

Israfael, Archangel of Music

**a heretical addition to Steve Jackson Games' IN NOMINE® RPG
by Ingeborg S. Nordén**

Introduction

*From a distance we are instruments
marching in a common band.
Playing songs of hope, playing songs of peace.
They're the songs of every man.
God is watching us. God is watching us.
God is watching us from a distance.*

—Bette Midler, “From a Distance”

Some of you might already know that I've "promoted" Israfael, the Angel of Music, to a full-fledged Superior in my campaign. Finishing and balancing her servitors' write-up has been unusually difficult; however, I hope that other players will enjoy what I've put together with help from a few friends.

Dissonance

It is dissonant for Israfael's servitors to discourage musical talent and performance--unless Hell would gain a distinct advantage that way; even then, Israfael prefers to Redeem the musicians rather than silence or destroy them. It is also dissonant for these angels to abuse music for selfish ends (such as using a Song to talk mortals into giving them unreasonable special treatment).

Servitor Attunements

Backup

If one or more musicians are performing, an angel with this attunement can command instruments to accompany them perfectly—the rhythm, harmony, and style will automatically match the piece being performed. Of course, the instruments must be available and in working condition. Furthermore, the angel can command only as many instruments as he has total Forces; a 9-Force beginner might provide Backup for a large rock band or similar group, but only Israfel herself can command a whole orchestra's equipment to accompany an opera soloist.

Know the Score

This attunement works exactly like Nybbas' "Soundtrack" attunement; despite the Demon Prince's jealous claims, Israfel developed it independently as an outgrowth of her Word.

Talent Scout

On a successful Perception roll, angels with this attunement can gauge musical talent in mortals—much like Seraphim of Creation, except for the narrower specialty.

Choir Attunements

Seraphim

A Seraph of Music can automatically detect whether someone is using music (sung or played) to deceive his audience. For instance, the angel might overhear a man performing “You Are So Beautiful” in a karaoke bar; he'd instantly learn whether the singer was offering a sincere complement, choosing that song because a friend happened to like it, or flattering a date at the bar just to seduce her into bed.

Cherubim (restricted)

Besides attuning to people as usual, a Cherub of Music can use his attunement in two indirect ways. First, he can attune to an instrument and learn about the rightful owner's location and well-being. (Instruments with no obvious “rightful owner”—such as one being displayed in a store—reveal information about their *creators* instead.) Second, the Cherub can attune to a piece of music he hears and learn about one performer as if he'd been targeted directly. This version still works on recorded music, but with a penalty of -3 to both the result and the Check Digit.

Ofanim

An Ofanite of Music can add his Corporeal Forces to any skill roll involving dance and choreography; this includes Corporeal Songs performed through dance.

Elohim (restricted)

On a successful Resonance roll, an Elohite of Music can hear emotional disturbance in others (including most Ethereal Discords/Disadvantages). Those who learn the Ethereal Song of Harmony always succeed at performing it (roll anyway to check for Interventions); the Song still costs Essence as usual.

Malakim

By spending 3 Essence, a Malakite of Music can sing a powerful, stunning note that acts like the Song of Thunder; roll only to determine the Check Digit and chances of an Intervention. (Treat the effective Song Level as equal to the angel's Corporeal Forces, whenever he uses this attunement.)

Kyriotates (restricted)

A Kyriotate of Music automatically gains access to the host's mundane musical knowledge. If his possession roll is a Divine Intervention *and* his host is aligned with Heaven, the Kyriotate can even use true Songs that person knows. (Of course, Israfil punishes anyone who tries to possess Uriel's followers; she may resent his killing the old Archangel of Song, but she doesn't want to start another civil war in Heaven!)

