	21	35	5 (+2)	6d6
7	56,000	34	54	25	40	5 (+2)	7d6
8	110,000	38	58	29	45	6 (+3)	8d6
9	220,000	42	62	33	50	6 (+3)	9d6
10	330,000	45	65	36	53	7 (+3)	9d6+2
11	440,000	48	68	39	56	7 (+3)	9d6+4
12	550,000	51	71	42	59	8 (+4)	9d6+6
13	660,000	54	74	45	62	8 (+4)	9d6+8
14	770,000	57	77	48	65	9 (+4)	9d6+10
15	880,000	60	80	51	68	9 (+4)	9d6+12
16	990,000	63	83	54	69	10 (+4)	9d6+14
17	1,100,000	66	86	57	70	10 (+4)	9d6+16
18	1,210,000	69	89	60	71	11 (+5)	9d6+18
19	1,320,000	72	92	63	72	11 (+5)	9d6+20
20	1,430,000	75	95	66	73	12 (+5)	9d6+22

Bards are those who have learned history, oral tradition, music, and performance. They travel widely looking for inspiration for the next great ballad or epic poem. A Bard is a welcome addition to most adventuring crews, as he has several useful skills to assist other characters. Charisma is the bard's Prime Requisite, and one must have a minimum Charisma score of 9. Bards, being a sort of jack-of-all-trades class, can benefit from various other abilities being exceptional as well.

A Bard is a hardy individual, using d6 to determine Hit Points. A Bard uses the cleric/thief column for his attack bonus and the thief's saving throw tables, however a Bard receives a +2 bonus on any saves associated with music, dance, performance, song, or singing, whether by spell or by a creature's special ability (other Bards' songs, siren's song, pipes of pan, or similar effects). Likewise, a bard has a +2 bonus on reactions, ability checks to influence other individuals, or any ability checks associated with music, song, entertainment, etc. (up to GM to decide).

A Bard is limited to one-handed melee weapons, and may use short bows, slings, or light crossbows. The Bard is limited to light or medium armor types (leather or chain mail) and may utilize a shield. Optionally the Game Master may allow some leeway with armor options, but it is highly recommended that adjustments (penalties) be assigned for such armor use. Suggested adjustments are summarized elsewhere in this document. Of course, a Bard can utilize magical varieties of allowable weapons and armor. Otherwise, Bards utilize magical items that a thief would be able to use. Musical magic items are especially appropriate for Bards, and one can generally use such items at increased proficiency, but the Game Master may have to figure out how to "enhance" such items on a case-by-case basis.

Having strong musical background, a Bard's ear for music grants one the Thief ability to **Listen** at an equivalent level. The ability is generally used to listen at a door, or to try to listen for distant sounds in a dungeon. The Game Master must decide what noises the character might be able to hear; a successful roll does not mean that a noise has been heard, but rather that a noise might have been heard. The GM should always make this roll for the player. Also note that the Bard and his or her party must try to be quiet in order for the character to use this ability.

Bards are also very inclined to acrobatic performance and dance, allowing a Bard to **Tumble** and Evade quite well. When subjected to an area-affecting spell or similar situations, the Bard takes 1/2 damage if successful with his tumble check; 1/4 damage if the relevant Save (if any) is also successful. The tumble ability may also spare the Bard from situations such as parting shots by opponents when retreating. The Game Master may reference this ability for other such situations as he sees fit.

Because one travels widely collecting historical details, legends, and various bits of locale lore, a Bard has the ability to come up with useful information. Often this **Lore** ability allows a Bard to intuitively put together details regarding locales, notable persons, or even details about magical items. In any event, the Game Master is warned not to give out full or detailed information, but rather vague bits of lore that may or may not be entirely accurate. Information outside the milieu or other meta-game information is never made available to characters.

This collecting of information from various sources also predisposes a Bard to be able to translate or read various writings (regardless of specific language used) through comparison, deductive reasoning, and sometimes a bit of guesswork. It takes about 10 minutes to **Decipher** text consisting of a page of normal sized handwriting, whether successful or not in translating the script. The Game

Master may adjust the chance of success and time requirements for various factors such as size of texts, obscurity of language, or even penmanship.

A Bard may learn two additional languages beyond what their race and intelligence score normally allows, however these additional languages are not part of the beginning set and must be learned during the course of game play.

Bards can produce effects collectively called **Bard Songs**, that enhance other characters in various ways, usually by playing of instruments and/or singing (detailed at the beginning of this supplement).

Bardic characters have musical talent enough to play most common instruments at least marginally well, but at 1st level must declare a **Chosen Instrument** to master (stringed, bow & stringed, reed horns, brass horns, drums, accordions, or rarely keyboards, to name several but not necessarily all). The Bard requires his or her chosen instrument to produce various effects collectively called Bard Songs (detailed below). At each 5th level (5th, 10th, 15th, etc) the Bard may choose another class of instrument to master. Given time and reasonable resources, a Bards has the skills to maintain, repair, or even produce instruments he has mastery in.

