

CARD BARD

Rulebook





CREDITS

Game Design - Keyan Kenney & Aaron Griffin

Graphic Design & Illustration - Keyan Kenney

© 2023 Key & Griffin Games LLC. All Rights Reserved.

No part of this product may be reproduced without specific permission.

Retain this information for your records. Not suitable for children

under 36 months due to small parts. Actual components may vary

from those shown. Made in China. THIS PRODUCT IS NOT A TOY. NOT

INTENDED FOR USE OF PERSONS 12 YEARS OF AGE OR YOUNGER.



CONTENTS

Prologue 3

Game Setup 5

How to Play 8

Card Anatomies 12

Token Details 16

Glossary 18

Special Thanks 21

Prologue

Two strangers, bound by a perilous quest and a shared secret, find themselves on a magical island promising to fulfill their deepest desires—if they can speak its true name. Thrust together by fate, their alliance is uneasy yet essential. As they journey through enchanted, dangerous landscapes, their friendship deepens, tested by traps and foes that challenge their bond. Deep within the island awaits not just the power they seek, but a final, harrowing competition forcing a choice between their newfound friendship and burning desires.

Time is ticking, enemies lurk at every turn, and their once-aligned ambitions begin to diverge. It's a high-stakes contest where friendship and rivalry collide, and only one can emerge victorious. Their relationship, quest, and lives hang in the balance, as they race against time and conflicting aspirations. A story filled with twists, where the lines between camaraderie and competition blur, leaving both forever changed. Turns, where the boundaries between camaraderie and competition blur, leaving both characters forever changed.

Overview

In Card Bard, you step into the role of a magical musical maestro—the Bard—and engage in a high-stakes duel of wits and strategy to accumulate the most Fame by the game's grand finale. Armed with a harmonious deck, each turn offers the chance to craft enchanting songs, outperform rivals in lyrical duels, and charm an ethereal audience. But it's not just about dazzling performances; Card Bard infuses strategic depth into every component. Each card, token, and counter holds intrinsic value, influencing the duel in nuanced ways. Reach 15 Fame first in this rich blend of musical flair and tactical gameplay to emerge as the virtuoso of verse, the sovereign of sonnets, and the ultimate Card Bard!

COMPONENTS



Cards (72)



Fame Tokens (40)



Status Counters (20)

Game Setup

To set up the game, perform the following steps, in order:

1. Setting the Stage

Place all Fame and Status counters within easy reach.

Choose a pre-built deck or construct your own.

(Deck construction guidelines on pg. 16).

2. Gearing up

Place your Bard card in the Bard Zone of your player area. Collect all Songs from your deck.

3. Tuning Up

Select Songs for your opening hand, shuffle the discarded Songs back into your deck.

4. Hushing the Crowd

Shuffle your deck, place it in the Draw Zone, then draw until you have six cards in hand.

5. Taking your Places

Determine the first player randomly; play proceeds clockwise from them.

The game is now ready to begin!

Tip: Your opening hand should have a mix of Songs and Compositions. A good starting point is holding onto 2-3 Songs, ensuring a balanced response to varying situations.



PLAY AREA



- 1. Timeline:** Represents the flow of time in your Songs.
- 2. Bard Zone:** Home to your hero, the inspiring Bard.
- 3. Catalog:** Store completed Songs here. Some card effects interact specifically with the Catalog.
- 4. Draw Zone:** Houses your Draw Pile.
- 5. Discard Zone:** Cards discarded by end-of-turn, card effects, or upon Song completion go here.
- 6. Retired Zone:** Place retired cards face down here, separate from the Discard Zone. Retired cards are out of play for the remainder of the game.

Note: Placements are suggestions to help keep your play area organized. Feel free to make adjustments that make sense to you, but do communicate with your fellow players!

How to Play



Immerse in the rhythmic duel of Card Bard as players orchestrate their cards to craft captivating Songs, garnering the applause and Fame from the enchanted audience. The curtain falls when a Bard amasses 15 Fame and has serenaded their final note, leaving no active Songs on stage. Such mastery of melody crowns them the victor!

