

Rite Publishing Presents

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PATHWAYS



ΚΛΑΥΔΙΑ ΒΥΛΑΝΤΟΒÁ



Captains
Joshua Root
Jacqueline Shanks



**A TREE THAT RIVALS MOUNTAINS!
FEATURES: HISTORY AND ECOLOGY OF THE TREE
NEW RACE OF BOTANICALLY AUGMENTED TRIBAL WOMEN**

World Tree

Kim Frandsen
Ken Pawlik
Tina Porter



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Editorial

by Dave Paul, Illustration by Klaudia Bulantová

Johannes Kepler had a theory about music, motion, and the planets. It wasn't entirely a new idea, he was aware that there had been some Greek thinkers, two thousand years before his time, who had similar ideas. Nevertheless, he was confident about this and worked on a book explaining his ideas. He appears to have concluded that after thousands of years of attempts, human beings had finally hit upon the true motion of the planets (that they moved in ellipses) and that these motions produced heavenly sounds that were pleasing to God. All of this made sense to Kepler who thought of God as a divine and amazing geometer and, as would be befitting to his conception of the deity, an inspiring and sublime musician.

Pythagoras and Ptolemy at their own times in the ancient world had arrived at similar ideas, but as their descriptions of the geometry of the universe were off, their conclusions about the harmonies produced by the moving heavenly bodies must also be off. Or, at least, so reasoned the great mathematician and thinker Kepler.

I bring all this up for a few reasons. First, human beings have, as far as I know, always been interested in music and deities. We've known for quite some time that motion can produce music and, not knowing what else to attribute to the motion of such things as the sun, moon, and stars, and equivocating on the term "the heavens," it frankly makes sense that our predecessors would have arrived at these kinds of ideas.

And, all of this stuff makes perfect sense in an RPG world. After all, in an RPG world there are multiple planes of existence, magic is real, creatures can function even if they've died, the dead return, and all manner of other beautiful and creepy things

happen. So, in such a world, why *shouldn't* the planets make music as they move? Why *shouldn't* there be sublime and beautiful harmonies produced by the turning of celestial wheels?

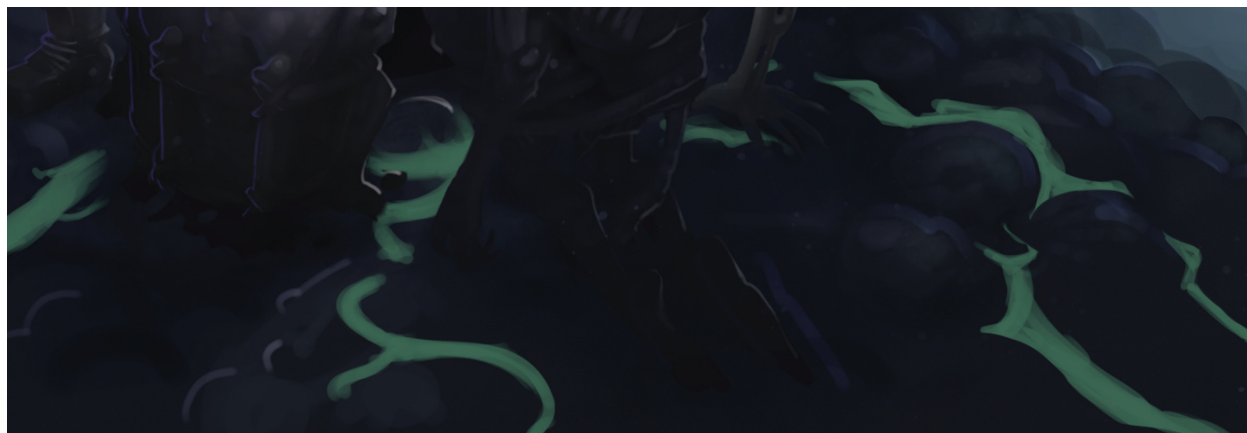
In this month's issue we feature music of all kinds. Lj Stephens offers a fantastic assortment of music-themed occult rituals for those who are using *Occult Adventures*, Mike Welham peels back the layers between worlds and shows us what can happen when music meets aberration, and I've unearthed some spells from my earlier environment spells books that happen to fit nicely with the musical theme.

There are many other considerations regarding the overlap of music and RPGs. For instance, I know many GMs and players who go to great lengths to choose music for encounters, adventures, and even themes for characters. I think this could be a great addition to the experience of the game. Many great films have songs or music types that serve as themes for characters. (Not just *Star Wars* but also films like *Lethal Weapon* feature character-oriented music.) Have you considered what music types best fit some of your characters?

A couple years ago, six friends of mine and I all rolled up bards and bought tickets for the same GenCon event. The GM couldn't believe it when he found out that his seven players all knew each other, and all created bards (with different instruments, and with the theme that we were all members of a band). He totally played along and made choices during play to allow this feature of our characters to be part of our experience at the table.

I'd love to hear from you about your experiences at the intersection of music and Pathfinder.

Happy gaming.



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Maestrolich Creature Template

by Owen K.C. Stephens, Illustration by Klaudia Bulantová

While some creatures seek the state of lichdom to extend their own existence, some move to reach a state of powerful undeath purely for their art. These crazed seekers of some dread truth wish to understand death and undeath, not to extend their own power, or to gain years of time to research, or to seek wealth, but as the only way to truly understand those horrors well enough to create art that expresses the true nature of these fell powers. While this is most often the case with evil bards and skalds, anyone willing to sacrifice everything for their art has the dedication, or more accurately, the obsession, to continue to make more and more dreadful art, until they woo undeath itself, and accept that unholy condition's embrace ... in the name of music and art.

The quest to become a maestrolich is a lengthy one. While construction of a masterwork piece of music that perfectly exemplifies the idea of undeath is a critical component, a prospective maestrolich must also learn the secrets of the arts that most appeal to the dead. What music and form can be drawn forth from the agony and death rattles of the tortured and dying? What noises can move even the undead, and the gods and the demons that rule over them? The exact methods for each master artist's transformation are left to the GM's discretion, but should involve expenditures of tens of thousands of gold pieces, numerous deadly artist explorations, and a large number of difficult skill checks over the course of months, years, or decades.

Creating a Maestrolich Creature

Maestrolich is an acquired template that can be added to any living creature (referred to hereafter as the base creature), provided it can create the required masterwork of undeath-defining art. A maestrolich retains all the base creature's statistics and special abilities except as noted here.

CR: Same as the base creature + 2.

Alignment: Any evil. Sometimes nonevil creatures take the first steps down the path to maestrolichdom, but the horrors that must be willfully committed to complete the transformation ensure anyone who reaches this state is evil.

Type: The creature's type changes to undead. Do not recalculate BAB, saves, or skill ranks.

Senses: A maestrolich's refined hearing grants it blindsight 60 ft.

Armor Class: A maestrolich has a natural armor bonus equal to half its HD, or the base creature's natural armor bonus, whichever is better.

Hit Dice: Change all of the creature's racial Hit Dice to d8s. All Hit Dice derived from class levels remain unchanged. As undead, maestroliches use their Charisma modifiers to determine bonus hit points (instead of Constitution).

Defensive Abilities: A maestrolich gains channel resistance +4, DR/- equal to one-third its HD, and immunity to gaze attacks, sonic damage, and effects depending on auditory or visual components

unless such effects are created by a creature with a number of ranks in Perform 4 or more higher than the maestrolich's HD.

Skills: The maestrolich gains ranks in all forms of Perform equal to its HD, but can only use these to create macabre art that focuses on despair, pain, torture, death, and undeath. If it gains a boost to any Perform skill from feats or class features, these also apply to all forms of Perform.

Special Abilities

A maestrolich gains the following special abilities:

Artistic Immortality (Su): A maestrolich leaves a small part of itself in every work of art it creates, and as a result is not destroyed when dropped to 0 or fewer hit points. Instead the maestrolich's physical form falls inert and becomes colorless, and all materials the maestrolich carried disappear. Within 2 hours, a new body is created adjacent to the nearest copy of the maestrolich's masterwork exemplifying death and undeath that allowed it to become a maestrolich. This new body may take visual or audible cues from the nature of that masterwork art, and has all the possessions the maestrolich had at the time of its previous body's destruction.

Similarly, if its last copy of its masterwork exemplifying death and undeath is destroyed, a copy of it reforms within an hour adjacent to



the maestrollich. The only way to permanently destroy either is to destroy both within an hour of one another.