Occasionally one might find a Bard character who is specialized in other forms of performance (counted as a form of Chosen Instrument) such as epic poetry, witty comedy, acrobatics, dance or other more rare displays. The Game Master may have to improvise any particulars of such characters to determine how abilities work in conjunction with these chosen specialties. It is recommended that a Bard begins play utilizing the standard types of instruments and learns these other alternate performance techniques later during the course of the campaign (if at all).

The Game Master may restrict Bards to certain races, according to his campaign and his concept of Bards. In games that are attempting to nearly duplicate the play style of certain old-school games, Bards are limited to Humans and Half-Elves.

When it is appropriate, Bards may be used to create combination-class characters, and the limitations of race would apply here as well. Sometimes a Game Master will bend the rules and allow a Human to create a character that is a Bard combo-class in specific ways in order to simulate a style of Bard found in certain old-school game editions. When such a combination-classed Bard has spell casting abilities such as a Bard Magic-User or Bard Cleric (Druid), the character has the unique ability to “play” or perform his spell casting. The magical words are incorporated into the lyrics or into the music itself and the

somatic gestures are incorporated into the playing of instruments. This allows the Bard to choose to play Bard Songs or cast as necessary without dropping his instrument. The character must still do one or the other, as casting a spell (while performing) will cease any Bard Song he might have in effect. The “playing of magic” is just as easily recognizable as any other sort of spell casting; a Bard has no special talent for hiding spell casting through his playing. It simply allows the Bard to adventure without unnecessary switching of gear round to round.

BARD AS A MAGIC-USING SUB-CLASS

A Sub-Class is a variant of one of the four main classes listed in the Basic Fantasy Role-Playing Game core rules. They exist to provide some options for players by making some character archetypes more functionally distinct. Each Sub-Class generally has more stringent prerequisites and may require different experience point progressions.

This Bard version is a sub-class of Magic-User that uses song and performance in addition to magical spells, however they rely less upon skill based abilities.

Bard (magic-user sub-class)

Lvl	Exp. Points	Spells 1 2 3 4	Lore	Decip	Songs (max)	Hit Dice
1	0	- - - -	1	10	2 (+1)	1d4
2	1,750	0 - - -	5	14	3 (+1)	2d4
3	3,500	1 - - -	9	18	3 (+1)	3d4
4	7,000	1 - - -	13	22	4 (+2)	4d4
5	14,000	2 - - -	17	26	4 (+2)	5d4
6	28,000	2 - - -	21	30	5 (+2)	6d4
7	56,000	2 1 - -	25	34	5 (+2)	7d4
8	110,000	2 1 - -	29	38	6 (+3)	8d4
9	220,000	2 2 - -	33	42	6 (+3)	9d4
10	330,000	2 2 - -	36	45	7 (+3)	9d4+1
11	440,000	2 2 1 -	39	48	7 (+3)	9d4+2
12	550,000	2 2 1 -	42	51	8 (+4)	9d4+3
13	660,000	3 2 2 -	45	54	8 (+4)	9d4+4
14	770,000	3 2 2 -	48	57	9 (+4)	9d4+5
15	880,000	3 2 2 1	51	60	9 (+4)	9d4+6
16	990,000	3 2 2 1	54	63	10 (+4)	9d4+7
17	1,100,000	3 3 2 2	57	66	10 (+4)	9d4+8
18	1,210,000	3 3 2 2	60	69	11 (+5)	9d4+9
19	1,320,000	4 3 3 2	63	72	11 (+5)	9d4+10
20	1,430,000	4 3 3 2	66	75	12 (+5)	9d4+11

Bards are those who have learned history, oral tradition, music, and performance. Each travels widely looking for inspiration for the next great ballad or epic poem. A Bard is a welcome addition to most adventuring crews, as he has several useful skills to assist other characters. Charisma is the Bard's Prime Requisite, and each must have a minimum Charisma score of 13 and an Intelligence score of 11.

Magic-Using Bards use d4 to determine Hit Points. He uses the magic-user's attack and saving throw tables, however a Bard receives a +2 bonus on any saves associated with music, dance, performance, song, or singing, whether by spell or by a creature's special ability (other Bards' songs, siren's song, pipes of pan, or similar

effects). Likewise, a bard has a +2 bonus on reactions, ability checks to influence other individuals, or any ability checks associated with music, song, entertainment, etc. (up to GM to decide).

A Magic-Using Bard is limited to a small array of weapons including dagger, short sword, mace, hammer or similar small one-handed weapons, and each may use short bows, slings, or light crossbows. A Magic-Using Bard is limited to light armor (leather), but is unable to use a shield. Of course, a Bard can utilize magical varieties of allowable weapons and armor. Otherwise, this sort of Bard utilizes magical items that a Magic-User would be able to, but may use musical magical items at increased proficiency (as determined by the GM).

A Magical Bard is substantially less inclined to larcenous behaviors and does not have thief abilities, instead supplementing his performance based abilities with magical spells. More information on spell use is detailed below.

