



The Bard Major

Bard School

“Sing us a song, Kelly, sing us a song!’ Same thing every quest. Guys! I play the flute! I’ve only got one larynx!”

--Kelly de la Cittern, freshman half-elf Bard

(Player’s Handbook (2014), Xanathar’s Guide to Everything (2017))

Bard training at Sigil Prep is taught through the illustrious Storm Silverhand College of Bardic Lore and Valor. There is power in music. The more melodic, the more inspired, the more heartfelt the song, the more power it resonates. Also competence. You want your music to be competent. Understanding of meter and time signature. And freakin’ rhyming, man! “Vicious” does not rhyme with “fitness”, Fergie!

At any rate. Music is power. Of course, you need to throw in some somatic and material components, and a basic understanding of arcane magic. But after that, it’s all music.

FRESHMAN YEAR

Your first year as a Bard student will be the busiest year of your life. And you will be so damned jealous of your other friends, who aren’t in class from dawn to dinner.

Scared yet? Beyond some basic weapon courses and skill training, you must take three units of performance classes (music is preferred, but you can argue). Joining marching band or show choir, or being in a play counts.

As you enter your second semester, you must select a “college” to focus your study. This is a philosophical college, not a literal one. You’re already at a university. Do not transfer out of Sigil Prep! We need your tuition money.

As a spellcasting major, you’ll have your share of Cantrip and Spellcasting Labs, as well as a basic course in Bardic Inspiration (BRD 110). More importantly, you are required to audit at least one academic class per day (Maths, Sciences, Skill Proficiencies, History, Etc.) and have a professor sign off on it, to earn your Jack of All Trades certification. You must turn in seven signed audit approvals each week to your faculty advisor.

SOPHOMORE YEAR

In your second year, you’ll begin taking spellcasting labs from other departments to increase your diversity. You’ll also take Countercharming Theory and Practice, as well as advanced training in your Freshman year courses.

JUNIOR YEAR

Your third year will continue the advancement of your earlier training, from more developed Spellcasting Labs to highly advanced Bardic Inspiration.

SENIOR YEAR

By your senior year, you should have mastered many spells, including spells from other departments, and have mastered overall Bardic skills and practices.

When all requirements are met, the student earns the Bachelor of Arts degree, which recognizes him as a master bard anywhere ballads are sung.

Gimble Cardflapper

(Gnome Bard, junior)

Gimble's sense of humor doesn't really mesh with most people's. He's annoying. He makes terrible puns, then laughs through that giant nose of his. Puns! Not real jokes! And nine hells, sometimes it isn't even puns. He'll just say a thing and think it's hilarious, and it's really just a thing that's happening. *"Look at that guy! He's wearing green socks! Ha! Green! Can you believe that!?"*

He's best friends with Nebin Dicechucker, and they spend far too much time together, but at least most of that is spent playing card games and *Tunnels & Trolls*, and they aren't bothering the rest of us all that much.

(Gimble is based on a portrait character in the Player's Handbook (2003); property of WotC)

Colleges of Thought for Bard Students

All Bardic students must select a College of Thought to focus their studies on during their Freshman year. This will guide their education throughout the remainder of their University career.

College of Glamour

(*Unearthed Arcana- Bards: Bard Colleges* (online download, 2016), *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* (2017))

To get this degree, you have to be taught by satyrs and faeries. Our faculty is diverse, but it isn't unlimited, so you may have to take what you can get. If the Performance class you need comes down to Professor Silverhand (not a satyr) and Professor Yankovic (satyr), you may just end up playing the accordion. Tough it out.

The student's course load includes classes such as Mantle of Inspiration and Enthralling Performance, which I bet you regular Bards wish you could take. But your centerpiece program is going to be Unbreakable Majesty (BRD 710), because Majesty is important, after all.

College of Lore

(*Player's Handbook* (2014))

Bards who wish to increase their knowledge base can enroll in the College of Lore program, in which you audit every lecture class on campus each semester. By the end, you'll know a little bit about everything. But not necessarily in any meaningful way, since you audited Advanced Faerunian History during the third lecture on the Crown Wars, so you know about this one battle, but not how the war started, or ended, or exactly what it was about. Unless you get your ass to the library after twelve straight hours of auditing classes to look it up.

Bard majors already have a heavy course load. And if you take this, you can expect even more academic courses and spellcasting labs to pile on. You'll also have a semester of Sarcasm and the Use of Cutting Words (BRD 220) and Peerlessness in Bardic Inspiration (BRD 730).

College of Satire

(*Unearthed Arcana: Kits of Old* (online download, 2016))

A lot of people don't get the difference between the College of Satire, the College of Parody, and the College of Spoof. Satire is the exaggeration or ridicule of social convention or attitude to comment on the world condition. Parody is the comedic deconstruction and imitation of a creative work, to comment on that work, its genre, or its artist. Spoof is just making fun of stuff. Like Mad Magazine. Or, you know, Sigil Prep.

You will be called a fool frequently in your training for this career path. Don't take it badly; it's a compliment, we swear.

This program's requirements include additional training in thieves' tools and Sleight of Hand. You'll also need to take Tumbling for Fools and Idiot Savants, Insight for Fools, and Luck for Fools.

