

Bardic 101: Bard-ing & Not with Horses!

As Taught By HL Ambra Michelli/Samantha More

So the first time I signed up for a Barding 101 class, I kept waiting for the horse people to leave, and strangely enough they didn't (The 15th Century French or Italian term 'Barding' refers to the armoring of a horse).

This course, Bard-ing 101, is for the bardic/musically obsessed such as myself. Get your bardic rockstar on! We'll discuss culture, performance techniques, busking, presentation, song selection, competitions, great resources for music to learn, and more. This is a foundation for the novice, and a refresher for the veteran. All are welcome.

- Define Bard as it applies to 'period': Best example of break down I've found, by Mistress Adelaide D' Beaumont, OP: <http://ravenboymusic.com/Articles/howtobard.htm>
 - Bard -- Gaelic word now translated as "poet"¹ (Welsh term: bardd)
 - Gesteur -- Old French for "teller of exploits" (became "jester"²)
 - Gleeman/Gleoman -- Old English for bard/minstrel/chorister (source of modern "glee clubs")
 - Harper -- Middle English (Latin term: cytharista), "player of harp", though it is often applied to any instrumentalist)
 - Histrio -- Latin, specific to actors, but also applied to minstrels in general
 - Jongleur -- OF from Latin jocularator, "entertainer" (became "juggler"²)
 - Minstrel -- from Latin ministrallis, "little servant" and Middle French menestral
 - Scôp -- OE/Old High German for bard/minstrel from scof, "mockery"
 - Skald/Skaldinna -- Icelandic/Scandinavian term for "poet"/"poetess"
 - Goliard -- Latin/OF/ME, "drunkard" or "glutton"; applies to usually itinerant scholar-poets whose works celebrate high living and sensual pleasures, hence the name. (This term is still used in Italy today for university students!)
 - Mimus-- Latin; like histrio, more properly applied to actors (and in period in no way implying silence as it does in modern use), but used for minstrels in general. Usually only applied to traveling performers, not a minstrel in paid service.
 - Musician -- Greek, a practitioner of "the art of the Muses"; usually applied to singers and instrumentalists, but as there are Muses for dance, history, poetry etc., technically applicable to much wider bardic use.
 - Seanachaidh -- Gaelic for "storyteller" (pronounced roughly "shanna-key"); as likely to be some old gaffer who simply is the most proficient "yarn spinner" in the village as anyone who gets paid for their performance; a seanachaidh is typically a wordsmith rather than a musician.
 - Troubadour/Trouvère -- OF from trouver, "to compose"³; applied to the French composers of the chansons de geste. They were often, though not always, members of the nobility. This term generally implies that you write your own material.

Also of note: Balladeer: Singer of ballads.

- Define Bard as it applies to the SCA /Types of Bards (multiple choice): Summarized as: "Entertainer":
 - Court/Feast Performance
 - Court-ly Performer (teas and such)
 - Trouba (dor/ritz) – Composer/Writer
 - Competition Bard
 - Tale Spinner/Story Teller
 - Act (or/ress)
 - Busker/Baladeer
 - Rockstar/Concert Bard
 - Comedic Bard
 - Instrumentalist
 - Poet
 - Circle dog
 - Choral Performer (secular or non)
 - Historian
 - B.I.T.
 - *Many Mor*
- Common SCA Paraphernalia/How to ID a Bard
 - Motley Anything – cloaks, cords, hats, bags, etc
 - When you where Motley, you are ready to preform
 - Bardic staffs/sticks
 - Bells & noise makers
 - Different cultures, different bardic bling
 - That performing voice you hear when you hit the site...