Turn Order

Card Bard plays over a series of alternating turns that are made up of 5 steps. Each of these steps takes place every turn, even if nothing happens during the step.

1. **Play:** Use Actions to play cards, draw, or activate effects.
2. **Resolve:** Ensure all effects are resolved before checking the win condition.
3. **Discard:** Discard any unwanted or excess cards down to your hand limit.
4. **Draw:** Draw cards up to your hand limit.
5. **Recover:** Recharge your Actions up to the Action limit for the next round.



GAMEPLAY

Playing Cards

The active player may play as many cards as they wish, provided they have enough Actions. Each card played consumes one Action.

Drawing Cards

The active player may draw as many cards as they wish, provided they have enough Actions. Each draw consumes one Action. Upon depleting the draw pile, shuffle the discard pile to form a new draw pile and place it in the Draw Zone, face down.

Ending Your Turn

At the turn's end, you may discard any number of cards, but you must discard down to your hand limit if exceeding it. If holding fewer cards than the hand limit, draw up to reach the hand limit. Recharge your Actions to the Action limit.

Action and Hand Limits

Default limits are six cards for hand size and three Actions. Some cards may alter these limits. Players can hold any number of cards and have any positive number of Actions during their turn, but must adhere to the limits during the Recover and Draw steps.

Example Turn

At the beginning of your first turn, you have six cards and three Actions. For your first Action, you play a Song from your hand using one Action. In this example, you have played “Maple N’ Twig,” an Open Song of three Complexity, meaning to score it and earn three Fame, you need to play three Composition cards onto it.

For your second Action, you choose to draw from your deck. You have drawn “Pull Off”. You play “Pull Off” from your hand using your third Action

Now at the end step of your turn, you decide you don’t need “Hidden Triad.” You discard it and draw 2 Cards from your deck to refill to your limit of six cards in hand. Now you refill your Actions to their limit of three for the next turn and end your turn.



THE CARDS



THE CARDS — An Overview

In Card Bard, each card orchestrates a distinct gameplay experience, occasionally unveiling dramatic or unique scenarios. Cards are played from your hand, costing one Action each to play – the effects of cards may resonate immediately, or only when certain conditions are harmonized.

Card Effects Timing

- Complete effects trigger on Song completion, before scoring.
- Catalog effects start when Song enters a player's catalog, remaining active while there. They do not stack.
- Sustain effects start with Song play on Timeline, ending on its removal.
- Activate effects cost an Action, usable any number of times per turn with sufficient Actions.
- Composition effects take effect immediately upon play.

Let's take a look at the anatomy of each type of card in Card Bard.

THE CARDS

THE BARD CARD



THE SONG CARD



THE COMPOSITION CARD



1. Instrumental Mastery
2. Name
3. Title
4. Type & Subtype
5. Complexity
6. Keyword
7. Ability
8. Effects
9. Set Information

THE BARD CARD

The Bard card is the maestro of your deck, guiding the melodic narrative you'll craft. Your Bard's instrumental mastery dictates the types of cards you can play: only those that echo your Bard's tune or those of an open tune may join your ensemble. Bards also enchant with special abilities, the costs of which are scripted on the card, ready to amplify your performance.

THE SONG CARD

Songs are the primary method of scoring Fame. Only one Song may take the spotlight in your Timeline at a time. To complete a Song and score the Fame from it, you must play Composition cards onto it, up to its complexity level. Once you have met the Complexity, resolve any effects of the Song card and then collect Fame equal to the Song's Complexity. The Song card then takes its bow in your Catalog, while the Compositions are gracefully exited to the discard.

THE COMPOSITION CARD

Composition cards are the harmonies and melodies that breathe life into your Songs. They resonate with effects instantly upon playing them. Yet, some Compositions carry a deeper tune, with requirements that must be met for their full melody to unfold. For instance, a card with a Tribute (1) effect will only unveil its magic if you dedicate 1 Fame to its performance.