College of Swords

(*Unearthed Arcana: Kits of Old* (online download, 2016); *Unearthed Arcana: Revised Subclasses* (online download, 2017), *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* (2017))

Even more than the College of Valor, Bards of this school are concerned with melee combat. Two-handed fighting, impressive displays of weapons spinning aroundedness, attacking and spellcasting in the same round. Hey, Bladesinger! Just thought I'd call and say, "Checkmate, loser."

The course has gone through a couple of revisions before its current form. Cunning Flourish and Battle Magic are no longer required. You will still need to take additional scimitar training, and take some courses from the Fighter department. You'll also take several courses with the word "Flourish" in the title, because just because you're fighting hand-to-hand, doesn't mean you aren't going to be entertaining about it.

College of Valor

(*Player's Handbook* (2014))

For bards more interested in combat... WHY THE NINE HELLS ARE YOU A BARD!? What are you going to do, hit a dude with your lute? You bes' be bringin' a tuba, buddy.

This program requires considerably more armor and weapons training than your standard bardic course load. You'll also be taking Combat Applications for Bardic Inspiration, and Battle Magic Spell and Combat Lab. Bruises and scars are good for charisma, trust us.

College of Whispers

(*Unearthed Arcana- Bards: Bard Colleges* (online download, 2016), *Xanathar's Guide to Everything* (2017))

The program for exploitative bard tactics. We'll tell you all the secrets, but first we need you to do something for us. Cool? We don't actually whisper in this course. But just in case, sit close to the front.

This program includes training in adding psychic damage to your blade attacks, and hurting people's feelings with terrible words.

College of Journalism

Listen. Bardic music is a means of influence. But you know what else is highly influential? The frickin' press. The power of the print media. Don't laugh! Most of us are from worlds that don't have your fancy Twitters yet.

And trust me. You want to manipulate some berks? Hint that you agree with their core values, and they'll believe any crap you want to tell them. That's why I'm editor of the campus newspaper.

That's why I'm *going* to be editor of the *Erelhei-Cinlu Courier*. Let Maddie Weber take over the Underdark. I'm just a pen swipe away from turning public opinion against her.



I'VE GOT MY SOURCES

Beginning when you enter this college at 3rd level, you may choose Divination spells from any class whenever you select new spells known. If you choose only Divination spells when you choose spells for the Magical Secrets bard class feature, you may choose a third Divination spell.

MIGHTY PEN

Also at 3rd level, you may cast spells replacing verbal components with written components. The casting time and effect of the spell do not change. Your hands must be free to write, but you can write on any surface with any medium.

MEDIA SAVVY

Beginning at 6th level, you have advantage to Persuasion and Deception checks used to get information from someone.

HOT OFF THE PRESSES

Also at 6th level, when confronting an individual, you may slam a newspaper on a table, desk, or other surface in front of that person and declare "Well, how do you explain this?" The target must make a Wisdom saving throw (DC equal to your Bard spellcasting saving throw). If he fails, the newspaper's headline reveals a secret about the individual he would prefer not to be made public. He is unable to deny the truth about the matter. The DM decides what the secret is; it may or may not be the secret the bard is fishing for.

If the opponent's save succeeds, the headline says something unrelated and you are embarrassed for one minute.

Once you have used this ability, you must take a long rest (and buy another newspaper) before you can use it again.

A LITTLE PAYOLA

At 14th level, you may cast Divination spells you know even if you have used your spell slots of the appropriate level by giving (100 x spell level) gold pieces to a nearby non-ally and saying "What do you know?" The spell will be cast without expending a spell slot, and any information gleaned will be spoken by the recipient of the gold, even if he couldn't possibly know the information.

You have a daily "budget" of your level x 100 gp to cast Divinations in this way.

College of Show-Offs

Look, dude. A lot of people know how to juggle. Pulling the damn balls out and tossing them around whenever there's a lull in the conversation isn't going to impress anybody and... and there you go. Oh, behind the back. Whatever.

Bards in the College of Show-Offs have a number of minor skills that are impressive in a "seen it before, can't do it myself" sort of way. But they have learned to put those skills to practical use, which is better than that hacky-sack kicking hipster over there does, so good on them.

A bard of the College of Show-Offs generally keeps his hands busy by juggling, kicking a hacky-sack, rolling one of those balls around your hand, and so forth. We'd make a table, but most Show-Offs tend to change up from time to time rather than doing the same thing all the time.

JUGGLING

Your class abilities are dependent upon Juggling. For these purposes, "juggling" is any rapid, dexterous manipulation of small objects, from regular juggling, to hacky-sacks, to baton twirling, devil sticks, etc.

You may declare you are juggling when combat begins. Juggling requires concentration; if at any point you stop juggling, you must use your move action to begin again.

MASTER THROWER

Beginning when you enter the College of Show-Offs at 3rd level, harmless things you are juggling can be used as thrown (or kicked) weapons. You have proficiency with these things, and they do 1d4 (usually bludgeoning) damage plus your Dexterity bonus on a successful hit.

