

Glass Armonicas

Strictly speaking, these items are not artifacts, as no truly esoteric knowledge is needed to either create or operate them. Indeed, that is the basic issue that both Heaven and Hell have with the items.

The first Glass Armonica was invented by Benjamin Franklin; he had been fascinated by the practice of 'tuning' wine glasses to produce music. The basic idea is to take a set of glasses, fill them with various levels of water and run a moistened finger along the edge. The level of the water dictates the tone produced by the finger, which means that it is a relatively straightforward matter to set up a scale and thus play music. Franklin's innovation was to replace the glasses with bowls specifically designed to produce the correct tone, then mount the bowls on a spindle; the performer merely had to keep the bowls moving with a foot pedal (and keep his fingers wet, which was almost as trivial). As usual, his invention was wildly popular. Many listeners compared the tones to angelic music (actual celestials agree that it isn't, but they do generally think that armonicas sound very pretty) and claimed that it had all sorts of healing virtues. That rumor is incorrect; so was the later one that Glass Armonicas

were dangerous to one's health. The major difference between the two rumors was that the former wasn't deliberately spread, and the latter was.

You see, the problem with Glass Armonicas is that they are sensitive to Disturbance. They are, in fact, precisely as sensitive to Disturbance as is a Symphonically Aware individual with two Celestial Forces. A Glass Armonica that 'detects' Disturbance will emit a rising chime for as long as it is within range; when asked, the Lightning Servitors assigned to the problem agree that the item is sufficiently sensitive to permit working out direction, distance, flavor (any information that could be gotten from a Symphonically Aware individual making a Perception Roll). A user would need to learn how to interpret the results, of course -- but given enough data the more common Disturbances could be worked out empirically. Worse, from the point of view of celestials, the results are reproducible. Every Glass Armonica will react the same way to the same specific Disturbance.

In other words, Ben Franklin had unwittingly invented a workable celestial detector. For what it's worth, he's very sorry about that.

Getting rid of the blessed things wasn't hard; it's *keeping* them suppressed that's the problem. Ben Franklin is an icon in Western History; like Leonardo Da Vinci (and let's not talk about all of **his** items that had to be hidden away, shall we?), there's always somebody interested in recreating something that he worked on. Both Heaven and Hell have been doing their best to dissuade such interest. Generally speaking, a bit of financial hassling usually works, but there's been at least one armonica maker in recent memory who has simply up and disappeared literally in thin air (albeit while flying a light airplane).

And that's just in *our* world.

Cost: strictly speaking, a PC wouldn't particularly need a Glass Armonica. But if one does anyway, 6 points sounds approximately correct.

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