THE TOKENS & COUNTERS

In Card Bard, tokens and counters enrich your gameplay experience. Fame tokens are your path to victory, marking win conditions and fluctuating with game actions. Dull/Inspire counters are two-sided: Dull (purple) ups song complexity but not rewards, while Inspire (green) adds extra Fame without requiring more compositions. These counters can also track actions or silence effects, serving as multi-use tools.



Fame Tokens

Each Fame token represents 1 Fame



Dull Counter

The purple side of this counter represents one point of Dullness.



Inspire Counter

The green side of this counter represents one point of Inspiration.

Deck Building

While Card Bard resonates beautifully with pre-constructed decks, the melody ascends to a crescendo when players compose their original decks. Each symphony of strategy you create must be orchestrated with exactly 31 cards, including your Bard, with no more than three echoes of any card, by name, to retain a harmonious composition. Within these musical measures, any ensemble of Song and Composition cards can be choreographed. Yet, the heart of your deck beats with the rhythm of your Bard. This maestro of melody dictates the genre of cards you can play. Each card in your ensemble must either resonate with your Bard's instrumental mastery or carry an Open Mastery tune. Your Bard also enchants with special abilities, the notes of which are scripted on the card, awaiting the right moment to amplify your performance.

Pre-constructed Decks



WRIBS MOLDBRANE

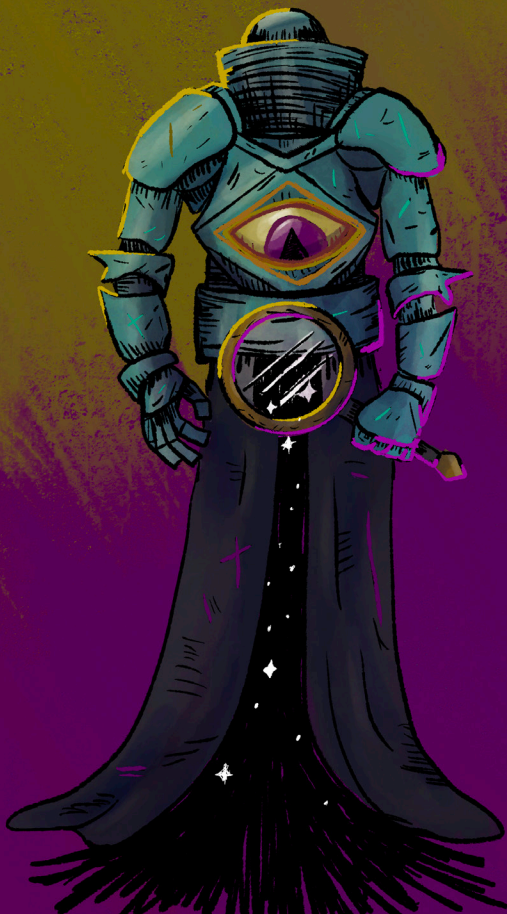
- 1 Wrib's Moldbrane
- 2 Each Cards 15-17
- 3 Each Cards 18-25



AIOLINE SILVERFALL

- 1 Aioline Silverfall
- 2 Each Cards 3-5
- 3 Each Cards 6-13

GLOSSARY



Action - Actions propel the game forward. Spend an Action to play or draw a card, or to use “Activate” effects. The default Action limit is three per turn.

Activate - “Activate” effects require one Action to use, and can be utilized multiple times per turn, provided enough Actions are available.

Catalog - A player’s catalog is where completed Songs are stored.

Catalog (Effect) - “Catalog” effects are triggered when the Song they are attached to enters a player’s catalog, remaining active as long as the Song stays in the catalog. These effects do not stack, unless specified.

Chorus - Playing successive cards with the “Chorus” keyword enhances their effects.

Complete - Songs are completed when the number of Composition cards on them matches their complexity rating.

Complete (Effect) - “Complete” effects are resolved upon Song completion but before Song scoring.

Fame - Fame is the core scoring mechanism in Card Bard. The game concludes when a player accumulates 15 Fame.

Finale - Composition cards with the “Finale” keyword must be the last card played in a Song.