At 3rd level, you can make only one attack while juggling in this manner; at 6th you can make two. This increases to 3 at 9th level, 4 at 12th, 5 at 15th, and a maximum of 6 at 18th. If you miss with any attack, you cannot make any further attacks as it throws off your rhythm. You may declare you attack with six balls you are juggling, or one ball which you carefully ricochet from target to target.

If you make all attack rolls, the objects bounce back to you and you continue juggling. If you fail any attack roll, you stop juggling and must use a move action to begin again.

CATCH AND RELEASE

At 6th level, you can attempt to catch one thrown weapon or ranged weapon ammunition each round. As a reaction, roll a d20, adding your proficiency bonus and your dexterity bonus. If you roll higher than the attack roll of the item you are attempting to catch, you catch the item it becomes part of the items you are juggling. You may throw the item as part of your Master Thrower attack on a subsequent turn, for its standard damage plus your dexterity bonus, but it does not return to you afterward.

IMPRESSIVE ARRAY

At 14th level, your juggling apparati are treated as magic weapons for the purposes of overcoming resistance.

Bard Faculty

(Note that Storm Silverhand is a member of the Circle of Deans, and is presently above Department level)

Cylyria Dragonbreast [department head]

(Half-Elf Bard, Professor of Music Theory, Harp Playing)

A talented harpist, and a senior member of Faerun's fabled Harpers, Professor Dragonbreast is often melancholy, although she has fits of merriment that surprise and delight friends and students alike. She is known to be a gifted singer, but she seldom sings outside the privacy of her office. Then, that one time a year she decides to raise her voice in song, and her students cry in amazement and delight.

Regardless of her moodiness, Cylyria is sympathetic and will listen to the concerns of any student, even if they aren't in her class.

(Cylyria Dragonbreast is a figure from the Forgotten Realms campaign setting; property of WotC)

Guinevere, Queen [tenured]

(Human Bard, Professor of Classical Romanticism)

As Queen of the realm of Camelot, Professor Guinevere has a lot of firsthand knowledge of the courtly doings of the royal class, which she shares with charm and enthusiasm. A highly likeable woman, so much so that she's probably having an affair with somebody else in the faculty right now. Someone that her husband is aware of, but grudgingly ignores because it's not noble to draw attention to such things, and anyway he'll gladly forgive said person on his deathbed. She's a pretty frequent topic on the gossip circuit, to be sure.

(Queen Guinevere is a figure from Arthurian legend; introduced to D&D via Legends & Lore (1990))

Olive Rustkettle [tenured]

(Halfling Rogue, Professor of Bardic Bluffing)

Professor Rustkettle is a fairly open imposter at Sigil Prep. She won her name (and reputation) in a dice game, and since that time has been pretending to be a Bard. Since she was hired on at Sigil Prep, she's also been pretending to be a Bard Professor, although she's mostly teaching how to keep up a bluff indefinitely.

Regardless, she's a good performer, and teaches several Performance classes in a number of instruments. She just doesn't produce any magic with it.

(Olive Rustkettle is a character from the Finder's Stone series of novels; property of WotC)

Jessareen

(Athasian Elf Bard, Professor of Journalism)

It may seem odd that one of Sigil Prep's most popular journalism professors is from the paper-scarce plane of Athas, but Professor Jessareen takes her craft to an extreme level, able to memorize volumes of current events and bringing the news from town to town. She expects no less of her students, and part of the final in her senior level class is to memorize an entire edition of the Sigil newspaper, SIGIS, and recite portions on command. She is also very socially conscious, and hippie do-gooder student Rhionna Hazelhawk is often quoted as saying she'd totally have a crush on Professor

Jessareen if Rhionna was into girls. Which she's not. But she supports your right to be. (Maybe after a couple of drinks).

(Jessareen is a character from the Dark Sun supplement, City by the Silt Sea (1994); property of WotC)

Giff Rapelje

(Gnome Bard, Professor of Creative Non-Fiction)

Professor Rapelje is the editor and head journalist of *Rope and Piton*, the newsletter of Eberron's Wayfarer Foundation. He is one of the most read travel writers on Eberron, and possibly in the planes. He seems very verbose when lecturing, especially on topics he's interested in, and he reads each students' papers as if they were engaging novels. But in one-on-one conversation, he's rather reserved. "Professor, if I'm writing a first-person narrative, and I need to get across a point that's important to the story, but to which I wasn't personally witness, should I comment on how I learned this information, or just leave it implicit that I came across the knowledge at some later point?" To which he'll reply, "Mm. Depends."

(Giff Rapelje is a character from the Eberron supplement, Explorer's Handbook (2005))

Suni

(Half-Elf Bard, Professor of Theater Arts)

Although she was hoping for a more prestigious job with the Bard department, to escape the rigors of Athas, Professor Suni accepted a job teaching theatrical arts (and putting on two plays a year). Frustratingly, she's most often assigned to direct shows for the Monster School and has to teach manticores and mind flayers how human interaction works long enough to get through *Romeo and Juliet*. Somehow, they never seem to have a problem with *Hamlet*...

(Suni is a character from a short story in the Dark Sun supplement, The Ivory Triangle (1993); property of WotC)

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