

The
Arcana Check
presents

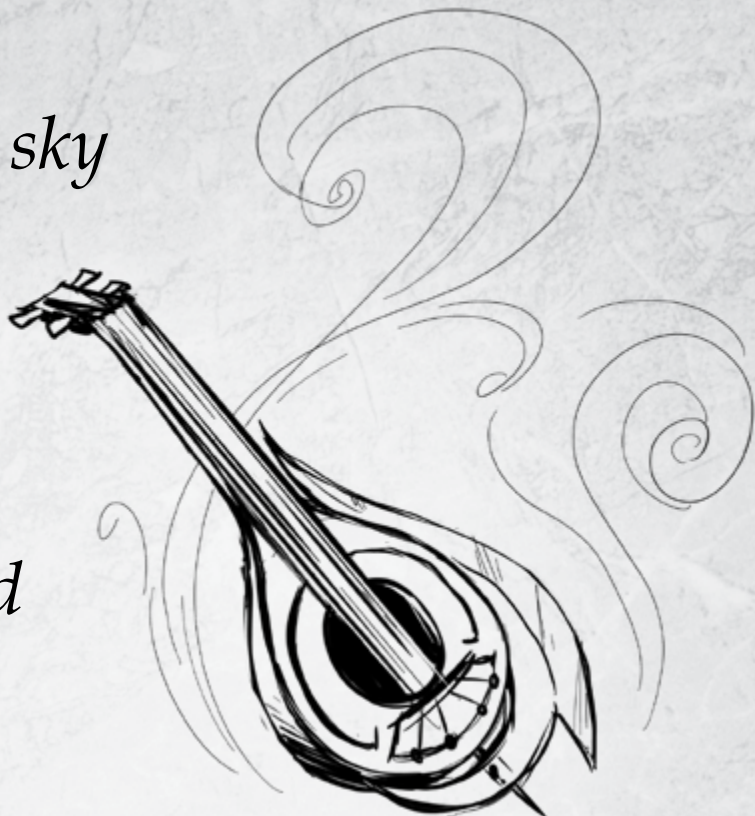
POWER CHORD: KILL

BARDIC SONGS FOR D&D 5E
&
THE COLLEGE OF METAL



*Tonight we strike
There is thunder in the sky
Together we'll fight
some of us will die
But they'll always
remember
that we made a stand
And many will die
by my hand*

-From "Hand Of Doom," by Manowar



Power Chord: Kill

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A deranged dwarf sings out a death growl and thrashes his head as he cleaves his way through yet another goblin. A half-elf starts a rhythmic chantey while the grain silo burns; it's out of place and startling, but it helps the line of fire-fighters find their pace as they pass pails toward the flames.

One of the iconic abilities of the bard from older editions of Dungeons & Dragons was the class's ability to create effects in combat via song and story. This was replaced with 5th editions' Bardic Inspiration (See *Player's Handbook*, pg.53.), which is a unique and fun mechanic that created a very different texture from the bard of previous editions.

Bardic Songs, which this document introduces, are special spells that a bard can cast and maintain concentration on. They take their mechanical inspiration from the bard class in D&D 3.5, but create new uses of the Bardic Inspiration mechanic, depending on which song the bard is singing.

And the subclass that you'll find for bards at the end of the document, the College of Metal, explores the bard as a vicious melee combatant whose regard for their own well-being is non-existent as they shred their way through battlefields and make use of this new mechanic.

BARDIC SONGS

Bardic Songs are unique spells that can only be cast with bard spell slots; they all require concentration, but have a special condition: whenever a Constitution saving throw is called for to maintain concentration on a Bardic Song, the bard may spend 1 Bardic Inspiration die and add it to the check (See Bardic Inspiration Dice by Level, below.).

Bardic Inspiration Dice by Level

Level	Bardic Inspiration Die
1-4	d6
5-9	d8
10-14	d10
15+	d12

The bard's Performance skill modifier is added to all Constitution saving throws to maintain concentration on Bardic Songs. Creatures that are immune to charm effects are unaffected by Bardic Songs.

The bard casts these spells using their voice or musical instrument as a spellcasting focus. The power of the spell can be interrupted by afflicting the bard with silence; deaf or deafened creatures cannot hear the Bardic Song and thus are unaffected. A bard who can communicate telepathically can bypass deafening effects, but not silencing effects.