Because one travels widely collecting historical details, legends, and various bits of locale lore, a Bard has the ability to come up with useful information. Often this **Lore** ability allows a Bard to intuitively put together details regarding locales, notable persons, or even details about magical items. In any event, the Game Master is warned not to give out full or detailed information, but rather vague bits of lore that may or may not be entirely accurate. Information outside the milieu or other meta-game information is never made available to characters.

This collecting of information from various sources also predisposes a Bard to be able to translate or read various writings (regardless of specific language used) through comparison, deductive reasoning, and sometimes a bit of guesswork. It takes about 10 minutes to **Decipher** text consisting of a page of normal sized handwriting, whether successful or not in translating the script. The Game Master may adjust the chance of success and time requirements for various factors such as size of texts, obscurity of language, or even penmanship.

A Bard may learn two additional languages beyond what their race and intelligence score normally allows, however these additional languages are not part of the beginning set and must be learned during the course of game play.

Bards can produce effects collectively called **Bard Songs**, that enhance other characters in various ways, usually by playing of instruments and/or singing (detailed at the beginning of this supplement).

Bardic characters have musical talent enough to play most common instruments at least marginally well, but at 1st level must declare a **Chosen Instrument** to master (stringed, bow & stringed, reed horns, brass horns, drums, accordions, or rarely keyboards, to name several but not necessarily all). The Bard requires his or her chosen instrument to produce various effects collectively called Bard Songs (detailed below). At each 5th level (5th, 10th, 15th, etc) the Bard may choose another class of instrument to master. Given time and reasonable resources, a Bard has the skills to maintain, repair, or even produce instruments he has mastery in.

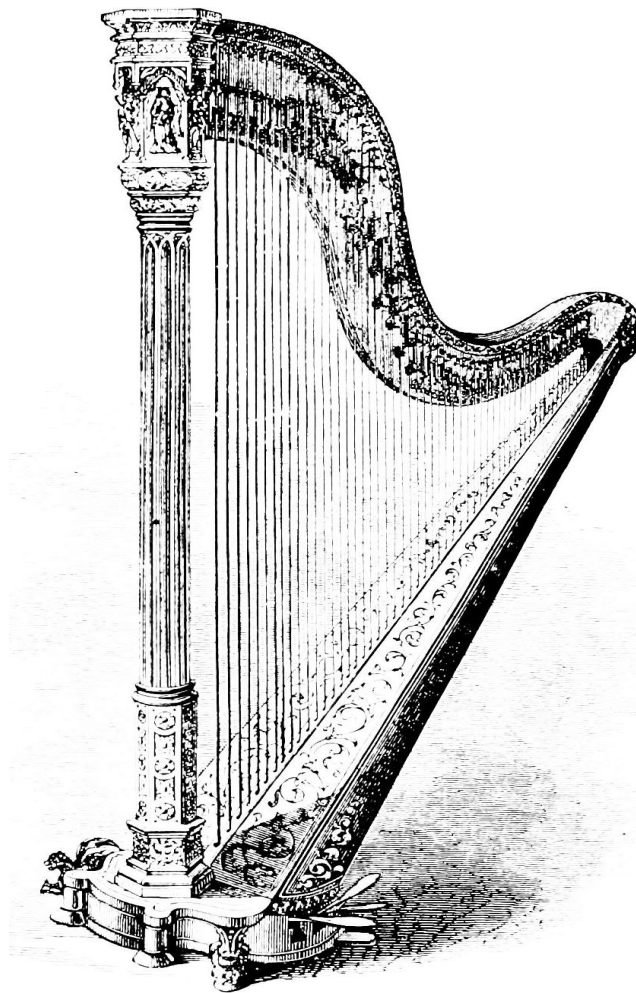
Occasionally one might find a Bard character who is specialized in other forms of performance (counted as a form of Chosen Instrument) such as epic poetry, witty comedy, acrobatics, dance or other more rare displays. The Game Master may have to improvise any particulars of such characters to determine how abilities work in conjunction with these chosen specialties. It is recommended that a Bard begins play utilizing the standard types of instruments and learns these other alternate performance techniques later during the course of the campaign (if at all).

A Magic-Using Bard can cast **Spells** in a similar fashion to a normal Magic-User. Beginning at 3rd level the Bard acquires his first spell, casting as a magic-user half his level, rounded down. For instance, a 9th level Magical Bard casts his spells as if his caster level is 4, and at 10th level his caster level would be at 5th level of ability. A Magic-Using Bard may cast spells while wearing light armor types (leather).

A Magic-Using Bard has the unique ability to “play” or perform their spell casting. The magical words are incorporated into the lyrics or into the music itself and the somatic gestures are incorporated into their playing of instruments. This allows the Bard to choose to play Bard Songs or cast as necessary without dropping his instrument. The character must still do one or the other, as casting a spell (while performing) will cease any Bard Song he might have in effect. The “playing of magic” is just as easily recognizable as any other sort of spell casting; a Bard has no special talent for hiding spell casting through his playing. It simply allows the Bard to adventure without unnecessary switching of gear round to round.