Deadly Artistry (Su): Any spell or effect of a maestrollich that targets creatures of a specific type, but not undead, can also target undead. Undead so targeted take the full effects of the spell or effect, even if they would normally be immune. For example, a maestrollich can cast *charm person* on an undead. If the undead fails its save, it is then charmed despite undeads' normal immunity to charm. If the spell or effect would normally allow a Fortitude save, an undead target instead receives a Will save. Such spells and effects always allow a saving throw when applied to undead, even if the spell of effect does not normally do so. If the effect is not a spell, the save is equal to $10 + 1/2$ the maestrollich's HD or caster level (whichever is higher), + the maestrollich's Charisma bonus. If such a spell or effect would normally restore a dead target to life, it can instead restore a destroyed undead to its undead state prior to destruction. Additionally, any spell or effect of a maestrollich that would normally provide bonuses to Constitution scores or checks, instead provides the same bonuses to Charisma scores and effects when applied to undead.

Corpse Cacophony (Su): All maestrolliches are capable of playing the dread sounds of death in arrangements drawn from musical theory, though living creatures do not always recognize the end result as "music." These horrific dirges can create magical effects. A maestrollich can use this ability for a number of rounds per day equal to $4 + 2$ per HD + its Charisma modifier. Each round, the maestrollich can produce any one of the types of corpse cacophony that it has mastered, as indicated by its HD.

Starting a corpse cacophony is a standard action, but it can be maintained each round as a free action. Changing a corpse cacophony from one effect to another requires the maestrollich to stop the previous performance and start a new one as a standard action. A corpse cacophony cannot be disrupted, but it ends immediately if the maestrollich is prevented from taking a free action to maintain it each round. A maestrollich cannot normally have more than one corpse cacophony in effect at one time (but see instruments of agony, below).

A maestrollich of 7 or more HD can start a bardic performance as a move action instead of a standard

action. A maestrollich of 13 or more HD can start a bardic performance as a swift action.

Each corpse cacophony has audible components, visual components, or both.

If a corpse cacophony has audible components, the targets must be able to hear the maestrollich for the performance to have any effect. If a corpse cacophony has a visual component, the targets must have line of sight to the maestrollich for the cacophony to have any effect. Unlike bardic performance, a maestrollich does not suffer any risk of failing at a corpse cacophony while deaf or blind – the horrid sounds and movements are an inherent part of the maestrollich which it never gets wrong.

A maestrollich with the bardic performance or raging song class features (or both) combines the rounds of those abilities with the rounds of corpse cacophony it can use each day, and can use any of these rounds to power any of these abilities. In essence, it treats all these abilities as an extended version of corpse cacophony, though only one of these abilities can be active at a time, taking an action to activate. Additionally, any feat that augments, modifies, or interacts with bardic performance can be used to instead augment, modify, or interact with corpse cacophony.

Any corpse cacophony that calls for a saving throw has a save DC of $10 + 1/2$ the maestrollich's HD + the maestrollich's Charisma bonus.

List of Corpse Cacophonies

Countersong (Su): As the bardic performance of the same name.

Disgust (Su): A maestrollich with 1 or more HD can use its corpse cacophony to instill disquiet and disgust in other creatures. Each creature to be disgusted must be within 90 feet, able to see and hear the maestrollich, and capable of paying attention to it. Each creature within range receives a Will save to negate the effect. If a creature's saving throw succeeds, the maestrollich cannot attempt to disgust that creature again for 24 hours. If its saving throw fails, the creature is flat-footed and takes a -4 penalty on skill checks made as reactions, such as Perception checks, as it is shocked and horrified by the corpse cacophony, but unable to fully draw its attention away, and it is considered distracted for purposes of being unable to take 10 and foes being free to make Stealth checks.

Disgust is an enchantment (compulsion), mind-affecting ability, and relies on audible and visual components in order to function.

Inspire Horror (Su): A maestrolich with 1 or more HD can use its corpse cacophony to instill horror in its foes, causing them to make a Will save or be shaken. When using this ability any ally of the maestrolich that has a fear effect (including any fear effect the maestrolich has other than inspire horror), instead gains a +1 bonus per 5 HD of the maestrolich to the fear effect's DC and duration. To be affected, a creature must be able to perceive the maestrolich's corpse cacophony. Inspire horror is a mind-affecting fear effect. Inspire horror can use audible or visual components. The maestrolich must choose which component to use when starting his cacophony.

Imbue with Deadliness (Su): A maestrolich with 6 or more HD can use its corpse cacophony to lend the art of death to all the actions of a single ally (including the maestrolich itself, if desired). All attacks made by that ally gain a +4 bonus to confirm critical threats. Additionally, the maestrolich may select any one critical feat with a base attack bonus prerequisite no higher than double its HD to add to all critical hits the ally scores. The ally must be able to see or hear the maestrolich for this effect to work.

Dirge of Discord (Su): A maestrolich with 9 or more HD can use its corpse cacophony to make sounds so loud and terrible they drown out all other sounds, or even the idea of other sounds. All foes within 60 feet of the maestrolich are deafened, and must make a Fortitude save or also be effectively silenced (as the *silence* spell). Dirge of discord relies on audible components.

Aggravating Cacophony (Su): A maestrolich with 12 or more HD can use its corpse cacophony to create an effect equivalent to *mass cause serious wounds*, using the maestrolich's HD as the caster level. In addition, this cacophony increases the duration of any existing fatigued, sickened, or shaken conditions from all those affected. These conditions' durations are not diminished by any time the target is in the aggravating cacophony, and have 5 minutes added to their durations after the cacophony ends. Using this ability requires 2 continuous rounds of cacophony, activating at the beginning of the maestrolich's second round, and uses two rounds of cacophony for each round it is active (total of four rounds used for every 2 rounds, and activating no more often than every other round). Targets must be able to see and hear the maestrolich throughout the performance. Aggravating cacophony can use audible or visual components. The maestrolich must choose which component to use when starting its cacophony.

Dark Arts (Ex): If the maestrolich has access to *cure* spells (such as *cure light wounds*) from a class spell list or spell-like ability, it may choose to swap these out for the matching *cause wound* spells.

Deadly Performance (Su): A maestrolich with 15 or more HD can use his cacophony to create this effect, which functions as the bardic performance of the same name.

Instruments of Agony (Su): When a maestrolich creates an undead through any means, or has access to an undead for one day per HD of that undead, it can turn the undead into a mobile musical instrument or artistic accompaniment. Skeletons can be molded into percussion or woodwind instruments, zombies form string instruments of their own sinew, ghoulish choirs can sing through dead lungs, or dance and caper in time with a beat.

As long as a maestrolich has at least one such altered undead within 60 feet, it can use that undead to begin and maintain a second corpse cacophony. It cannot begin a third or additional cacophonies, regardless of how many instrumental undead it has nearby.

Example Maestrolich

Asmevath Deathdrum CR 10

XP 9,600

CE Medium undead

Init +1; Senses Perception +9 (blindsight 60 ft.)

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 12, flat-footed 19 (+4 armor, +4 natural armor, +1 deflection, +1 Dex)

hp 76 (9d8+32)

Fort +7, Ref +7, Will +8; +4 vs. bardic performance, language-dependent, and sonic

Defensive Abilities channel resistance +4, DR 3/-, misdirection, immune to gaze attacks and sonic, undead immunities

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee mwk club +6/+1 (1d6-1)

Special Attacks bardic performance and corpse cacophony 48 rounds/day (move action; countersong, dirge of discord, dirge of doom, disgust, distraction, fascinate, imbue with deadliness, inspire competence +3, inspire courage +2, inspire greatness, inspire horror, suggestion)

Bard Spells Known (CL 9th; concentration +13)

3rd (4/day)—*blink*, *charm monster* (DC 19), *displacement*, *dreadscape* (DC 19)

2nd (5/day)—*eagle's splendor*, *misdirection*, *unadulterated loathing* (DC 18), *whip of spiders* (DC 18)

1st (6/day)—*adjuring step*, *cause light wounds* (DC 17), *ear-piercing scream* (DC 17), *disguise self*, *undetectable alignment*

0th (at will)—*daze* (DC 16), *detect magic*, *light*, *mage hand*, *message*, *read magic*

BASE STATISTICS

This combat-ready stat block assumes the maestrolich has already cast *eagle's splendor*. Without that spell, the maestrolich's statistics are Bard Spells Known reduce spell DCs by 2; Cha 14; Skills Bluff +12, Intimidate +8, Perform (all) +19, Use Magic Device +16.