SONG OF COURAGE

1st-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Through song, poetry, or stirring words, a bard can bring a surreal and ethereal but stirring vigor to the battlefield, or to other deeply trying events.

Frightened or charmed allies who can hear you can immediately make a

Constitution saving throw to end their frightened or charmed conditions, and can make an additional Constitution saving throw against these conditions at the start of the bard's turn. Allies who have successfully ended their frightened or charmed conditions in this manner cannot be subjected to charmed or frightened conditions from that source again while they can hear the *song of courage*.

When the song ends, or if the bard expends a Bardic Inspiration die for any reason, allies who heard the *song of courage* become inspired and gain half of the bard's proficiency bonus to their attack rolls.

MORNING MOOD ETUDE IN G

1st-level transmutation

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 5 minutes

A bard's regular warmup takes on a magic of its own, and when done properly, it leaves a bard with a more flexible array of powers than they might normally have had.

Immediately after finishing a long rest, the bard runs through a set of arpeggios, warming up for the day and gaining 2 additional Bardic Inspiration dice, which persist until the bard either expends them or takes another long rest. This spell may only be cast within 30 minutes of finishing a long rest.

Additionally, your allies within range who can hear the song gain 1 point of inspiration (the non-bardic kind), if they didn't already have one. If your game does not use the inspiration system or has altered the inspiration system, allies who

hear you gain advantage on their next ability check or attack roll; this effect can be used any time during that day, until the next long rest when the effect dissipates.

Casting this spell at 2nd level or higher, gives the bard 2 additional Bardic Inspiration dice for each level of the spell slot used above the 1st.

FASCINATE

1st-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Creatures within range that can see or hear the bard's performance must make a contested Wisdom (Insight) check versus the bard's Charisma (Performance) check. If they fail, they are fascinated, unable to move or take any action except for a reaction while the spell lasts. A creature that is not affected by *fascinate* can use an action to snap someone out of the effect, but will generally only do so if they have reason to suspect the bard is up to something other than an innocent performance.

If a creature must make a Wisdom (Perception) check while affected by *fascinate*, they do so at disadvantage.

Any hostile action or clear and present danger will snap fascinated creatures out of the spell's effect, allowing them to act normally.

Creatures that pass the check realize they are being magically manipulated, and will react according to the situation, since magical entertainment is not necessarily malicious: performing magically for a tavern might cause a seedy barkeep to try to hire you. Doing the same for a king whose head guard or trusted advisor

passes the check might result in your arrest.

INSPIRE COMPETENCE

2nd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

The words and music of a skilled bard can bring up wells of untapped talent in their listeners and sharpen the minds of those who must think and act quickly. The listener might believe they have heard hidden advice in the words or the music, or that the gods have reached down to help, but the bard is simply bringing up much-needed qualities that had always been there, sleeping and untapped.

Allies within range who can hear the bard and that the bard can see can treat 1 skill they are not proficient in as if they were proficient. If that ally has disadvantage on an ability or skill check, they may also add the bard's Charisma (Performance) proficiency modifier to the result of the check instead of their normal modifier.

In addition, the bard can choose to spend 1 Bardic Inspiration die as normal on a single ally within range who can hear this song. When expending and rolling Bardic Inspiration die to maintain concentration on this song, a listening ally within range that you choose and that you can see can add that die to their roll on top of your Charisma (Performance) proficiency modifier, and will also have advantage on the roll.

When the song ends, the effect persists for 6 more seconds, or 1 round of combat.

COUNTERSONG

2nd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Requirement: College of Lore

A bard from the College of Lore (See *Player's Handbook*, pg. 54.) can draw on their knowledge of the arcane and divine arts to understand which verbal components of a spell they can disturb with a well-placed note, a specific tone, or certain combinations of words.

While concentration is maintained on this spell, enemies within range that can hear the bard must make a Charisma saving throw against the bard's spell save DC when they attempt to cast spells with verbal components. If the save fails, their verbal components are confounded by the bard's use of rhythm, magic, and poetry, and their spell fails and has no effect.