- To bard, or not to bard? What's your answer to the question?
 - You don't have to be a bard to enjoy baric or perform bardically. There are many people out there who have been content and enjoyed themselves with a repertoire of only a handful of songs. So choose your own Path as you like. If you love it, your audience will love it. If you don't, why do it?
- Getting Started
 - Play to your strengths – figure out what they are
 - Developing a repertoire
 - Pros and cons of paper
 - Find a Venu
 - Feast
 - Queen's Tea (or similar)
 - By the field for the pavilion
 -
 - Basic Performance tips
 - Selecting your piece
 - Keep your venue in mind
 - Projection
 - Eye contact/closing your eyes, pros and cons
 - Distracting your audience through nervous habits
- Bardic Circles – Attending
 - Circle Decorum and Courtesy
 - Taking Turns: How do you know when it is your turn/how do you bust into a circle
 - Bardic Strike done with Courtesy
 - Thanking your host
 - Constructive feedback – when to give it and how
 - Focus on the solution
 - Complement a successful element of performance or song
 - Only give critique if specifically asked
 - Positive feedback before constructive critique
 - There is always SOMETHING to praise the singer about:
 - The *Passion* with which it was performed (Emoting)
 - The *Writing*
 - The *Music Composition*
 - The *Vocals*
 - The *Imagery* of the poetry
 - The *Courage* to share their piece with you
 - Knowing your Audience/Cultural Differences
 - Judging Tone
 - Selecting your Pieces
 - Tolerance (Art of the successful water break)
- Bardic Circles – Hosting
 - Advertising
 - Setting the Scene – The Aesthetics
 - Hospitality, and How it Effects Your 'Clential'
- Competing
 - Knowing Your Judges
 - Trimaris
 - Laureate competitions

- Busking
- Competition
- Court
- Busking
- Bardic Circles

- The lyrics are not on the ceiling...
- The importance of Emoting
- Instrumental assistance, pros and cons

- The Bardic Strike
- Especially in new territory, try safe neutral songs until you get the vibe of a group

- Enabling the New-Blood
- Drawing a Crowd
- Guiding the Circle
- Tolerance – Life is a Circle

- Baronial/Group champion competitions
 - Warrior Bard of Trimaris
 - Prizes vs. Regalia
 - Out of Kingdom judging sheets/good breakdowns
 - Knowne World Competitions
 - Being a Judge
 - Know the rules/theme of the comp
 - Don't feel intimidated and over compensate
- Share Your Knowledge
 - Bogarting is Bogus: Be free with your work.
 - Website
 - Bardic Books
 - Safeguard your compositions by sharing them (paper dies)
 - Teaching
 - Universities and Events
 - Symposiums/Workshops
 - Monthly Bardics/Jam Sessions
 - Compile your Resources
- Finding Resources for Developing your Skills
 - Laurels: Help Them Help You
 - Other Veteran Bards
 - Google and You Tube are our friend
 - Inspiration strikes when it feels like.
 - Tap the resource of your Colleagues
 - Just about everyone has something to offer
 - Stepping Up
 - Contrary to popular believe, the printed word still exists. Visit your local library.
 - Listen, Listen, Listen
- Concluding Thoughts:
 - The SCA is the most forgiving crowd you'll ever perform for.
 - Everyone sucks sometimes.
 - Never give up!
 - It's not about you. It's about the material.
 - Big fish, little fish
 - Keeping an Open Mind & Open Heart
 - Being Helpful
 - Don't get defensive.
 - Have Fun! Otherwise, you're wasting your time and energies on being unhappy.

Ever Onward

by Ambra Michelli/Samantha Moore

Shall I now forsake this road of freedom?
 No more to wander, sing or truly play?
 Return to where my struggle to become
 Dissolves as I accept what others say.
 There are those who do not heed the soul's song
 For fear of darkness choose dark guised as light.

The rhythms in my heart beat proud and strong
 No shadow cast compares, nor any fright.
 They laugh at me and question my desires.
 They say, "Such whims are nurtured in death's womb."
 Forsake the road to which my heart aspires
 Or likely, first, the road will be my tomb.

Mayhap the road to dreaming high consumes
 For me, my journey, ever on, resumes!

www.hartshavenmusic.com