Mercurians (restricted)

In addition to the usual information (see *Core Rules*, p.104), a Mercurian of Israfel learns about the significance of music in the life of any person he resonates:

CD Result	Additional Data
1	A vague sense of which musical styles that the target prefers: "classic rock", "smooth jazz", or another simple description.
2	How much general exposure to music the target has had, and the most important source of that exposure: "She's grown up hearing only a few styles because of her family's beliefs." If the Mercurian is resonating a fellow celestial, only information that the target's Role/host would know is revealed at this level.
3	Which styles the target likes <i>and</i> dislikes passionately: "Ruth loves country and western, especially older artists like Johnny Cash; but she also swears that hard rock is the Devil's music."

CD Result (cont.) Additional Data

- 4 How much the target personally knows about music: "Ruth's trained her voice informally and has enough theory under her belt to play 'Chopsticks' on a piano."
- 5 Whether the target has "musical connections" with anybody else in the room (or 10x CeIForces feet away outdoors): "Ruth and her boyfriend—that guy I see in the flannel shirt—think of the Tennessee Waltz as 'their song'. Ruth also sings in the church choir directed by that blue-haired woman at the next table."
- 6 How much ordinary musical potential the target possesses ("Ruth's singing voice could get her noticed beyond her hometown"); *or* how musical connections with other people influence the target's life ("Ruth's choir director has performed 'Love Lifted Me' at revivals so often, that Ruth associates the hymn with tearful cries for forgiveness.") The Mercurian must choose ONE of these answers each time he uses his resonance; he cannot learn both at the same time, unless he rolls a Divine Intervention.

On a Divine Intervention, the angel learns *both* possible results for CD 6 (along with the lower information). On an Infernal Intervention, he fails completely and cannot resonate that person again for 1d6 days. (In campaigns that allow Ethereal Interventions, the Mercurian picks up one random, music-related memory from his target's life. The lullaby that person first heard as a baby, the details of a long-lost instrument he used to own, and similar thoughts might turn up this way.)

Bright Lilim (restricted)

If a Gifter of Music is within earshot of a live musical performance, she has a better chance of determining her target's Needs; add the angel's Celestial Forces to the Check Digit of her resonance roll. (Note that the music must be performed *live* to grant this bonus; recordings don't count, even if they were made in the same location earlier.) If the Bright herself is giving a live performance, she may substitute a Skill check for a resonance check. Of course, Israfel's Brights can always try to detect Needs normally (following the usual rules) in other situations.

Relationships

Allied: Eli (her father—and all music is a creative art); Novalis (whose Rites and attunements often involve joyful dance)

Associated: [Amaré](#) (love and music often stimulate each other); Blandine (music both inspires and expresses great dreams); Christopher (music is a major part of children's play and learning); Yves (who shares her interest in the Symphony as a whole)

Neutral: Most others¹, except...

Hostile: [Uriel](#) (who destroyed the Grigori Archangel of Song²; Uriel himself is Neutral to Israfel, considering her an improvement on the corrupt Watcher she replaced)

1 Dominic mistrusts Israfel as he does most ex-Creationers, but doesn't hate her outright.

Laurence, on the other hand, feels professionally Neutral: despite Israfel's origins and her ties with the Peace Faction, he acknowledges that music is important to both the War and the Church.

2 Although this didn't happen in canon, it made sense to me that Uriel would blame the Archangel of Song for spreading the Celestial Song of Fruition and corrupting the Host; when Dominic ruled that the entire Choir of Grigori were to be cast out of Heaven, Uriel decided to execute their leader personally.

Distinctions

Vassal of Music

With a successful Perception roll and enough time (7 – CD hours), a Vassal of Music can master unfamiliar instruments or sheet music more quickly than a mortal can. This knowledge fades in 24 hours, unless the angel has Character Points available to buy the proper skill normally. (Someone who reads notes could still follow a score on sight after his power fades, but have trouble playing or singing a part himself.)