Additionally, while the bard maintains concentration on this spell, whenever damage is directly caused by sound (such as through thunder damage or the cantrip *vicious mockery*), the bard can expend and roll 1 Bardic Inspiration die. The result is added to the bard's Charisma modifier, and this total is subtracted from the damage dealt by this spell to any ally within range who can hear the bard.

HEROIC TRAGEDY

3rd-level abjuration

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

In story, poetry, and song, bards often tell of heroes who overcame the worst obstacles imaginable. Particularly skilled bards can weave magic into these tales, imparting the power of the spirits of these ancient heroes into their allies.

When allies within range that can hear the bard make a saving throw against a spell or an effect, the bard also rolls a Charisma (Performance) skill check. After rolling the check, but before learning the result of the check, the bard's ally can choose the Performance check or their saving throw.

When the song ends, allies add half of your proficiency bonus to their next saving throw made within 1 turn of the song ending.

INSPIRE GREATNESS

2nd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Requirement: College of Glamour

The College of Glamour (See *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, pg. 14.) teaches bards to impart their own greatness unto those around them.

Allies within range that can hear the bard's performance can roll 2 of their Hit Dice and immediately gain the result as temporary hit points. Allies may repeat this process every turn after the first if they wish, as long as they remain within range and are able to hear the Bardic Song.

While maintaining concentration on this spell, any Bardic Inspiration die the bard expends and rolls will also heal 1 ally of the bard's choosing who is in range and can hear the bard for twice the amount rolled plus twice the bard's Charisma modifier. When casting this spell at higher levels, the bard can add 1 Bardic Inspiration Die per additional level past the 2nd level to this roll without expending any additional Bardic Inspiration dice.

Temporary hit points remaining when the song ends last until the end of the bard's next turn.

SKALD'S SONG

2nd-level divination

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Requirement: College of Valor

Bards of the College of Valor have mastered the art of bringing song to battle, and when they do so, their allies are stirred to fight with a grace and vigor that transcends their normal training, imparting a combat prowess that can turn even the simplest commoners into effective combatants.

Allies that can hear your performance may make attack rolls with your Charisma (Performance) proficiency modifier instead of their normal attack modifier.

Crescendo. When you use a Bardic Inspiration die for any reason during this spell, you or an ally of your choice within range who can hear you may make 1 weapon attack or cast 1 cantrip immediately against an enemy who is in range as a reaction.

UNCEASING MOCKERY

3rd-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Requirement: College of Swords

A common riddle goes:

Question: How can you tell when a bard is from the college of swords?

Answer: You'll be so angry that you can't.

Bards from the College of Swords (See *Xanathar's Guide to Everything*, pg. 15.) are capable of lacing a magical song with jibes and infuriating insinuations that make it magically difficult to focus on the bard, and painful to fail to inflict harm on them.

Enemies within range that can hear the bard have disadvantage when they make weapon attacks against the bard, and take psychic damage when they miss any attack on the bard (or when the bard saves versus an ability or skill where there is no effect on a passed save). The psychic damage inflicted on enemies is equal to one roll of the bard's Bardic Inspiration dice (but does not expend one). When this spell is cast at 4th level or higher, enemies affected take 1 additional die of psychic damage per additional level past the 4th on each missed attack.

When the bard expends and rolls a Bardic Inspiration die for any reason while this spell is active, they may choose 1 enemy within range who can hear them. This enemy must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw or suffer the effects of the cantrip *vicious mockery*, even if the bard has not learned that cantrip. The Bardic Inspiration die's result is added to the damage.

DIRGE

5th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Requirement: College of Whispers

The *dirge*, unique to the College of Whispers, is often mistaken for a minor-key variant of some other Bardic Song, but its effects are both subtle and disastrous on the bard's targets.

While concentration is maintained on this spell, enemies that can hear the bard have disadvantage on saving throws against the spells and abilities of the bard and their allies. Additionally, affected enemies' armor class is reduced by half of their Charisma modifier.

Enemies who make a successful Wisdom (Insight) check versus the bard's spell save DC at the start of their turn realize they have been weakened. Upon realizing that they've been weakened, the effect ends.

When the bard expends and rolls a Bardic Inspiration die for any reason while this spell is active, they may choose 1 enemy within range who can hear them. That enemy must succeed on a Wisdom saving throw against the result of that Bardic Inspiration die roll plus the bard's spell save DC, or become frightened of the bard until the end of its next turn.