STATISTICS

Str 8, **Dex** 13, **Con** –, **Int** 14, **Wis** 14, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +5; **CMD** 17

Feats Arcane Strike, Catch Off-Guard, Scribe Scroll, Silent Spell, Skill Focus (Perform [all]), Still Spell

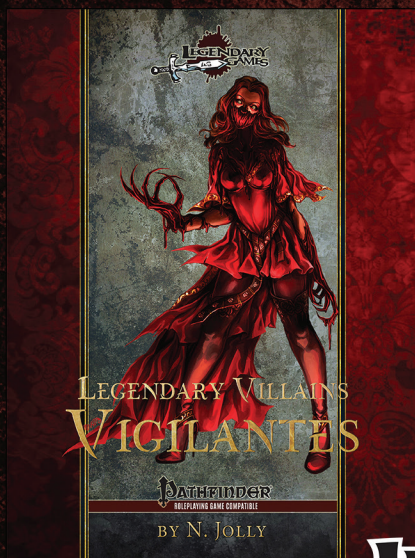
Skills Appraise +10, Bluff +14, Intimidate +10, Knowledge (arcana) +15, Knowledge (dungeoneering, engineering, geography, history, local, nature, nobility) +10, Knowledge (religion) +18, Knowledge (planes) +13, Linguistics +8, Perception +9, Perform (all) +21, Profession (educator) +6, Sense Motive +9, Spellcraft +14, Stealth +13, Use Magic Device +18

Languages Abyssal, Aklo, Common, Dark Folk, Draconic, Necril

SQ artistic immortality, bardic knowledge +4, dark arts, deadly artistry, instruments of agony, lore master 1/day, versatile performance (keyboard, oratory)

Combat Gear potion of *cause moderate wounds*, potions of *mage armor* (2), scrolls of *bestow curse* (2), scrolls of *command* (4), scroll of *fly*, scroll of *gust of wind*, scrolls of *lightning bolt* (2), wand of *scorching ray* (50 charges); **Other Gear** chain shirt, masterwork club, *ring of protection* +1, 75 gp



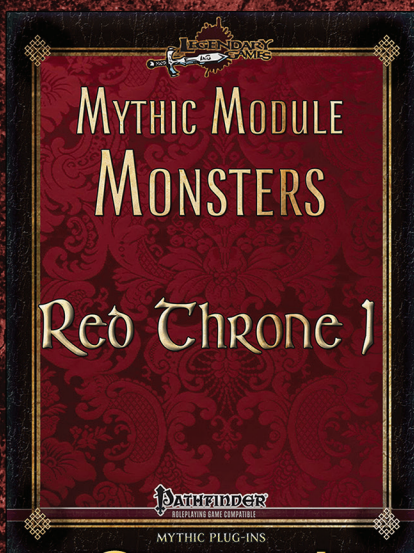


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10 Things to Loot From a Dead Bard

By Anthony Jennings

Some bards meet violent ends either because they travel where they shouldn't or someone objects (violently) to their music.

In their extraordinary lives, bards amass a variety of trinkets, souvenirs and keepsakes in their travels. Rummaging through a bard's pockets and pack, one could discover the bard's entire life story or just a handful of trash.

Use the table below to determine what the PCs find.

1. A care-worn love letter the bearer has read and refolded so many times it is starting to fall apart. The signature at the bottom is smeared and impossible to read. The letter explains the parting of a human—most likely the bard—and an elven lover. The elf believed the relationship was doomed because of the tragically short life span of humans and refused to commit to such a short relationship.
2. Ten hexagonal gold coins of unknown origin. They have a hole cut through the center and are strung together on a thin leather cord. A collector of ancient or exotic coins may offer up to 10 gp per coin.
3. A small vial labelled "Bottled Love" with the instructions "One drop per draught of ale" written in looping script on the side. The smell of the liquid inside is sweet and tempting but quickly overpowering. When administered to someone's drink as per the instructions, the liquid acts as an aphrodisiac.
4. Several pages of sheet music for a haunting melody that sticks in the listener's head if played.
5. A pair of chapbooks, *The Wizard's Luck* and *The Game of Pawns*, which feature the love affair and adventures of Shara and Jaxak, a pair of wizards who meet at an arcane academy, fall in love and save the world from the forces of evil.
6. A blue rose that never wilts but is cold to the touch.
7. A travelogue detailing the bard's journey. The badly written stories must be exaggerated, especially the story about the elven queen falling in love with the bard.
8. An ornamental rapier with a silver pommel and silver filigree on the guard. With gold filigree and jewels set in the hilt, the weapon was built for show, not use. Because of the exquisite craftsmanship, the weapon would likely fetch triple the value of a typical rapier.
9. An old rapier that has been used in many battles, but the previous owner took very good care of it. Twisting the pommel reveals a small

compartment where one might hide a short document or other small item.

10. A small, slightly worn, silver brooch in the shape of a dove with an inscription on the back that reads, "To my dearest, Loraël, on the 400th anniversary of your birth."
11. A flamboyant, wide-brimmed blue hat with a giant golden eagle's feather stuck in the band.
12. A tiny mimic shaped like an ornate wooden box. The bard had befriended it, and it now plots revenge on those who murdered its friend.
13. A repair kit for the bard's lute including replacement strings and a cloth to clean the instrument.
14. Scraps of paper that when ordered properly become the outline for an epic poem. Based on the outline and the few incomplete verses, this would have been the bard's masterpiece.
15. An annotated copy of "The Tragedy of T'Kor", a play about a gnome wizard who summons and falls in love with an incubus. From the notes in the play, the bard was portraying the incubus.
16. A novelty magic trick comprising a simple wooden box with a velvet lining that makes coins disappear when the top is shut and a button depressed.
17. A tiny longsword—no longer than a pinky finger—made from a magnetic metal.
18. A map of the region with notes beside each town that details the reception the bard received as well as which taverns have the best ale and wine.
19. A quiver of 17 poorly crafted arrows with wicked barbed arrowheads most likely made by goblins or orcs.
20. A golden signet ring bearing the emblem of an ancient elven noble house. The party might be rewarded if they return it (or they might be accused of murder!)

Designer Bio

Anthony Jennings is living his dream as freelance writer of RPGs and editor, having finally found an acceptable outlet for his love of obscure rules, High Gygaxian syntax, the Oxford comma, and two spaces after a period. His credits include work on *Werewolf: The Apocalypse*, *Pathfinder*, and *Dungeons & Dragons 5E*. He irregularly updates his blog *Read the Damn Book*.

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Forest and Swamp Spell Showcase

By Dave Paul, Illustration by Laura Born

Let's dust off some of those earlier books! For this issue of Pathways I've dug into the recesses and pulled out a couple of spells that touch upon the

theme of music. You'll find *bog nixie's song* in 101 *Swamp Spells* and you'll find *fey form, satyr* in 101 *Forest Spells*.

"Gentlemen, despite your many conquests, despite the carefully preserved and mounted dragon heads," at this point Arianna raised one exquisite and pale arm, the sheer blue silk of her gown slipping downward to her shoulder, and swept an index finger in a wide arc indicating the heads of several dragons on the walls of the priory, "you really shouldn't wander into the marshes without some careful planning."

Tacton glanced at Chandus, apparently to defer to his friend's thoughts on the matter, before providing his own. He noted that Chandus was either deep in thought and happened to have his eyes focused on Ari's arm, or he was staring at Ari's arm. "Chandus?" he interrupted.

"Yeah?" came from Chandus, sounding more like a reflex than an actual response.

"What do you think?"

"About what?"

"About what Ari is talking about. About the swamp."

"What?"

Tacton rolled his eyes and looked at Palin who was smiling. "What about you?"

Palin responded in his druidical, elven tenor, "Ari is right. I mean, you two can do what you want, but I know that I'm going to be prepared if I travel into that swamp. We've had run-ins with the witches and their allies before. I'm sure they've only gotten stronger. Unlike the rest of us who tend to spend the winters indoors, growing fat on the larders and slow from lack of practice, the denizens of the swamp grow leaner and stronger—provided they survive."

Tacton nodded thoughtfully. He was well aware of the effect winter sometimes had on his men; and he worked hard to counter it.

Ari, whose arms were now in front of her again, hands folded in her lap, continued. "There are enchanters and transmuters in those areas. Some of the most dangerous have access to foul magic that impel action and engender helplessness. Being deaf helps, but being deaf has its own disadvantages."

"I'm not going to let you make me deaf Ari," Chandus said flatly. "It's not going to happen."

"Not even temporarily, to give you a better chance to make it through the swamps?"

"No."

"I could teach you finger speak."

"No thank you. My fingers are busy wrapped around the hilts of my swords."

Tacton smiled at Ari, "Make him a ring or something. That'll help."

Ari spoke into the space above the food on the table.

"Make him a ring or something'," she mimicked, "Yeah. That's what your wizard is for. Making trinkets."

"Could be worse," Tacton offered.

"Truly," she responded curtly. "It'll take me a few weeks. You can't rush these things if you want them done well."

~~

Bog Nixie's Song

School: Enchantment (compulsion) [evil, mind-affecting]; **Level:** Bard 6, Druid 7, Sorcerer/Wizard 7, Witch 7

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Components: V, S, DF

Range: 60 ft.

Targets: Up to 4 creatures

Duration: 1 minute/level

Saving Throw: Will negates; **Spell Resistance:** Yes

This spell causes those within the area to wish to join you. While it is a mind-affecting spell, it is not language-dependent, any creature able to identify music could be targeted. Those failing their saves will attempt to move adjacent to you and will otherwise only take actions to defend themselves or you. If the path leads them into dangerous areas, they receive a secondary save to end the effect before moving into peril. Once such creatures are adjacent to you, they will no longer act to defend themselves, rendering them helpless.

