



Pied Piper of Hamelin

by Stephen Duckham

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PantoScripts Sample

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THE PIED PIPER

CHARACTERS

THE RODENT LORD
 LORELEI (The good witch of the mountain)
 PIED PIPER
 KARL
 LIESL
 BURGOMASTER
 FRIEDA VON FROTH (Owner of the Beer Garden)
 CARROTS (Karl's lame younger brother)
 WILLY (Frieda's Son)
 GRETCHEN (His girlfriend)
 THE MOUNTAIN KING

CHORUS OF CITIZEN OF HAMELIN, CHILDREN AND PEOPLE OF THE MOUNTAIN

SYNOPSIS OF SCENES

ACT ONE

SCENE 1 THE COUNTRYSIDE
 SCENE 2 THE CITY OF HAMELIN
 SCENE 3 THE RIVER WESER
 SCENE 4 FRIEDA'S BOUDOIR
 SCENE 5 THE BEER GARDEN
 SCENE 6 THE COUNTRYSIDE
 SCENE 7 KOPPELBERG MOUNTAIN
 SCENE 8 THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING

ACT TWO

SCENE 1 THE BEER GARDEN
 SCENE 2 THE COUNTRYSIDE
 SCENE 3 KOPPELBERG MOUNTAIN
 SCENE 4 THE CITY OF HAMELIN
 SCENE 5 THE COUNTRYSIDE (SONG SHEET)
 SCENE 6 BURGOMASTER'S HALL

ACT ONE

SCENE 1	THE COUNTRYSIDE	Front Cloth
SCENE 2	THE CITY OF HAMELIN	Full stage. Beer Garden entrance right. Burgomaster's house left. A pump upstage with sliding top.
SCENE 3	THE RIVER WESER	Front cloth with river bank cut out on stage left.
SCENE 4	FRIEDA'S BOUDOIR	Cloth or inset. Screen on Stage.
SCENE 5	THE BEER GARDEN	Full stage with trees, light etc Outdoor bar to one side.
SCENE 6	THE COUNTRYSIDE	As scene 1
SCENE 7	KOPPELBERG MOUNTAIN	Front cloth/Gauze with rock covered entrance to one side.
SCENE 8	THE HALL OF THE MOUNTAIN KING	Full set. Brightly coloured scene with whatever the transformation ballet Requires.

ACT TWO

SCENE 1	THE BEER GARDEN	As 1 – 5
SCENE 2	THE COUNTRYSIDE	As 1 – 1
SCENE 3	KOPPELBERG MOUNTAIN	As 1 – 7
SCENE 4	THE CITY OF HAMELIN	As 1 – 2
SCENE 5	THE COUNTRYSIDE (SONG SHEET)	As 1 – 1
SCENE 6	BURGOMASTER'S HALL	Full set with Tudor woodwork and decoration. Banners hanging with various coat of arms etc.

CHARACTERS

THE RODENT LORD	Voice only except for an appearance in the final scene. Should be of a good build to fight with the Principle Boy. (Double Mountain King & Chorus.) See <i>note</i> .
LORELEI	The good witch of the mountain. Not the 'Fairy' type. Young to middle-aged. Good, clear speaking voice – non singing.
PIED PIPER	Young in appearance. Agile, likable and quick-witted with an ability to charm and amuse. Small amount of singing.
KARL	Principle Boy. Good looking, charming with a good singing voice. Age mid 20's – mid 30's.
LIESL	Principle Girl. Pretty and likable. She is strong willed as well as romantic. Good singing voice required. Age mid 20's.
BURGOMASTER	Pompous, authoritative and full of his own importance. Also under the control of the Rodent Lord. Singing required with company.
FRIEDA VON FROTH	Owner of the Beer Garden and panto Dame.
CARROTS	Karl's lame younger brother. Age approx 15. Singing with Company
WILLY	Frieda's Son. Energetic and comic. Good singing voice. Age mid 20's – mid 30's.
GRETCHEN	His "sometimes" girlfriend. Full of life and a bit of a man eater. She wants to snare Willy at whatever the cost! Great comic timing. Good singing voice. Age mid 20's – mid 30's.
THE MOUNTAIN KING	Larger than life and jovial. Can double with the Rodent Lord & Chorus.