Creatures that are frightened of the bard while the *dirge* is active are vulnerable to the bard's psychic damage.

COLLEGE OF METAL

Some bards live hard and die young. Bards of the College of Metal are fearsome warriors who can make terrifying and inspiring music manifest from their massive axes, which they use to dive into fights far above their weight levels. Bards from the College of Metal fight for truth and justice wherever these things are lacking, though they have a reputation as trouble makers as they generally disregard the power of authority figures.

BONUS PROFICIENCIES

The bard gains proficiency with great axes, which can also be used as a musical instrument and a spell-casting focus.

FIGHTING STYLE

The bard gains Great Weapon Fighting (See *Player's Handbook*, pg. 72, 84.). When you roll a 1 or 2 on a damage die for an attack you make with a melee weapon that you are wielding with two hands, you can reroll the die and must use the new roll, even if the new roll is a 1 or a 2. The weapon must have the two-handed or versatile property for you to gain this benefit.

BATTLE MOSH

The bard can expend 1 Bardic Inspiration die to make 1 melee weapon attack against every creature in range, making distinct attack rolls for each creature in range. The result of this Bardic Inspiration die is added to both the attack and damage roll.

SHRED

Starting at 6th level, successful melee attacks against creatures with a higher armor class than the bard's deal 1 additional damage die per 3 points of armor class higher than the bard's.

HEADBANGER

Starting at 6th level, when maintaining concentration on a Bardic Song, the bard may make 1 melee weapon attack with their bonus action. Whenever the bard is forced to roll to maintain concentration on a Bardic Song, they may make 1 melee attack against any 1 creature in range. If the attack hits, the bard maintains concentration regardless of whether or not the concentration roll was successful.

DISTURBED

Starting at 14th level, the bard can become an avatar of Metal, causing their own attacks to hit harder, and allowing them to defy death itself. This effect lasts for 1 minute.

The bard's armor class drops to zero, maximizing the damage potential of their Shred ability.

While using Disturbed, the bard cannot fall unconscious, but must make death saving throws as normal at zero hit points.

If the effect ends while the bard has zero hit points, the bard falls unconscious.

If the bard dies while this ability is in effect, their body continues to fight under its players' control while the effect lasts; once the effect ends, the bard dies.

This ability may be used once per day.

DEATH METAL

1st-level evocation

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Requirement: College of Metal, Great Axe

The bard goes wild with their axe, playing a secret song known only to the College of Metal.

Enemies that can hear the bard's song

take 1d6 thunder damage at the start of the bard's turns. When this spell is cast at 2nd level or higher, the damage increases by 1d6 for each level of the spell slot expended above the 1st.

If the bard rolls a Bardic Inspiration die while this song is in effect, the number rolled is added to the damage enemies take at the start of the bard's next turn. When the song ends, enemies in range that can hear the bard take the spell's damage again (minus any bardic inspiration dice expended) and must make a constitution saving throw against the bard's spell save DC or be knocked prone.

POWER CHORD: KILL

9th-level enchantment

Casting Time: 1 bonus action

Range: 60 feet

Components: V, M

Duration: Concentration, up to 3 minutes

Requirement: College of Metal, *power word: kill*

Lacing the words of Power Word: Kill into a bardic performance can have devastating effects, though the bard's magic fundamentally changes the way the spell works.

Enemies that can hear the bard have their armor class and saving throws reduced by the bard's Performance skill.

When the bard spends a Bardic Inspiration die for any reason while playing this song, a creature of the bard's choice that is in range can hear the bard must pass a Wisdom saving throw or die immediately.

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Power Chord: Kill

VERSION 1.0.0

The Arcana Check uses Semantic Versioning, which has 3 numbers separated by a period. The numbers can be read as: Major.Minor.Patch

Major. A change that alters the entire concept of a document, such as removing or completely changing a feature. First releases begin as 1.0.0.

Minor. A change that adds something about a hack, such as swapping a spell in a spell list, changing the damage of an ability, or adding a new feature.

Patch. A change that addresses typos and exploitable features.

1.0.0 - Feb. 2019 - initial release.