If the terrain from which you cast this spell could be considered a swamp, then no feature of marsh terrain triggers the secondary save (allowing creatures affected by this spell to be entangled or to drown, if circumstances permit it).

A *remove curse* spell ends *bog nixie's song* only if its caster level is at least two higher than your caster level. *Break enchantment* does not end *bog nixie's song*, but *limited wish*, *miracle*, and *wish* do.

Any creature with a similar ability, such as a siren or harpy, is immune to this spell.

Fey Form, Satyr

School: Transmutation (polymorph); **Level:** Bard 4, Magus 4, Sorcerer/Wizard 5

Casting Time: 1 standard action

Components: V, S, M (a bit of horn from a satyr)

Range: Personal

Target: You

Duration: 1 min./level (D)

Saving Throw: See text; **Spell Resistance:** No

You become a satyr. You gain a +2 size bonus to Strength, a +2 natural armor bonus, low-light vision and DR 5/cold iron. Your body appears muscled and attractive. In addition to these changes, you gain the constant use of *dancing lights* and *ghost sound*.

While in the form of a satyr, you have many powerful drives. You are strongly attracted to

wine, music and carnal delights. Should you wish to pursue those drives, you gain a +4 on Bluff, Diplomacy, Perception, Perform and Stealth checks when you are using them toward those ends. In addition, if you are attempting to seduce someone using music, you may use *charm person* or *sleep* once while in this form. If you succeed in charming someone with the *charm person* granted by *fey form, satyr*, you must make a Will save (same DC as the *charm person*) or become infatuated with the subject of your spell. This infatuation persists even after *fey form, satyr* ends. (The duration is ultimately per GM adjudication and the infatuation should not otherwise impede play.)

If you cast this spell in forest terrain, then, while you remain in forest terrain, you may cast any one of the following once without it counting against your spells per day if you know or have access to it: *summon nature's ally I, II or III*; or *summon monster I, II or III*. If you summon a monster, it must be a creature that could normally be found in a forest.

A witch with a transformation patron may select *fey form, satyr* as a 4th level spell.



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Sounds of the Celestial

By Lj Stephens

The music created by man is beautiful, but the melodies that emanate from the celestial world are sublime and, when combined with the ritual magic of lesser beings, it can do things that mortals could never do on their own. These three spells are occult rituals that mortals can perform to touch the face of the divine, if only for a moment or two. See *Pathfinder Roleplaying Game Occult Adventures* for the complete rules on casting occult rituals.

Choir of Angels

School Conjunction (Healing); **Level** 12

Casting Time 120 minutes

Components V, S, M (1 pound of ground glass from used *healing potion* vials), F (physical symbol of great significance to the target worth at least 500 gp), SC (6 exactly)

Skill Checks Heal DC 21, 9 successes; Knowledge (local) DC 21, 3 successes

Range long (400 ft. + 40 ft./character level of the primary caster)

Target one army or group of individuals (up to 300 HD)

Duration instantaneous

Saving Throw Will negates (harmless); **Spell Resistance** yes (harmless)

Backlash All casters become exhausted and are unable to cast any healing spells for 24 hours

Failure All hit point damage that would have been healed by the ritual is instead added together and divided amongst all casters, likely resulting in their deaths

EFFECT

To set up this spell, the primary caster places the focus on a bed of ground glass (see components) at her feet. The other six casters surround her, joining hands, closing their eyes, and turning their faces upward in meditation, and all begin to chant in whispered voices. As the two-hour ritual begins, the chants from the seven casters become louder and more beautiful as the minutes pass. Luminous images of angels slowly appear around them, as the chants turn to song. At the half-way point, the angelic images, now fully visible, begin to sing. The gracefulness and beauty of their voices grow to a nearly painful level. When the ritual ends, the exquisite music comes to a rapturous peak and then quickly dies out.

If successful, the casters channel divine energies to remove injury and afflictions, as per the *heal* spell, except as noted above. Save DC to resist is equal to 10 + the ritual level (12) + the primary caster's Intelligence, Wisdom, or Charisma bonus (whichever is highest). All casters are then exhausted and unable to cast any conjunction (healing) magic for the next 24 hours.

If unsuccessful, all damage that would have been healed by the ritual is taken by the casters of the ritual instead.

Example: Jassinda and her six acolytes are attempting to cure a farming village that has suffered from a bad grain blight and become poisoned. There are 200 individuals gathered together around the casters in a large field expecting to be healed. Each has 1d6 points of damage on them, for an average total of 700 hp. The casters attempt the ritual together, calling upon a *choir of angels* to lend their divine voices to this group, and heal them of their poison and their damage. The casters gain 6 failures before they are able to reach 12 successes, the ritual fails. The casters then take the total number of hit points in damage (700 hp) and divide it evenly between them (100 hp each). As none of these casters have this many hit points, this results in Jassinda's death, and the deaths of all her acolytes.

Devil's Din

School Enchantment; **Level** 6

Casting Time 60 minutes

Components V, S, M (1 drop of blood of the target type, or caster's blood if target is random, per target individual), SC (up to 2)

Skill Checks Spellcraft DC 25, 4 successes; Diplomacy DC 25, 2 successes

Range close (25 ft.+ 5 ft./2 character levels of primary caster)

Target one group of individuals (up to 30 HD)

Duration concentration, or until all subjects are dead

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** yes

Backlash Primary caster gains confused condition for 1 hour

Failure Primary, and all secondary casters, cursed with unending cacophony (see below)

EFFECT

The *devil's din* ritual turns an otherwise peaceful group of individuals into a murderous mob of chaos and violence. The caster only needs one drop of blood (either of the creature type he wishes the mob to harm, or his own, if he does not wish to designate a creature type) per individual in the mob target group. All individuals in the target group must be within range of the spell during the casting, but may leave the area once the ritual is complete without breaking the effects of the compulsion. If desired, the primary caster may designate one creature type, or subtype if appropriate, as the subjects that the target group will attack. The ritual's casters are immune to the ritual's effects, and are never considered subjects of the mob's rage, even if they fall within the primary caster's chosen subject type.

As the one-hour ritual begins, the caster spills the blood component on the ground, one drop at a time, until he has spilled the entire amount. As he does so, each individual in the target group begins to hear the screams and cacophonous cackles of demons, devils, and tortured souls in his head. The cacophony begins slowly, quietly, and builds until the ritual is ended.

If successful, the target group becomes a murderous mob and gains *rage*, as per the barbarian's power. If the caster has chosen a creature type as subjects of the target's rage, the mob will immediately scatter, seek, and destroy all such subjects as if compelled to do so by the murderous command spell, until the caster stops concentrating, or until all subjects are dead. If the primary caster has not designated a subject, they will simply attack the nearest living creature, (including the other members of the mob) until they are all dead, or the spell ends. Also, if successful, the primary caster gains the confused condition for 1 hour.

If the ritual is unsuccessful, nothing happens to the mob, except that they heard some strange sounds over the last hour. The casters, however, are all cursed with unending cacophony (see below).

Unending Cacophony

Type curse; **Save** none

Effect Confused; **Cure** This curse can only be cured by successfully casting both *calm emotions* and *remove curse* within one minute of each other.

The cacophonous sounds, screams, and cackles that were building in the targets' heads transfer to the mind of the failed caster. They pound and flail, ebb and flow, driving the caster mad.

Music of the Gods

School Divination; **Level** 9

Casting Time 90 minutes

Components V, S, M (1 vial of magical mercury, worth at least 500 gp), F (silver tuning fork, and crystal sphere worth at least 5,000 gp), SC (up to 3)

Skill Checks Knowledge (planes) DC 34, 6 successes; Perception DC 34, 3 successes

Target one individual

Range anywhere on the caster's plane

Duration 1 minute per caster level

Saving Throw none; **Spell Resistance** no

Backlash Caster fatigued and unable to speak for 12 hours

Failure All casters rendered *mute* as per the spell until *lesser restoration* is cast upon them

EFFECT

During the casting of this 90-minute ritual, the casters all take turns sipping magical, liquid mercury, and lightly striking a small crystal sphere with a silver tuning fork. The echoes that reverberate off the sphere begin to tinkle and chime, almost as if speaking some unknown celestial language. As the ritual comes to a close, the casters begin to experience a divine euphoria that swells, peaks, dwindles, and then dies just before the spell ends.

If successful, the primary caster creates an invisible magic sensor in a specific location, as per the *clairaudience/clairvoyance* spell, with the following exceptions:

- Primary caster may both see and hear in the targeted area.
- Primary caster may mentally communicate with any target scried upon (does not need a common language).
- There is no range limit to where the area designated may be, as long as it is on the caster's current plane of existence.