The Game Master may restrict Bards to certain races, according to his campaign and his concept of Bards. In games that are attempting to nearly duplicate the play style of certain old-school games, Bards are limited to Humans and Half-Elves.

When it is appropriate, a Magic-Using Bard may be used instead of Magic-User to create combination-class characters, and the limitations of race would apply here as well. Sometimes a Game Master will bend the rules and allow a Human to create a character that is a Bard combo-class in specific ways in order to simulate a style of Bard found in certain old-school game editions.



Bard Spells

A Magic-Using Bard casts spells just as a normal Magic-User, through the exercise of knowledge and will. Each prepares spells by study of a songbook (like a magic-user's spellbook); each Bard has his own songbook, containing the magical formulae for each spell the Bard has learned, written in a magical music-notation script that can only be read by the Bard who wrote it, or through the use of a special first-level spell: **read magic**. Like Magic-Users, a Bard begins play with **read magic** as his first spell, and it is so ingrained that the Bard can prepare it without his songbook. **Read magic** has a range of "touch" and is permanent with respect to any given magical work (songbook, spellbook or scroll).

The Bard may learn spells by being taught directly by another Bard, or by studying another Bard's songbook. The Bard may also learn appropriate spells from standard Magic-Users (or other arcane casters, if used); the spell always being at the level as it appears on the Bard Spell List. Likewise, a Magic-User may learn spells shared by the classes from a Bard. If being taught, a spell can be learned in a single day; researching another Bard's songbook takes one day per spell level. Either way, the spell learned must be transcribed into the Bard's own songbook, at a cost of 500 gp per spell level transcribed. A beginning Bard, even though at first level cannot cast yet, starts with a songbook containing read magic and at least one other first-level spell, as determined by the Game Master, at no cost. The Bard also uses this songbook to record various lyrics, musical notation, poetics and other bits of lore or information.



Spell List for Magic-Using Bards

First Level Bard Spells

1	Change Self (illusionist)
2	Charm Person
3	Detect Magic
4	Hold Portal
5	Magic Mouth
6	Read Languages
7	Sleep
8	Ventriloquism

Second Level Bard Spells

1	Analyze Magic (Libram Magica)
2	ESP
3	Invisibility
4	Knock
5	Locate Object
6	Mirror Image
7	Phantasmal Force
8	Wizard Lock

Third Level Bard Spells

1	Clairvoyance
2	Darkvision
3	Dispel Magic
4	Haste*
5	Invisibility, 10' Radius
6	Protection from Normal Missiles

Fourth Level Bard Spells

1	Charm Monster
2	Confusion
3	Massmorph
4	Polymorph Self
5	Remove Curse*
6	Wizard Eye

BARD AS A DIVINE SUB-CLASS

This Bard version is a sub-class (as described earlier) of Cleric, or more correctly a form of Druid, that uses song and performance in addition to magical spells coming primarily from the Druid spell list. This version of Bard reflects an earlier concept of the class, going back to the roots of the term “Bard” (being rather Celtic in origin).

If one wanted to forgo the Druidic connection, this version of Bard could instead be associated with Cleric by modifying the spell list with clerical spells instead (and changing allowed weapons and armor). One might call this alternate sort of Bard a Cantor, who travels the world spreading his faith by song. The clerical version of this class is not fully detailed, being mostly redundant with the information here.

Bard (cleric/druid sub-class)

Lvl	Exp. Points	Spells 1 2 3 4	Lore	Decip	Songs (max)	Hit Dice
1	0	- - - -	1	10	2 (+1)	1d6
2	1,750	0 - - -	5	14	3 (+1)	2d6
3	3,500	1 - - -	9	18	3 (+1)	3d6
4	7,000	1 - - -	13	22	4 (+2)	4d6
5	14,000	2 - - -	17	26	4 (+2)	5d6
6	28,000	2 - - -	21	30	5 (+2)	6d6
7	56,000	2 1 - -	25	34	5 (+2)	7d6
8	110,000	2 1 - -	29	38	6 (+3)	8d6
9	220,000	2 2 - -	33	42	6 (+3)	9d6
10	330,000	2 2 - -	36	45	7 (+3)	9d6+2
11	440,000	2 2 1 -	39	48	7 (+3)	9d6+4
12	550,000	2 2 1 -	42	51	8 (+4)	9d6+6
13	660,000	3 2 2 -	45	54	8 (+4)	9d6+8
14	770,000	3 2 2 -	48	57	9 (+4)	9d6+10
15	880,000	3 2 2 1	51	60	9 (+4)	9d6+12
16	990,000	3 2 2 1	54	63	10 (+4)	9d6+14
17	1,100,000	3 3 2 2	57	66	10 (+4)	9d6+16
18	1,210,000	3 3 2 2	60	69	11 (+5)	9d6+18
19	1,320,000	4 3 3 2	63	72	11 (+5)	9d6+20
20	1,430,000	4 3 3 2	66	75	12 (+5)	9d6+22

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A Druidic Bard uses d6 to determine Hit Points. He uses the cleric's attack and saving throw tables, however a Bard receives a +2 bonus on any saves associated with music, dance, performance, song, or singing, whether by spell or by a creature's special ability (other Bards' songs, siren's song, pipes of pan, or similar effects). Likewise, a bard has a +2 bonus on reactions, ability checks to influence other individuals, or any ability checks associated with music, song, entertainment, etc. (up to GM to decide). A Druidic Bard is at home in the wilderness between settlements, and is accomplished at most tasks associated with roughing it.

