

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.

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 courseload 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; 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.

NEW BARD COLLEGE:

College of Jongleuric 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 Jongleuric 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 Jongleuric 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 Jongleuric Show-Offs tend to change up now and then 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 Jongleuric 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. Even if the object is normally usable as a thrown weapon, when using it with this ability, it does 1d4 damage (although it can do slashing or piercing damage if appropriate).

At 3rd level, you can make only one attack while juggling in this manner; at 6th you can make two attacks with one action. This increases to 3 attacks 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 and 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. They now do d6 damage.

NEW BARD COLLEGE:

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 “budget” of your level x 100 gp to cast Divinations in this way. This budget only determines how much you can spend to cast spells in this manner; it does not create money, so you must have the needed gold on hand to use this ability. Once you have spent that budget, you cannot use this ability until after a long rest.

NEW BARD COLLEGE:

College of Poisons

In most worlds, Bards are thought of as carefree wandering minstrels or passionate entertainers. On the world of Athas, they are deadly assassins who have mastered the use of poison. But they still carry lutes, because lutes are pretty sweet.

The DM should give you inspiration for singing songs from 80s hair band Poison when you cast your spell, but I can’t make him do that.

I SPENT THE LAST FEW YEARS BUILDING UP AN IMMUNITY

At 3rd level and beyond, you always have advantage to saving throws against poisons. Further, you may select one poison to which you are completely immune. You may select another poison at 6th, 9th, 12th, 15th, and 18th levels.

TOXIC COOKBOOK

At 3rd level, choose a poison from the *DMG*. You have notes on that poison in a book of poison recipes, and may concoct a dose for half its listed cost. Each time you gain a level, you may add another poison recipe to your book, selected from the *DMG*, any poison you have been exposed to, or another source approved by the DM.

You may brew one poison per week during downtime.

TOXIC PURGE

Starting at 6th level, you may end the poisoned condition on yourself or another individual by spending an action. It's not a pretty purging, but it's non-magical. The person you are purging the poison from suffers 1d6 necrotic damage, from either bloodletting, forcing them to vomit, or cutting off bloodflow to or from an injury.

NATURALLY NOXIOUS

By 14th level, you have exposed yourself to so much poison, you're just naturally toxic. Any creature that hits you with a bite attack must make a Constitution saving throw (DC equal to your spellcasting DC) or become poisoned for 1d6 rounds.