If successful, the primary caster gains the fatigued condition, and is unable to speak for the next 12 hours.

If unsuccessful, all casters are rendered *mute* as per the spell until *lesser restoration* is cast upon each of them.

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Abominations of Sound

By Mike Wellham

Courts depend on musicians to provide entertainment for guests and to tout the accomplishments of their ruler. Likewise, armies depend on music to boost their spirits and demoralize their foes. This applies to most intelligent creatures on the Material Plane as well as in the courts and armies of planes beyond. In the furthest reaches of space where insane creatures dwell, such musicians are living instruments which play mad tunes for their leaders, and, either through mischance or in response to cultic summons, these cacophonous monsters arrive in unsuspecting places where they wreak havoc.

All abominations of sound have the following special ability:

Cut through Silence (Su) In an area of magical silence, an abomination of sound can use its sonic-based abilities if it succeeds at a caster level check (using its HD as its caster level) with a DC equal to 11 + the spell's caster level. It does not actually dispel the spell or effect, so it must make this check each round it is in an area of magical silence.

Fluut

Standing on seven legs, this squat obsidian creature has numerous proboscises protruding from random places on its body; the proboscises produce a discordant fluting sound.

Fluut CR 5

XP 1,600

CN Medium aberration

Init +7; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception -2

DEFENSE

AC 18, touch 14, flat-footed 14 (+3 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural)

hp 52 (7d8+21)

Fort +5, **Ref** +7, **Will** +3

Defenses jumble of thoughts; **Immune** mind-affecting effects

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +7 (1d6+2)

Special Attacks curse of madness, cut through silence, fluted blast

STATISTICS

Str 14, **Dex** 17, **Con** 16, **Int** 11, **Wis** 7, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +5; **CMB** +7; **CMD** 21 (29 vs. trip)

Feats Dodge, Improved Initiative, Lightning

Reflexes, **Skill Focus** (Perform [wind instruments])

Skills Acrobatics +13, Escape Artist +13, Perform (wind instruments) +16, Stealth +13

SQ unnatural flutist

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary, pair, or ensemble (3–6 fluuts plus any number of other abominations of sound)

Treasure incidental (musical instruments)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Curse of Madness (Su) Injury—fluted blast; *save* Will DC 16; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Wis and the victim must make a DC 16 Will save at the beginning of a stressful situation (combat, tense negotiation, or other situation at the GM's discretion) or become confused for 1d6 rounds.

Fluted Blast (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a fluut can unleash a shrill sonic blast affecting all creatures in a 30-foot cone. Affected creatures take 4d6 points of sonic damage and become confused for 1d6 rounds. A successful DC 16 Will save halves the damage and negates the confused condition. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Jumble of Thoughts (Su) Any creature attempting to contact a fluut's mind or read its thoughts with a divination spell or similar ability must succeed at a DC 16 Will save or be overwhelmed by the creature's alien thoughts. Creatures that fail take 1d4 points of Wisdom damage and are confused for 1d6 rounds.

Unnatural Flutist (Ex) A fluut treats Perform (wind instruments) as a class skill.

Some of the least powerful sonic abominations, fluuts are also the least predictable. The creatures caper about the battlefield and attack random opponents with their flute-like appendages, in between insanity-inducing blasts of sound.

Fluuuts like to scavenge musical instruments from fallen foes and attempt to play them, usually with little success. Creatures managing to defeat fluuuts still face peril as they constantly hear reverberating trills in their minds and eventually succumb to madness as a result. Fluuuts stand 3 feet tall and weigh 50 pounds.

Timpanus

This pale, three-legged creature has three arms ending in bony mallets and features a giant, translucent membrane covering its torso along with several smaller membranes connecting its upper arms to its torso and connecting its upper legs.

Timpanus CR 7

XP 3,200

CN Large aberration

Init +0; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +12

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 9, flat-footed 21 (+12 natural, -1 size)

hp 85 (10d8+40)

Fort +7, **Ref** +3, **Will** +6

OFFENSE

Speed 40 ft.

Melee 2 slams +12 (3d6+5)

Space 10 ft.; **Reach** 10 ft.

Special Attacks concussive blast, curse of pain, cut through silence, drown out

STATISTICS

Str 21, **Dex** 10, **Con** 18, **Int** 9, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +7; **CMB** +13 (+15 bull rush); **CMD** 23 (25 vs. bull rush)

Feats Dazzling Display, Improved Bull Rush, Intimidating Prowess, Power Attack, Weapon Focus (slam)

Skills Intimidate +21, Perception +12, Perform (percussion instruments) +16

SQ unnatural drummer

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary, pair, or ensemble (3–6 timpanuses plus any number of other abominations of sound)

Treasure incidental (hammers)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Concussive Blast (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a

timpanus can unleash a booming blast affecting all creatures in a 20-foot radius. Affected creatures take 6d6 points of sonic damage and become frightened for 1d4 rounds. A successful DC 18 Will save halves the damage and reduces the frightened condition to shaken. Additionally, the timpanus can make a free bull rush maneuver check against all creatures in the blast's radius; it makes one check and applies the result to all target creatures. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Curse of Pain (Su) Injury—concussive blast; *save* Will DC 18; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Str and the victim must make a DC 18 Will save at the beginning of a stressful, noisy situation (combat, loud argument, or other situation at the GM's discretion) or become sickened for 1d6 rounds.

Cut through Silence (Su) A timpanus has a +2 racial bonus when making its check in areas of magical silence.

Drown Out (Ex) A timpanus constantly beats on its large membrane to create a wall of noise. Any creature within 30 feet of the timpanus must succeed at a caster level check (DC 15 + spell level) to cast a spell with a verbal component. Additionally, a bard must succeed at a DC 15 Charisma check to affect creatures within 30 feet of the timpanus with bardic performances relying on audible components.

Unnatural Drummer (Ex) A timpanus treats Perform (percussion instruments) as a class skill.

Timpanuses seek to induce fear in their opponents and overwhelm all other noise in their vicinity. The massive creatures enjoy entering the fray with their opponents and often forget to use their sonic blasts, which induce weakening headaches in their victims well after they have been defeated. Timpanuses enjoy taking hammers and other mallet-like weapons and use them to produce different sounds. They sometimes strip the flesh from their victims to create drum-like objects they can play. The creatures stand roughly 8 feet tall and weigh 400 pounds.

Tromby

Fashioned from brass which oozes a rust-colored fluid, this creature has three evenly-spaced legs and a narrow body from which extend two trumpet-like appendages and an arm that curves back on itself.

Tromby

CR 8

XP 4,800

CN Medium aberration

Init +3; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +14

DEFENSE

AC 21, touch 13, flat-footed 18 (+3 Dex, +8 natural)

hp 102 (12d8+48)

Fort +8, **Ref** +7, **Will** +7

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee 2 slams +15 (2d6+6/19–20) and 1 slam +15 (1d6+6/19–20 plus grab)

Space 5 ft.; **Reach** 5 ft. (10 ft. with slam)

Special Attacks curse of discordance, cut through silence, sonic blast

STATISTICS

Str 22, **Dex** 17, **Con** 19, **Int** 12, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 16

Base Atk +9; **CMB** +15 (+19 grapple); **CMD** 28

Feats Combat Reflexes, Following Step^{APG}, Improved Critical (slam), Power Attack, Step Up, Step Up and Strike^{APG}

Skills Disable Device +12, Intimidate +18, Perception +14, Perform (wind instruments) +18, Sleight of Hand +12, Stealth +12

Languages Aklo

SQ unnatural horn player

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary, pair, or ensemble (3–6 trombies plus any number of other abominations of sound)

Treasure incidental (brassware)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Curse of Discordance (Su) Injury—sonic blast; *save* Will DC 19; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Int and the victim must make a DC 19 Will save at the beginning of a stressful, noisy situation (combat, difficult question posed to the victim, or other situation at the GM's discretion) or become stunned for 1d4 rounds.

Sonic Blast (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a tromby can unleash a blast that drops several octaves and affects all creatures in a 30-foot cone. Affected creatures take 6d8 points of sonic damage and become nauseated for 2d4 rounds. A creature succeeding at a DC 19 Will save takes half damage

and is instead sickened for 1d4 rounds. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unnatural Horn Player (Ex) A tromby treats Perform (wind instruments) as a class skill.

Trombies enjoy the nausea induced by their ever-changing range of notes, usually ending in a low gut-wrenching tone. In between these sickening sonic blasts, they smash their opponents with their strange, rust-weeping brass arms, one of which can hook a foe. A lingering effect from an encounter with trombies creates a jarring sensation for their victims, making it difficult to think clearly and fomenting virtual paralysis. Trombies collect brass from their fallen victims, but they usually destroy the metal after a few days. The creatures stand 6 feet tall and weigh 200 pounds.