A Druidic Bard utilizes any one-handed melee weapon, as well as staff, sling, and shortbow. He is limited to light non-metallic armors (leather), but is able to use a wooden shield (but not primarily metal shields). Of course, a Druidic Bard can utilize magical varieties of allowable weapons and armor. Otherwise, each utilizes magical items that a Druid would be able to, but may use musical magical items at increased proficiency (as determined by the Game Master).

A Druidic Bard is substantially less inclined to larcenous behaviors and does not have thief abilities, instead supplementing his performance based abilities with magical spells of Druidic nature. More information on their spell use is detailed below.

Because one travels widely collecting historical details, legends, and various bits of locale lore, a Bard has the ability to come up with useful information. Often this **Lore** ability allows a Bard to intuitively put together details regarding locales, notable persons, or even details about magical items. In any event, the Game Master is warned not to give out full or detailed information, but rather vague bits of lore that may or may not be entirely accurate. Information outside the milieu or other meta-game information is never made available to characters.

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A Bard may learn two additional languages beyond what their race and intelligence score normally allows, however these additional languages are not part of the beginning set and must be learned during the course of game play.

Bards can produce effects collectively called **Bard Songs**, that enhance other characters in various ways, usually by playing of instruments and/or singing (detailed at the beginning of this supplement).

Bardic characters have musical talent enough to play most common instruments at least marginally well, but at 1st level must declare a **Chosen Instrument** to master (stringed, bow & stringed, reed horns, brass horns, drums, accordions, or rarely keyboards, to name several but not necessarily all). The Bard requires his or her chosen instrument to produce various effects collectively called Bard Songs (detailed below). At each 5th level (5th, 10th, 15th, etc) the Bard may choose another class of instrument to master. Given time and reasonable resources, a Bard has the skills to maintain, repair, or even produce instruments he has mastery in.

Occasionally one might find a Bard character who is specialized in other forms of performance (counted as a form of Chosen Instrument) such as epic poetry, witty comedy, acrobatics, dance or other more rare displays. The Game Master may have to improvise any particulars of such characters to determine how abilities work in conjunction with these chosen specialties. It is recommended that a Bard begins play utilizing the standard types of instruments and learns these other alternate performance techniques later during the course of the campaign (if at all).

A Druidic Bard can cast spells in a similar fashion to normal Druids (clerics). Beginning at 3rd level the Bard acquires his first spell, casting as a Druid half his level, rounded down. For instance, a 9th level Druidic Bard casts his spells as if his caster level is 4, and at 10th level his caster level would be at 5th level of ability.

A Druidic Bard has the unique ability to “play” or perform his spell casting. The divine words are incorporated into the lyrics or into the music itself and the somatic gestures are incorporated into the playing of instruments. This allows the Bard to choose to play Bard Songs or cast as necessary without dropping his instrument. The character must still do one or the other, as casting a spell (while performing) will cease any Bard Song he might have in effect. The “playing of magic” is just as easily recognizable as any other sort of spell casting; a Bard has no special talent for hiding spell casting through his playing. It simply allows the Bard to adventure without unnecessary switching of gear round to round.

The Game Master may restrict Bards to certain races, according to his campaign and his concept of Bards. In games that are attempting to nearly duplicate the play style of certain old-school games, Bards are limited to Humans and Half-Elves.

When it is appropriate, A Druidic Bard may be used instead of Cleric to create combination-class characters, and the limitations of race would apply here as well. Sometimes a Game Master will bend the rules and allow a Human to create a character that is a Bard Combo-class in specific ways in order to simulate a style of Bard found in certain old-school game editions.

