

CIRCLE OF RHYTHM

A MUSICAL SUBCLASS FOR DRUIDS

BY KAI LINDER



DRUID CIRCLE OF RHYTHM

INTRODUCTION

Nature is full of rhythm, of repeating cycles: life and death, growth and decay, night and day, seasons, heartbeats. Druids of the Circle of Rhythm use percussive music to connect with, support, and guide these rhythms, listening both for the obvious changes and the subtle regularities that so many overlook. They join in the music of our surrounding and revel in sharing it with others, ensuring nothing is taken for granted and that we all can beat as one heart.

Druids of this circle are found in nature as are most druid, but they are most often encountered as members of travelling performances or as seasonal workers. Many follow a regular routine, perhaps moving between the same four places with each season or visiting for particular festivals. Wherever they go, the rhythms they make with drum, clap, and tabourine encourage others to listen and join together.

RHYTHM OF MAGIC

When you choose this circle at 2nd level, your careful practice lets you use rhythm to invoke magic. You gain proficiency in two percussive musical instruments of your choice, such as drums or rattles. You can use percussive musical instruments you are proficient with as a spellcasting focus for your druid spells.

Additionally, you know the *booming blade* and *thunderclap* cantrips, and they are druid spells for you.

NATURAL CYCLE

Starting at 2nd level, your magic is at its strongest when it follows the alternating rhythm of growth and decay. When you deal damage to a creature with a spell or attack, it takes extra necrotic damage equal to half your druid level if you didn't deal damage to a creature on your previous turn. When you restore hit points to a creature, it regains additional hit points equal to half your druid level if you didn't restore hit points to a creature on your previous turn.

MATCH TEMPO

At 6th level, you can use music to bolster and synchronise your allies. As an action, you play a magical rhythm audible out to 30 feet. You and friendly creatures that heard the rhythm gain temporary hit points equal to your druid level, and for the next minute can use the Help action as a bonus action on other creatures who heard the rhythm. If a creature that hears the rhythm can already use the Help action as a bonus action, including as a result of a previous use of this feature, it gains the ability to use the Help action as a reaction on other creatures who heard the rhythm.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

SENSE VIBRATION

When you reach 10th level, you can send out subtle rhythmic pulses of vibrational magic. As a bonus action, you gain tremorsense out to 15 feet. You have advantage on Wisdom (Insight) checks against creatures within range of your tremorsense that have a heartbeat. This effect lasts for 1 minute or until you are incapacitated.

You can use this feature a number of times equal to your proficiency bonus, and you regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

CIRCADIAN RHYTHM SHIFT

At 14th level, you have the ability to alter the influence of night and day. When you take a short rest, you can play a musical rhythm that shifts the bodily perception of time for a number of creatures up to your Wisdom modifier (minimum of one) that are also taking a short rest. At the end of the short rest, you and the chosen creatures gain the benefits of a long rest instead. The next time those affected by this switch complete a long rest, they gain the benefits of a short rest instead.

Once you have used this feature, you can't do so again until you finish an unaltered long rest.



Through the chaos of battle the clanging sound of a tambourine range, each quick shake and beat steady. As the rhythm floated through the air the fighter couldn't help but match the beat just as the monk three an elbow on the downbeat. The demon fell, two wounds in its chest. "Nice one!" They called in unison. The druid swung down from their tree branch with a smile, not breaking their tambourine rhythm. With their right hand they snapped, and a thunderclap knocked an imp from the air. A quick rattle and thumbroll and the fighter's wound knit together. Attack, restore, attack, restore.

GONG SHIELD

Armor (shield), rare (requires attunement)

Gong shields are large circular discs of heavy bronze or brass that have been magically suspended a finger-width from their straps to allow them to resonate.

While holding this shield, whenever you successfully push a creature you can push it an additional 5 feet away from you.

The shield has 4 charges, and it regains 1d4 expended charges daily at dawn. When you take damage from an attack or from falling, you can use your reaction to expend 1 or more charges. Roll a d10 for each charge expended and reduce the damage by the total result. Each creature within 10 feet of you must succeed on a DC 14 Constitution saving throw or take thunder damage equal to the amount of damage reduced.

WAR TAMBOURINE

Weapon (tambourine), rare (requires attunement)

This tambourine has a steel frame with razor sharp clappers and a drumhead magically treated to resist damage. It's a musical instrument and a +2 magic weapon, which weighs 1 lb and deals 1d4 slashing damage. It has the finesse, light, and thrown (range 20/60) properties.

Parry. When you are hit by an attack, you can use your reaction to add 2 to your AC against that attack. You can use this ability three times, and regain all expended uses when you finish a long rest.

Spellcasting. You can use the tambourine to cast the following spells without requiring components (spell save DC 16): *cause fear*, *compelled duel*, *heroism*, and *heroes' feast*. Once you have cast a spell in this way, you can't cast that spell again until you finish a long rest. *Heroes' feast* can only be cast once every 7 days.

BANDIT THE RACCOON

Familiar

Bandit is a cheeky little scamp of a raccoon, a constant source of mischief. He's very grabby and loves to take or be given things, though he cares little for actually having things, generally dropping them or hiding them in someone else's stuff. He enjoys music, though the sound of drumming makes him sleepy.

Trait. There's nothing better than the thrill of getting ahold of something.

Bond. Threaten my friends, you threaten me.

Flaw. I have no respect for other people's things.

BANDIT THE RACCOON

Small beast, chaotic neutral

Armor Class 11

Hit Points 5 (1d6 + 2)

Speed 30 ft. Burrow 5 ft.

STR	DEX	CON	INT	WIS	CHA
4 (-3)	13 (+1)	15 (+2)	3 (-4)	13 (+1)	10 (+0)

Damage Immunities poison

Skills Sleight of Hand +5, Stealth +5

Condition Immunities shame

Senses Darkvision 60 feet, passive Perception 11

Languages understands Common but pretends he can't

Challenge 4 (1,100 XP)

How Did You Get That? As a bonus action, Bandit magically opens a hole up to 6 inches in diameter in any surface up to 4 inches thick. A hole can only be made, and remain open, while no one is observing Bandit. Bandit can close the hole no action required, as if it had never been there.

Inexplicable Scamp. Bandit is immune to damage from effects that target an area, somehow always getting away.

Keen Smell. Bandit has advantage on Wisdom (Perception) checks that rely on smell.

ACTIONS

Bite. Melee Weapon Attack: +2 to hit, reach 5 ft., one target.
Hit: 1 piercing damage.

CREDITS

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SOUNDS OF CIRCLE OF RHYTHMS

The Primal Song is based on the musicality of nature and how it speaks to our emotions and behaviour. How this manifests is impossible to pin down, but here's some examples that inspired me:

Djembe: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LOS0kA_O6lQ

Castanets: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=fPgJE_H2k9s

Tambourine: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_LxS3ScFwrc