Veollin

Standing on a base of five squid-like legs, this creature appears to be made of wood and has several sinews running from its head to its base. It has a single bony arm ending in a sharp "bow" playing against the sinews.

Veollin

CR 6

XP 2,400

CN Small aberration

Init +4; **Senses** darkvision 60 ft.; Perception +11

DEFENSE

AC 20, touch 16, flat-footed 15 (+4 Dex, +1 dodge, +4 natural, +1 size)

hp 67 (9d8+27)

Fort +6, **Ref** +7, **Will** +5

OFFENSE

Speed 30 ft.

Melee slam +5 (1d6–2 plus 1d4 bleed)

Special Attacks curse of despondency, cut through silence, ear-rending blast

STATISTICS

Str 7, **Dex** 18, **Con** 16, **Int** 14, **Wis** 9, **Cha** 19

Base Atk +6; **CMB** +9 (+11 dirty trick); **CMD** 18 (20 vs. dirty trick, 22 vs. trip)

Feats Agile Maneuvers, Combat Expertise, Dodge, Improved Dirty Trick^{APG}, Mobility

Skills Acrobatics +16, Escape Artist +16, Knowledge (arcana) +14, Perception +11, Perform (string

instruments) +16, Spellcraft +11, Stealth +14
Languages Aklo, Common
SQ unnatural violinist, versatile performance

ECOLOGY

Environment any land

Organization solitary, pair, or ensemble (3–6 veollins plus any number of other abominations of sound)

Treasure incidental (chains made of valuable metals)

SPECIAL ABILITIES

Curse of Despondency (Su) Injury—ear-rending blast; *save* Will DC 18; *frequency* 1/day; *effect* 1d4 Str and victim must make a DC 18 Will save at the beginning of a stressful, noisy situation (combat, loud argument, or other situation at the GM's discretion) or take a –2 penalty on attack and damage rolls, saving throws, skill checks, and ability checks for 1d6 rounds.

Cut through Silence (Su) A veollin has a +2 racial bonus when making its check in areas of magical silence.

Ear-Rending Blast (Su) Once every 1d4 rounds, a veollin can unleash a shrieking blast affecting all creatures in a 20-foot radius. Affected creatures take 4d8 points of sonic damage and become deafened for 1d6 rounds and dazed for 1 round. A creature succeeding at a DC 18 Will save takes half damage and is only deafened for 1 round. The save DC is Charisma-based.

Unnatural Violinist (Ex) A veollin treats Perform (string instruments) as a class skill.

Versatile Performance (Ex) A veollin can use its

bonus for Perform (string instruments) in place of its bonus for Bluff and Diplomacy. When substituting in this way, the veollin uses its total bonus for Perform (string instruments), including its class skill bonus, in place of the associated skill's total bonus.

Veollins are physically weaker than most abominations of sound but make up for that with an adaptive mind and powerful sense of self. Veollins often lead ensembles and direct the chaotic sound produced by the ensembles for the greatest damage. They rely mostly on sonic blasts which destroy eardrums and stop foes short, with a lingering effect which induces profound sadness. If they must enter combat, they fall back on tactics to hinder their foes and allow them maneuvering room, but their razor-sharp bow arms can inflict persistent wounds in their foes. Like other abominations of sound, they collect trophies from their victims, in their case thin metal chains with which they can replace their sinews. The creatures are 4 feet tall and weigh 80 pounds.

Abomination of Sound Ensembles

One of the above creatures is dangerous in and of itself, but multiple creatures are truly terrifying as they bolster each other and improve the individual creatures' abilities, despite their inherently chaotic natures. Reference the table below for benefits granted with 2 or more of the above creatures are in an encounter.

Table: Abomination of Sound Ensembles

Number in Ensemble	Benefits for Each Member of the Ensemble
2	Outflank feat; add 1 to blast ability DC if the other member used its blast ability in the previous round.
3–5	Swap Places feat; add 2 to blast ability DC if another member used its blast ability in the previous round; one member of the ensemble can use countersong as per the bardic performance ability (with a +4 morale bonus on its Perform check).
6–10	Shake It Off feat; all members gain immunity to mind-affecting effects; +2 morale bonus on check to bypass magical silence.
11+	Improved Swap Places feat; add 4 to blast ability DC if another member used its blast ability in the previous round; the member with the highest HD can counterspell a spell with a verbal component cast within 60 feet of it (it must ready an action to do so).



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Twenty Questions with Ilya Bossov

By Dave Paul

1. Could you tell us a little about yourself and your company?

My name is Ilya Bossov and I'm a co-owner of Lagging Dice, and the author of Gatekeepers RPG. Since we're a small indie company, I'm also the artist.

2. What is your game like?

Gatekeepers is a labor of love and laziness. As a game master, I run a lot of sandboxy games, where players have agency to surprise me at every turn. So I made a game system that lets me improvise things on the spot—including generating random encounters in seconds by drafting them with cards. The idea was to appeal to my laziness, so the only thing I need before we start playing is an idea for an adventure, and then we're off.

It was a long journey, but four years later we have a polished game where players have no class restrictions, and neither do their enemies, where fights are lethal and fast, and rules are simple enough to run large engagements without breaking a sweat or boring people to death. In Gatekeepers, players are often outnumbered by predictable enemies, and solve each encounter like a teamwork puzzle.

We use cards instead of character sheets, each card has an ability on it and they combine in interesting ways, amplifying each other's potential for mayhem. It's like building your character concept one fireball at a time.

Suppose I should mention the setting. We took inspiration from GRR Martin and JRR Tolkien and cranked magic to 11, because you can't really have too many magical creatures, can you?

We have 17 playable races, including the staples like elves and dwarves and some unusual ones, like demons, goopy blobs and giant mantises.

3. What is your favorite Paizo product?

I've only played in one Pathfinder campaign and it didn't last very long. I am familiar with 3.5 edition of D&D and by extension, its legacy. I don't have a favorite Paizo product because all I've ever had experience with is the Core Rulebook.

4. You are currently an author for Lagging Dice, how did that start and how would you characterize the company today?



Well, we've just launched our first [kickstarter](#), so we're just starting out. We have plans in place to carry on regardless whether it succeeds or fails. We went to show our game at PAX East and at Total Con and got a lot of positive responses and made some new friends, but it's been a challenge to reach a broader audience. People that got a look at our game are often floored, and our booth at PAX was swarmed most of the time, and the reviews have been very positive, yet we didn't get as many backers as we'd hoped.

5. What is your favorite Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product you worked on and could you tell us a little about it?

I haven't worked on any Pathfinder products.

6. What was your best moment working on that product?

Probably this interview.

7. What do you feel was the most ingenious part of that product?

The awkward questions.

8. What was the most challenging aspect of working on it?

Answering them.

9. What did you learn while working on it?

An overwhelming sense of irony and impending doom. I'm going to have to re-write this, aren't I?

10. Other than your own work and Lagging Dice products, what is the best Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product out there?

Probably the OGL license hanging over the whole thing. It's been a boon for the roleplaying community.

11. What in your opinion makes a good Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible product?

Ability to incorporate it into whatever campaign you're running. Every game master dreams of being a game designer, and with those dreams come house rules and homebrew settings.

12. Who is your favorite designer of Pathfinder Roleplaying Game compatible products?

I don't have one.

13. What advice would you give to would-be-freelancers?

The hardest part of your project is marketing. The six Ps of marketing come to mind: proper planning prevents piss poor performance. I should know. Marketing is hard. Start early, don't delay it until the last minute. It is the only thing that will sell your game.

14. Who is your favorite tabletop RPG illustrator that you have worked with?

I am far too biased to answer this question, considering the only RPG illustrator I've worked with is myself. But I don't suffer from humility so I'm the best so far.

15. What has been your most memorable fan response to your work?

I've gotten a little squeal and a hug for making something awesome. It was a piece of content for Dungeons and Dragons Online, where I was a content designer at one point in my career.

16. Could you give us an exclusive hint or teaser about an upcoming product you are working on?

Everything has a reasonable scientific explanation. Magic is a lie.

17. Do you have any goals for Lagging Dice that you have yet to obtain or overcome?

Well, apparently 500 copies is a lot for a roleplaying game starting out. But that's what we'll be shooting for to get a print run.

18. Can you tell us a little about Gatekeepers?

In Gatekeepers, players are part of a conspiracy. There are Gates out there, leading to other places, some wondrous and some horrible, that were sealed off for millennia, to let the world heal after a cataclysmic war. Players keep those gates shut, and it's been so long that the common folk forgot all about them. This conspiracy doesn't have any political power to speak of, so it must operate in secrecy, because the less people know, the safer everyone is from the plagues and armies on the other side. Gatekeepers are often forced to make tough decisions in supporting one House over another, because an unwise ruler can make their work more difficult.

Multiple noble Houses vie for control of the city of Orodin, the principle setting of the game. Factions within the city are all advancing their agendas, and players cannot hope to influence all of them. But if they pick their battles well, nothing will go apocalyptically wrong on their watch.