Divine Bard Spells

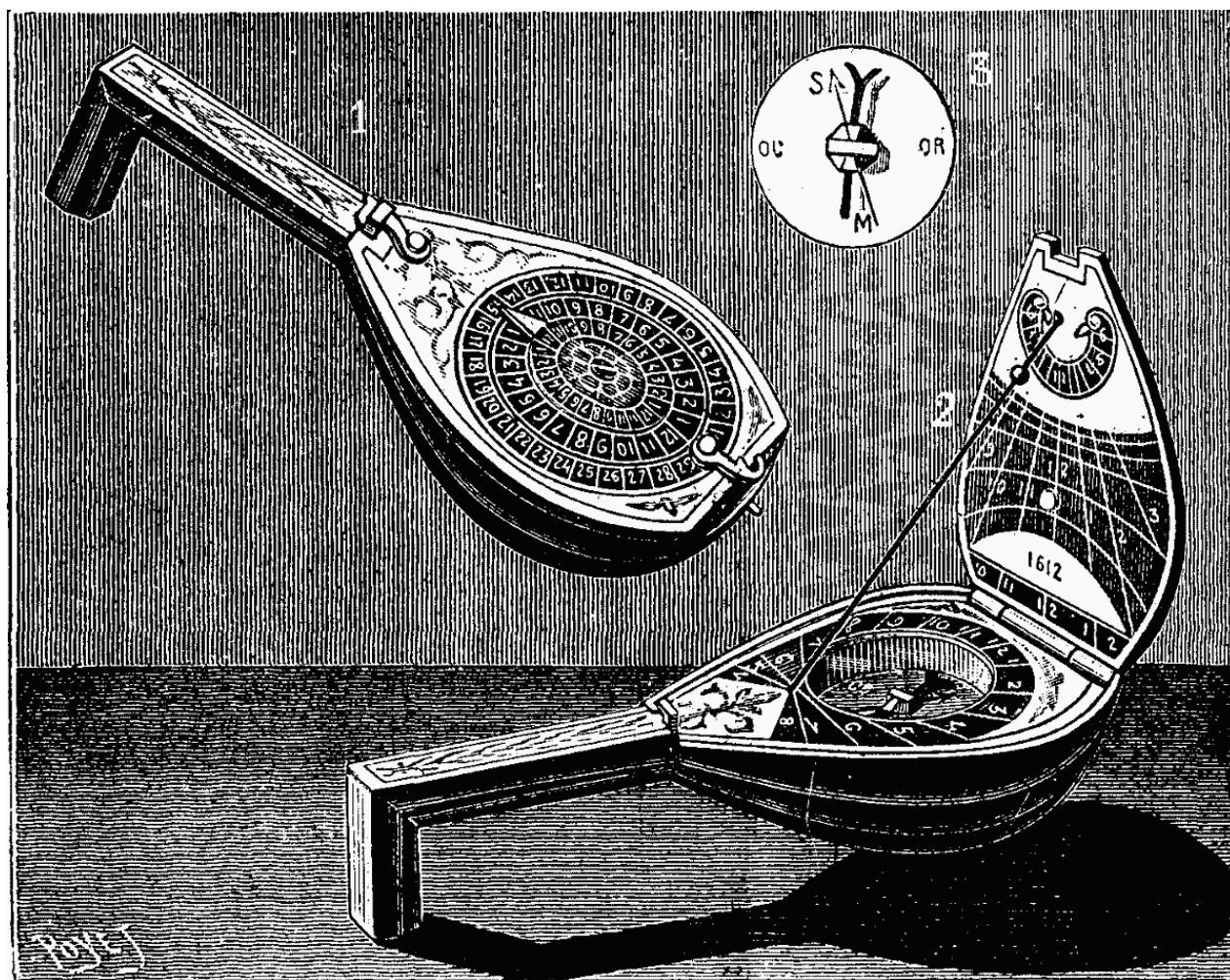
Below are listed spells available to the Divine Bards. Like Druids, such Bards receive their spells through faith and reverence (to nature, deities associated with nature, or whatever system the Game Master has developed for his campaign). Each day, generally in the morning, a Divine Bard must pray or meditate for at least three turns in order to prepare spells. Of course, the Bard may be expected to "meditate or commune with nature" more than this in order to remain in good graces for his faith.

Because he gains his spells through faith, a Divine Bard may prepare any spell of any level he or she is able to cast. Spells prepared but not used persist from day to day; only those actually cast must be replaced. A spell caster may always choose to dismiss a prepared spell (without casting it) in order to prepare a different spell of that level.

Like other spell casters, a Divine Bard must have at least one hand free, and be able to sing/speak, in order to cast spells; thus, binding and gagging a spell caster is an effective means of preventing him or her from casting spells. In combat, casting a spell usually takes the same time as making an attack. If a spell caster is attacked on the Initiative number on which he or she is casting a spell, the spell is spoiled and lost.

Some spells are reversible; such spells are shown with an asterisk after the name. The bulk of the spells below come from the standard Divine spell list (whether Druid or Clerical), and other sources are marked accordingly:

When new spells or spell from other sources might be available, the Game Master should decide whether the Divine Bard has access to such spells on a case-by-case basis. Divine Bards are not full Clerics or Druids, and should not have full access to all such spells, but spells that might have association with musical, sound, dance, etc. would be very appropriate to add.