Intro - Composition cards with the “Intro” keyword must be the first card played in a Song.

Kick - Cards with the “Kick” keyword trigger additional effects, if the Kick cost is paid. Kick costs involve discarding a specified number of cards.

Removed - Removed cards are taken from a player’s Timeline and placed into their discard pile.

Silence - Halts a Bard’s special ability. Use a Dull counter for each turn of Silence, removing one counter each turn.

Steal - Players can steal Fame, cards, or other components from opponents. When stealing multiple components, select one opponent as the target.

Subtype - A classification besides the base class, e.g., Composition - Dance.

Sustain - “Sustain” effects start when the Song they are attached to is played onto the Timeline and continue until they exit the Timeline.

Tribute - Cards with the “Tribute” keyword trigger additional effects when played, if the Tribute cost is paid. Tribute costs involve returning a specified number of Fame tokens to the shared pool.



And a Very Special Thanks To All of Our Kickstarter Backers!

We want to take a moment to express our heartfelt gratitude to each and every one of our Kickstarter backers. Without your generous support, the enchanting world of Card Bard would remain but a dream. Your belief in our vision has made this game a reality, and for that, we are eternally grateful. As you immerse yourself in the captivating duels of Card Bard, know that you are an integral part of this magical journey. Thank you for helping us bring the melody, magic, and strategy of Card Bard to tables around the world. May your songs echo through the ages!



Daniel Anderson
Andrew McLean Owens
Derek Lilleskov
Michael Plati
Ryan
Edwin Pennington
Jason Shipp
Michael Spitler
andrew Berkeland
Alexander
The Creative Fund by BackerKit
Potionslingers
ArgusWolfe
Korey Kolberg
Alex Knobloch
Dancing Koala Games
Josh Goforth
Todd Hamelin
Shayna MacLarty
Patrick Jones
Samuell Ahlfinger
Fox McGregor
Zac Rovang with StrongBox Games
Randy
Sean Temple
Clint griffin
Kyle Jordan
Madison Letzig
Vince Formica
Shawn Hurd
Robert



Jayson Minnick
Jake Williams
Trent
Ghoul
Van
David
Terry
Nathan Cleveland
frogpaste
Murray Gallagher
Carrie Temple
Noah Kihata
fallenape
Austin
Micah Hill
Mona Carol
Margaret
Kelly Diana Brogdon
Matthew Scrivner
Bryan
Ravachol
shawn
Neil Taylor
Torsten Stelling
Neuromancer
Samantha McEvoy
Melinda Yoder
Jonathan Flike (Atomic Automaton)
Ashley Dillard
Frankie Danger
Winston Roberts

Mike Bregel
Bubs and Paps
Griselda Weiner
Stefan Curtis
Matt Holden - Indie Game Alliance
David Forck
Richard Hart
Jenna Griffin
□○GAMES
Jacen Martin
Rob Seib
John T Schott III
sean dreuth
Steve and Rebecca Sykes
Nancy
Brian Donelson
TheyCallMeShine
William Allen
Die Bad Die Games
Federico R.
Rebekah Dalton
Loren Mora
Max Stone
Matt Lindner
Timothy
SrD LdN
Edward



QUICK REFERENCE

CARD BARD



Turn Order

1. Play: Use available Actions to play or draw cards, and activate effects.
2. Resolve: Resolve all effects still in play then check for the win condition.
3. Discard: Discard unwanted cards and discard excess cards over the hand limit.
4. Draw: Draw cards up to the hand limit.
5. Recover: Recharge Actions up to the Action limit.

Card Effects Timing

- Complete effects trigger on Song completion, before scoring.
- Catalog effects start when Song enters a player's catalog, remaining active while there. They do not stack.
- Sustain effects start with Song play on Timeline, ending on its removal.
- Activate effects cost an Action, usable any number of times per turn with sufficient Actions.
- Composition effects take effect immediately upon play.

Icon Guide



Spend/Gain 1 Action.



Discard From Your Hand



Spend/Gain 1 Fame.



Retire From Play