19. Is there anything you wish you could have included in that product?

Miniatures. Perhaps in the next edition.

20. Is there anything else that folks should know about you or your work?

I believe in making accessible, simple rules to build up sophisticated concepts in a way players can follow and discover on their own. Many roleplaying games pride themselves on extensive rules and obscure, convoluted design decisions. A good designer takes pride in butchering their babies (metaphysical babies, that is). It took four years of ruthless cutting to arrive at a ruleset that fits on 30 pages. The rest of our 96 page book is the lore of the setting.

Editor's Note: Despite Herculean efforts by the Rite Publishing staff, Ilya would not step down from the Throne of Humor upon the Dais of Brevity. (Please treat the short, funny responses as entirely intentional and interpret them appropriately charitably given that perspective.)

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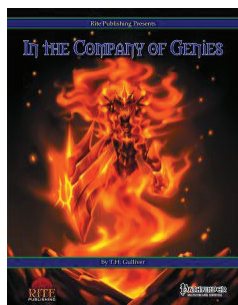
IN THE COMPANY OF WIGHTS



by Aaron Phelps



Reviews



In the Company of Genies

Publisher: Rite Publishing

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of the amazing "In the Company..."-series, my go-to-series for playable monsters, clocks in at a mighty 31 pages, 1 page

front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 2 pages of advertisement, 1 page of back cover, leaving us with 25 pages of content, so let's take a look!

This pdf was moved up in my review-queue as a prioritized review at the request of my patrons.

We begin with a gorgeous image of a letter, representing the correspondence of Pers Veilborn with Qwilion of Questhaven, contextualizing the pdf within the context of the series in an awesome hint of a frame-narrative. Speaking of which – in case you are not familiar with the series, let it be known that you're in for a treat: The installment thankfully follows in the tradition of the pdfs, as it depicts the introduction to the race herein, at least partially, from the in-character perspective of its members, making the pdf actually nice to read. (So not kidding you – I read a lot of racial pdfs and most are DRY. This is not. This is actually something you want to read.) While the narrator this time around is less opinionated and more laid back and neutral in his descriptions, the sections still deserve being called prose and represent more than just an accumulation of game data.

Beyond the vivid prose, the introduction, the recap of the culture and peculiarities of the genie-mindset serves another crucial task, namely to contextualize and elaborate the very mindset of the race in question. In this instance, it is not any being that narrates this pdf, but the very last lord of the janni – and thus we learn of the proxy wars that have almost undone the equilibrium that our world requires to prosper; and indeed, the lord seems to have closed the pass in a final act of preserving our world; has left agents to help us withstand the elemental onslaught of the genie, if push comes to shove.

The jann are made of the stuff of this plane, yet distinct from it and the origin myth for their race – it is also via this origin myth that the concept of the trapped janni is explained in a metaphysically

concise manner that makes sense within the context of the game. Similarly, their behavior and role on both elemental and material planes is elaborated upon and helps picture the race within the realm of the game world's cosmology. The level of detail we expect extends to the janni and their interactions with adventurers, faith and society, allowing for a pretty detailed starting point for any players electing to play a janni – which is amazing and something that should frankly be standard: Races are more than just an accumulation of dry stats and have so much more potential, need so much more to feel distinct. From all of these to nomenclature, the fluff presented is nice and evocative indeed.

But what about the crunch? Janni receives +2 Dex and Wis, -2 Con, are Medium native outsiders, get low-light vision and choose a dominant element at character creation. Their diversity is represented in an array of racial traits, two of which are chosen at character creation. These sometimes interact with the dominant element chosen and include bonuses to atk and Knowledge versus the efreet, superb adaptation that makes it easier to blend into larger communities, element-dependent bonuses to skills, elemental-dependent caster level bonus, natural armor, darkvision 60 ft., skill-check-bonuses while near large bodies of water and the like – and yes, even RP-based scavenging of other race abilities – though in a limited capacity. The base race, in short, is perfectly balanced and can work in any high- or low-fantasy context without any snags. Big kudos! Also: Age, height and weight table is included in the deal. The favored class options presented include core and APG-races, magus, bloodrager, kineticist and vigilante, tie in well with the race's themes and do not sport any problems.

All right, that out of the way, let us take a look at the racial archetypes contained herein, the first of which would be the Jann Fury bloodrager, who is locked into either the destined or elemental bloodline, but also gets to choose a jann path from the list available to the jann racial paragon class – said path must correspond to the element chosen or be the true jann path, gaining the listed class skills.

Let's make a quick detour here to talk about these paths. The racial paragon class chooses one such path at 1st level; these paths each add two class skills to their list and determine the type of points contained in another class feature, the elemental pool: The path of Djinn, for example, adds air empathy points. These elemental paths behave somewhat akin to bloodlines in that they provide a so-called path inheritance at 2nd level and every even level thereafter up until 10th level. To retain

the example of the path of the djinn, we begin with +2 to initiative at 2nd, + class level acid resistance at 4th level and 6th level allows for the option to concentrate and remain motionless for 3 rounds – if the character does, he can pinpoint hidden corporeal creatures and may extend this sense even around blockages, provides she could bypass them. 8th level allows for 5-foot-steps in difficult terrain and 10th level provides the limited ability to assume a whirlwind form for a scaling number of rounds per level. You're no doubt noticing that the abilities actually provide some cool tactical tricks and this indeed extends to the other oaths: Fire damage for AoOs, ignoring limited amounts of fire resistance, vortex form and a combo of bull rush and grapple can be found...oh, and what about bull rushing foes into the earth? The janni choice is the most flexible of them, obvious, but also has the least raw power, with high-level options allowing for prolonged existence on the elemental planes. How? Well, they get to choose their resistance. Pretty cool.

However, the path is further entwines with the racial paragon class – you see, starting at 10th level, the jann paragon may cast plane shift 1/day as a SP and is furthermore considered to be a noble specimen of the respective race. At this point, the chosen path further determines the ability unlocked – which, in this case, would be the ability to assume an alternate form while on the corresponding elemental plane; in some cases, the ability also bestows passive always-on benefits like a swim speed and the ability to breathe underwater. At this halfway point, the benefits of the chosen path also change: From here on out, at 12th level and every 2 additional levels thereafter, the jann gets to choose a so-called noble inheritance from a list provided by the respective path. In short – these behave more like talents. The noble inheritances include the respective energy immunities, select SPs to conform with the noble genies and upgrades, like a better vortex form, but also sport e.g. fire-to-fire teleportation, causing tremors and the like. As a minor complaint – some abilities build upon other noble inheritances or elemental powers and don't require their prerequisites to take, which can leave an inexperienced player with a dud-choice if they don't read the pdf properly. That being said, since they are unlocked at 12th level, a player at this point is not inexperienced, hence this gets a pass.

All right, got that all? Great, let's get back to the jann fury for now. Instead of the bloodline power of 1st level, the jann fury receives an elemental pool with the corresponding affinity and also learns one

elemental power from a limited list – more on those concepts later in the racial paragon discussion. 3rd level yields the 2nd level path inheritance of the chosen path, with 7th level providing the 6th level path inheritance and 10th level providing the 8th level path inheritance. Starting at 13th level, the bloodrager receives a noble inheritance, plus an additional one every 3 levels thereafter. This does eliminate blood sanctuary and DR. 4th level yields the 1st level bloodline power and the 4th level path inheritance, but eliminates the 4th level bloodline power. Bloodrage is gained at 4th level and at -3 class levels. 13th level yields the noble janni benefits instead of 13th level's bloodline spells and 16th level's bloodline power and 20th level replaces the bloodline capstone with that of the racial paragon class.

The second archetype contained herein would be the primal weaver kineticist. These guys gain the same diluted path ability as the bloodrager archetype, modifying class skill selection. Elemental focus must correspond to the choice made here and at 7th and 15th level, the primary element must be chosen as expanded element. At the lower, even levels that would yield path inheritances, we receive those instead of the utility wild talents. Instead of metakinesis (quicken), the character receives the noble janni ability. 17th level replaces metakinesis (double) with a noble inheritance and 20th level replaces the omnikinesis capstone with that of the racial paragon class. The archetypes, while flavorful and tied in well with the base class, did not absolutely blow me away, so let's take a look at the racial paragon class now.

The jann class' framework is powerful: Full BAB-progression, 6 +Int skills per level, d10 HD and good Ref- and Will-saves as well as proficiency with simple and martial weapons...but not with armors or shields. Now, I already mentioned the elemental pool: Gained at 1st level. This pool contains 3 + Class level elemental affinity points. While the jann paragon has at least one elemental affinity point, he can, as a swift action, use detect magic or conjure forth images and shapes from nearby elements... which is a nice, flavorful ability.