BARDIC CHARACTERS

A BASIC FANTASY SUPPLEMENT

Spell List for Druidic Bards

First Level Bard (druidic) Spells

1	Animal Friendship
2	Create Water
3	Cure Light Wound*
4	Detect Magic
5	Detect Snares and Pits
6	Light
7	Pass without Trace
8	Purify Food and Water

Second Level Bard (druidic) Spells

1	Charm Animal
2	Find Traps
3	Message
4	Produce Flam
5	Slow Poison
6	Snake Charm
7	Speak with Animals
8	Warp Wood

Third Level Bard (druidic) Spells

1	Continual Light*
2	Cure Disease*
3	Growth of Animals
4	Hold Animals
5	Plant Growth
6	Protection from Fire

Fourth Level Bard (druidic) Spells

1	Control Temperature 10' Radius
2	Lower Water
3	Protection from Lightning
4	Speak with Plants
5	Sticks to Snakes
6	Tree Sanctuary

Spell List for Cantors (Clerical Bards)

First Level Bard (clerical) Spells

1	Cure Light Wounds*
2	Detect Evil*
3	Detect Magic
4	Light*
5	Protection from Evil*
6	Purify Food and Water
7	Remove Fear*
8	Resist Cold

Second Level Bard (clerical) Spells

1	Bless*
2	Charm Animal
3	Find Traps
4	Hold Person
5	Resist Fire
6	Silence 15' Radius
7	Speak with Animals
8	Spiritual Hammer

Third Level Bard (clerical) Spells

1	Continual Light*
2	Cure Blindness
3	Cure Disease*
4	Locate Object
5	Remove Curse*
6	Speak with Dead

Fourth Level Bard (clerical) Spells

1	Create Water
2	Cure Serious Wounds*
3	Dispel Magic
4	Neutralize Poison*
5	Protection from Evil 10' Radius
6	Sticks to Snakes

BARD AS A QUASI-CLASS

A Quasi-Class is a set of class-like options that can be layered upon another base-class in order to create additional character archetypes or types of characters that cannot be easily achieved by use of the typical class offerings. Each quasi-class has its own set of requirements and offers unique benefits in exchange for an additional experience point requirement.

Bard (quasi-class)

The quasi-class version Bard (that is closely associated with the other versions detailed here) is described in the Quasi-class supplement located in the Showcase section of the BFRPG website. I did not see the need for the duplication here.

APPENDIX A – Optional Bard Rules

Like some considerations given to other classes, some optional rules may be included with Bards as well.. These additional rules and tweaks are optional and the Game Master must decide whether or not to include the concepts in his game. This table summarizes just the bard specific functions, and a more extensive listing of all thief-like ability adjustments can be found in Appendix B.

Bard Adjustments for Ability/Armor/Race

Deciph	Listen	Lore	Tumble	Penalty or Bonuses
Int	Wis	Wis	Dex	+/- 5 per bonus
-	+10	-	+10	Armor, None
-	-	-	-	Armor, Leather
-	-20	-	-20	Armor, Chain
-	-10	-	-10	Shield (+ armor)
+5	+5	+5	-	Race, Dwarf
+5	+5	+10	-	Race, Elf
-	+5	-	+10	Race, Halfling
-	+5	+5	+5	Race, Gnome
-	+5	+5	-	Race, Half-Elf
-5	+5	-	-5	Race, Half-Orc
-10	+5	-5	-10	Race, Half-Ogre

Jesters (bard variant)

The archetype of a Jester can be achieved using the Bard class with abilities described a little differently. Listen, Tumble, Lore, and Decipher text all work as written. The Reactio/Influence bonus is generally attributed to witty

and stinging jibes (for negative reactions), comedic actions and comments (for positive reactions), and so forth. Often Jesters are much more animate than other characters, juggling, tumbling & dancing about. Bard Songs may be initiated by similar actions or by the use of a traditional Jester instrument such as pipes, or small stringed instruments. The Game Master may allow for other races to become jesters such as Gnomes, Halflings, or others, even when such races cannot become standard Bards.



Other Bard Terms:

While the general term Bard can be used universally to any of the above class variants, one can use other similar terms to differentiate the classes, especially if the Game Master utilizes more than one of the Bard types in their game. Some examples of such names or titles include: Minstrels, Troubadours, Skalds, Cantors, and Ovates, among other related options.

Any such name are generally interchangeable, but this is one way one can utilize the terms to differentiate the types of Bards that might be available in a campaign (and this is only a suggested break down):

Bard – the standard Bard as a core-class, the non-magical performer, often quite roguish in outlook.

Minstrel – the Bard as a Magic-User sub-class.

Ovate – the Bard as Druid sub-class, a non-standard and more obscure term that is technically quite accurate, coming from historical Druid/Celtic roots.

Cantor – the Bard as a true Cleric sub-class, typically a part of a clergy that prepares and performs music and some oratory portions during worship.

Bardic Quasi-Class characters might utilize any such combination mentioned above based upon the pairing of their base-class. In addition, Skald is a very likely term that might work best for Bardic-Fighters (or other warrior types).

Bear in mind that it is still suggested that the GM stick to one version of the Bard class. The suggested alternate names may still be used for variations based upon combination class or quasi-class variants in order to give further role-playing flavor.