Friend of the Gamut

A Friend of the Gamut can improve the musical skill rolls of others who sing or play along with him—as many musicians as the angel has total Forces. The bonus granted decreases with the total number of performers, since extending this blessing further becomes more difficult:

Additional Performers (excluding the Friend)	Skill Roll Bonus
2-4	+3 each
5-8	+2 each
9 or greater	+1 each

A Friend of the Gamut's bonus applies to *either* the Target Number *or* the Check Digit of a single performance (character's choice each time). However, it never causes or prevents an Intervention of any kind.

Angels with this Distinction can enhance true Songs, though this is more difficult than improving ordinary music: If the Friend is helping others with a Chorus or a Theme³, then the bonus is always a flat +1 no matter how many others sing with him. Furthermore, only two Friends of the Gamut may affect the same musicians at the same time: one for the target number of a musical Skill roll, and the other for the Check Digit.

Master of Celestial Harmony

By singing or playing an instrument beautifully, a Master of Celestial Harmony can reveal the Symphony's infinite power to mortal minds. If the angel's Skill roll succeeds *and* the hearer's Will roll fails, that person realizes for one bright second how deeply connected each living thing is to one another, leaving him greatly humbled. For as many hours as the Master has Ethereal Forces, the target of the resonance must roll versus Will in order to consciously do something selfish.⁴

Chorister

This special Distinction counts as a half-step above a servitor's existing rank;⁵ it allows the bearer to sing in the Angelic tongue while using a vessel. (In canon, the Archangel Michael granted Israfel this same power through the Vassal of War Distinction; when Israfel became an Archangel in her own right, she too made "singing in vessel" a special honor.)

3 As described in *Liber Canticorum* (pp. 17-21).

4 Adapted from the Mercurian of Light attunement on the "INVerse" fansite (<http://www.pvv.org/~solas/inverse/lucifer.html>).

5 For example, a Vassal of Music who is also a Chorister commands more respect than other Vassals. This Distinction is rarely awarded to someone who hasn't earned another one first.

Rites⁶

Basic:

- Compose a new musical work.
- Teach a song (or a Song!) to others.
- Spend 2 hours performing music for an audience of 20 people or more.

Expanded:

- Use music to calm fears or heal a relationship.
- Introduce 20 or more listeners to a new musical style.
- Assist in the Redemption of a Hardcore or Media demon (+2 Essence).

Invocation Modifiers

+1—A well-used musical instrument in playing condition, or a favorite songbook.

+2—A musician singing or playing alone, without being asked to perform.

+3—A group of three or more musicians performing together.

+4—A song known to at least 1000 people, in the original composer's notation.

+5—A large professional choir or symphony orchestra, performing for the public.

+6—The original handwritten score of a world-famous composer's work.

⁶ Adapted from *Liber Canticorum* (p. 10); some new Rites suggested by Erik Bergesen and Scott Rochat.

Cathedral: The Divine Conservatory

Israfel built her Cathedral within flying distance of the Halls of Creation, incorporating much of the magnificent artwork that her predecessor had kept. Its domed roof resembles a crown with nine spires; each spire is topped by a sculpture representing a major Choir of angels, performing on its signature instrument. (The Grigori sculpture—an enormous angelic figure, teaching men to make instruments of their own—has been veiled in black since Dominic ruled against the Watchers' returning to Heaven. The spire and sculpture representing Bright Lilim, on the other hand, is a recent addition to the Conservatory: it shows a graceful, feminine angelic form rising from a bank of flames and lifting her voice in song.)

The interior of the Conservatory contains Israfel's throne room and her immense collection of musical creations. Scores as old as written notation are carefully preserved there; so are instruments from every era and culture on Earth, and recordings made as soon as Jean (Archangel of Lightning) found the technology. Several more levels of the Conservatory have been dedicated to concert halls, dance floors, and practice rooms for her servitors; but the deepest, most heavily guarded rooms hold those angels' Hearts.

Tethers to Israfel's Conservatory have their upper ends in secret rooms; entry and exit through the proper gateway is controlled with a Symphonic code that matches the Earthly location. (When using the lower end of a Tether to return home, most of Israfel's servitors wait until no one else can hear them nearby.)