Beyond the aforementioned path and its benefits, the class also gains elemental powers – the first is chosen at 1st level and another is unlocked at every 2 levels after 1st. Elemental powers represent active abilities that are supernatural or spell-like abilities, with a save DC equal to 10 + 1/2 class level + Wisdom modifier, if applicable. These abilities require the expenditure of the respective elemental affinity points: In order to use elemental powers

that require fire empathy, you need to, obviously, be able to use fire empathy points, with costs ranging from 1 – 3 points. Elemental powers with a cost of 1 point can be activated as a move action, while more costly tricks require a standard action to activate. Thus, the choice of path also influences the choices available here. However, quite a few of the abilities featured in this selection are available for multiple paths, allowing the janni to pay the cost in one of multiple affinities. These choices generally make sense: Control water requires the use of water affinity points, for example, while control weather can be paid for with either air or water affinity points. Beyond the obvious, offensive fire burst and similar options, you'll also find some unique options – like the ability to control the density of water to keep people afloat or make them sink, so depending on your priorities/build, you can actually provide some unique utility options. At range combat maneuvers via earthen hands or bursts of air also allow the character to engage in some soft battlefield control. Conjuring forth elemental shields or turning into scaling elemental body shapes. Choking others, dealing minor damage or adding a debuff can also provide some hard controlling actions, while creating clouds of elemental energy or mounts allow for further modifications and interesting options – and yes, elemental walls are similarly included, should you require hard battlefield control. Basically, these limited resources allow you to engage in pretty potent tricks, yes, but they do feel balanced within the context of the class. The capstone lets you assume the noble form of the noble janni feature for an indefinite amount of time as well as plane shift at-will.

The pdf also includes 5 feats: +2 elemental pool points, an extra elemental power and a 1/day reroll versus charm, possession, etc. can be found. Another feat yields a kineticist's basic utility talent of the chosen element and a final feat yields a latent elemental power than that may be used at -4 class levels, a total of 4 – elemental power point costs in an interesting twist on the formula of such feats. Basically, it lets you gain an elemental power sans point costs, but with a hard cap of daily uses.

Conclusion

Editing and formatting are very good, I noticed no significant issues. Layout adheres to Rite Publishing's nice and easy to read two-column full-color standard and the pdf comes fully bookmarked for your convenience with nested bookmarks and all. The pdf is full of really nice full-color images

I haven't seen before, making it aesthetically pleasing as well.

It's been too long since I had a book by T.H. Gulliver in my hands and it's nice to see that some things don't change: For one, the flavor of the janni-race herein is awesome; and while I wasn't too blown away by the racial archetypes, at least they did tie in with the unique options available for the race. The racial paragon class, the heart of this pdf, is flavorful, evocative and fun and has a nice selection of unique tricks that allow you to play it in widely different ways: You could play these guys as dangerous skirmishers, utility warriors, martial battlefield controllers...and so much more. The base chassis looks incredibly strong, but thanks to the structure and nature of the talents, the class plays in a fun, yet not overpowering manner. Oh, and I have seen A LOT of elemental-themed books. To the point where I'm frankly, at least for the most part, very sick of them. This does not hold true here – the class actually manages to cover some new ground in this well-tread field – so yeah, what more can you ask of a pdf? This is a well-presented, well-written, fun way to actually play a genie – well worth 5 stars + seal of approval.

[You can get this amazing pdf here on OBS!](#)

Endzeitgeist out.



Mythic Magic: Intrigue Spells

Publisher: Legendary Games

Reviewer: Endzeitgeist

Stars: 5 stars out of 5

This installment of the Mythic Magic-series clocks in at 32 pages, 1 page front cover, 1 page editorial, 1 page SRD, 1 page ToC, 2 pages of introduction, 1 page advertisement, 1 page back cover, leaving us with 24 pages of content, so let's take a look at this book!

So, at this point, you probably are familiar with what these books by now – if not, the pitch is simple: We get mythic versions of all spells contained in Ultimate Intrigue and thus, we begin with an alphabetic list of the spells featured within this book. However, there is an important paradigm shift in this book, courtesy of the changed design paradigm Paizo introduced back in Occult Adventures and continued in Ultimate

Intrigue. You see, the adaptations of spells in earlier hardcovers have been somewhat different in tone and focus; numerical bonuses and damage types, as a whole, obviously lend themselves to an adaptation to mythic adventure contexts based on numerical escalation; you get the idea – expend mythic power for x, use mythic surge in conjunction with it for y.

That type of design simply does not gel too well with Ultimate Intrigue's spell selection. What do I mean by this? well, the first spell already makes this clear: Mythic absolution allows you to retain specific charms and compulsions, while still allowing for code of conduct violation rerolls, with the 4th tier augment allowing for the expenditure of 2 uses of mythic power, with better saves for the target. Similarly, aerial tracks augment options allows you to automatically succeed Survival checks of DC 40 or below if you power it via mythic power. Aphasia can bypass tongues and may be upgraded to behave basically like a curse, audiovisual hallucinations actually react appropriately towards damage inflicted and may receive more complex instructions.

Mass Charm Person is harder to detect when used in its mythic iteration, while codespeak significantly increases its duration – amazing: The mythic version actually PERMANENTLY teaches to read and understand the code...which is amazing for complex spy-games. Similarly, making a conditional curse hereditary represents an amazing augment and conjuration foil's mythic iteration may represent a numerical upgrade, but also includes a variety of tactical options. The crime spells allow for multiple rolls and the caster's choice of the result taken. Dark whispers affects up to two creatures per tier beyond line of sight/effect and may even imitate voices. Deadman's contingency's upgrade allows you to actually layer several of them upon each other. False Belief allows for the implantation of fake memories, while e.g. handy grapnel is indeed a full-blown Batman-level super-grapnel. Cool: Hollow Heroism is incorrectly identified by probing magic as mythic heroism, while illusion of treachery allows for a significantly increased control.

Casters of majestic image may employ other spells in conjunction with the spell and phantasmal affliction may impose curse, poison or wasting-like benefits. Rumormonger also gets an amazing upgrade, providing basically a rumor-web, which can really make high-powered investigations provide a whole new assortment of options -same goes for trace teleport....and treacherous teleport.

Now there are also a couple of different spells that do not go this way – true prognostication, for example, has a higher maximum chance of success and does not have a cost. Undetectable Trap continues until the next time the trap is triggered, while also increasing the DC to notice the trap... and no automatic detection chances for anyone. Vicarious view has a longer duration and may be used in conjunction with senses of a spell level lower than your tier. So yes, there are a couple of diverse spells that are a little bit less extensive in their options.

Conclusion:

Editing and formatting are top-notch, I noticed no significant glitches. Layout adheres to legendary Games' two-column full-color standard and the pdf features several nice full-color artworks, though fans of Legendary Games will probably be familiar with several of them. The pdf comes fully bookmarked with extensive bookmarks for your convenience.

Alex Riggs and David N. Ross went above and beyond in this mythic magic-installment: The spells and their effects have been seriously expanded, allowing for a wide variety of brilliant gambits to stack upon another. In fact, this is probably the best Mythic Magic-installment so far. Why am I saying this? Simple: This book has managed what no other Mythic Magic book made me want to do: Play a very specific game. As some of you may know, I'm a huge fan of Batman, Death Note and similar battle of wits type of scenarios and this pdf's spells allow for the truly epic battling of magical wits: The spells in the base book already had this Batman/Sherlock detective-battle-of-wits type of vibe, but once you add this book's vastly expanded options to the fray, things become amazing, allowing the PCs and villains to pit complex gambits against one another...and boy, do I love that! I really want to make a truly intrigue-heavy game with these!

Expertly crafted, this installment is absolutely inspired and allows the GM and players to engage in a whole new level of deception, subterfuge and style. This is an amazing, diverse and extremely well-made pdf, well worth 5 stars + seal of approval.

You can get this absolutely inspiring collection of mythic spell-upgrades here on OBS!

Endzeitgeist out.

THE PATH LESS TRAVELED 33: Victory Tastes Sweet! By Jacob E. Blackmon



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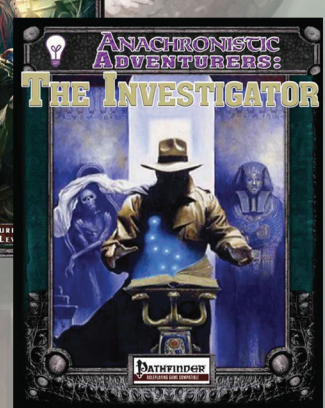
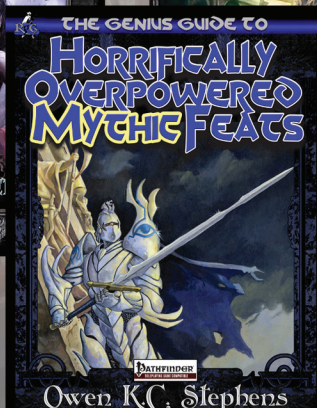
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