APPENDIX B – Combined Ability Adjustments

Thief-Like Ability Adjustments

Adjustments for Ability and Armor

Penalty or Bonuses	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Remove Traps	Move Silent	Hide	Listen	Climb	Assassin Disguise	Assassin Poison	Assassin Shadow	Bard Lore	Bard Decipher	Bard Tumble	Ranger Track
+/- 5 per bonus	Dex	Dex	Int	Dex	Int	Wis	Str	Int	Int	Wis	Int	Int	Dex	Wis
Armor, None	+10	+10	+10	+10	+10	+10	+10	+10	-	-	-	-	+10	-
Armor, Leather (L)	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
Armor, Chain (M)	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-20	-	-	-	-	-20	-
Armor, Plate (H)	-40	-40	-40	-40	-40	-	-40	-40	-	-	-	-	-40	-
Shield (+ armor)	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-10	-	-	-	-	-10	-

When using Armor Supplement, L = light armor types, M = medium armor types, H = heavy armor types (or piecemeal equivalents by weights)

Core Races

Penalty or Bonuses	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Remove Traps	Move Silent	Hide	Listen	Climb	Assassin Disguise	Assassin Poison	Assassin Shadow	Bard Lore	Bard Decipher	Bard Tumble	Ranger Track
Race, Dwarf	-	+5	+5	-	-	+5	-10	-5	-	-	+5	+5	-	-
Race, Elf	-	-5	-5	+5	+5	+5	-	-	-	-	+10	+5	-	-
Race, Halfling	+5	-	-	+5	+5	+5	-15	-	-	-	-	-	+10	-
Race, Human	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-

Supplemental Races

Penalty or Bonuses	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Remove Traps	Move Silent	Hide	Listen	Climb	Assassin Disguise	Assassin Poison	Assassin Shadow	Bard Lore	Bard Decipher	Bard Tumble	Ranger Track
Race, Gnome	+5	+5	-	-	+5	+5	-5	-5	+5	-	+5	+5	+5	-
Race, Half-Elf	-	-	-	+5	+5	+5	-	-	-	-	+5	-	-	-
Race, Half-Orc	-	-	+5	-	-	+5	+5	+10	+5	-	-5	-5	-5	-
Race, Half-Ogre	-5	-5	-5	-5	-5	+5	+15	-10	-	-5	-10	-10	-10	-

New Races Supplement

Penalty or Bonuses	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Remove Traps	Move Silent	Hide	Listen	Climb	Assassin Disguise	Assassin Poison	Assassin Shadow	Bard Lore	Bard Decipher	Bard Tumble	Ranger Track
Bisren	-10	-10	-10*	-20**	-20**	-	-	-20	-	-10	-	-	-10	-
Canein	-5	-	-	-	-	+10	-	-	-	+20	-	-	-	+20
Faun	-	-	-	+5	-	+5	-5	-	-	-	+5	+5	+5	-
Kappa	-	-	-	-10 ^w	-10 ^w	-	-	-5	-	-	-	-	-5	-
Phaerim	-	-	-	+10	+10	+5	-20	-10	-	-	-	-	+5	-

* Outdoor traps such as snares and pitfalls Bisren have +10 bonus instead. ** When in indoor settings Bisren do not have penalties to Move Silent and Hide.

^w In watery areas (swamps, lakeshores, sewers, etc) Kappa have +15 bonus instead.

Monsters as Races Supplement

Penalty or Bonuses	Pick Pockets	Open Locks	Remove Traps	Move Silent	Hide	Listen	Climb	Assassin Disguise	Assassin Poison	Assassin Shadow	Bard Lore	Bard Decipher	Bard Tumble	Ranger Track
Bugbear	-	-	-	+20	+10	-	-	-10	-	+10	-10	-10	-5	+10
Caveman	-	-10	-10	+10	+10	-	+20	-	-	+10	-	-20	-	+10
Centaur	-20	-	-	-20	-20	-	-40*	-20**	-	-	+5	-	-20	-
Gnoll	-	-	-	-	-	+10	-	-10	-	+10	-5	-5	-5	+10
Goblin	-	+10	+10	-	-	-	-	-	+5	-	-	-	+5	-
Hobgoblins	-	-	+5	-	-	+5	-	-	-	+5	-	-	-	+5
Kobold	-	+5	+15	+5	+5	-	-	-10	+10	-	-	-	+10	-
Lizard Man	-10	-10	-10	-	-	-	-	-20	-	-	-5	-5	-10	-
Ogre	-20	-20	-20	-10	-10	-	+10	-20	-10	-	-20	-20	-20	-
Orc	-	-	+5	-	-	+10	+10	+5	-	-	-10	-10	-5	-
Troglodyte	-	-	-	+10	+20	-	+10	-20	-	-	-10	-10	-10	-

* Centaurs cannot climb in the traditional sense, modifier is for situations of steep slopes, navigating narrow ledges, etc. See race description.

** A Centaur can really only disguise himself as another Centaur (and penalty still applies).

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