The age ranges are for the characters and just a guide.

NOTE:

The Rodent Lord can be an actual character throughout the pantomime if you so wish. With small adjustments to the script he can appear in a single light down stage left until his final entrance.

The placing of the musical numbers and who sings them is suggested in the script, but it is up to the director to decide what to use. A word of advice: Pantomime audiences – particularly the younger members – like the story to keep moving, so don't make the musical sequences too long, especially the ballads.

I hope you enjoy doing this version of 'The Pied Piper of Hamelin' and have a great success with your production.

Stephen Duckham

THE PIED PIPER OF HAMELIN

ACT ONE

SCENE 1 THE COUNTRYSIDE

[During the Overture the silhouette of rats is seen on the house tabs or show curtain. After the overture, down stage right the lights pick up LORELEI, THE WHITE WITCH of Koppelberg Mountain.]

- LORELEI Dear people of – *[Place where panto is playing.]* I am Lorelei, the white witch of Koppelberg Mountain. There's no need to be afraid because I'm a good witch! At the foot of the mountain is the ancient city of Hamelin. Normally everything is peaceful and calm there, but recently the city has been overrun with rats. They're eating everything and causing chaos. They want to drive to people out so their leader, the Rodent Lord, can take control of the city.
- [The voice of the RODENT LORD is heard.]*
- RODENT That is correct.
- LORELEI *[Surprised.]* You are here?
- RODENT I am everywhere. Especially in the minds of the weak or susceptible. The Burgomaster is one such person. I can play on his greed to get him to work for me.
- LORELEI How is that?
- RODENT In return for his helping me to take over the city I have said I will assist him in becoming Chancellor of the country. Just watch. Come here my willing subject. *[Down left of the stage the BURGOMASTER enters. It appears as if he is in a trance.]* Anything I want this puny mortal to do he does. *[Calling to the BURGOMASTER.]* What is happening in the city?
- BURGOMASTER Everything is progressing well.
- RODENT Make sure no-one interferes with my plans.
- BURGOMASTER They won't. I assure you. Very soon the people will have had enough and leave.
- RODENT And then I will assume my rightful position. Go now. I will call on you later.
- BURGOMASTER Yes, my lord. *[HE exits.]*
- RODENT See. I am all powerful, so don't waste your time trying to defeat me.
- LORELEI You are right. I am no match for you powers.

RODENT And you will do well to remember that. I am invincible. I am the Rodent Lord!
[With an echoing laugh the voice ends.]

LORELEI I may not be able to help those poor people of Hamelin, but I know someone who might.

[She exits as the lights come up on a front cloth with the Pied Piper's Wagon set right of centre. A magical tune is heard and suddenly the PIPER appears playing his pipe. Over his waistcoat and trousers he wears a coat of red and yellow.]

PIPER *[To the audience.]* Hello! I am the Pied Piper. How nice to see you. Have you come far? Did my tune make you stop and listen? I have many more. Tunes for every occasion. I can play a happy one for birthdays or anniversaries. Do any of you have a birthday soon?
[Reaction.] Well this is for you. *[HE plays a snatch of a happy tune.]* Or I can play you a sad tune for when you are feeling down or under the weather. *[Play a mournful tune.]* But you don't want to hear one of those, do you? Not today while the sun is shining and everyone is feeling on top of the world.

[LORELEI enters.]

LORELEI Not everyone is feeling on top of the world my friend.

PIPER Hello! I've not seen you in a while. What brings you looking for me?

LORELEI There is a problem in the town of Hamelin. They are preparing for their annual festival but the whole place has been overrun by rats.

PIPER Rats? Not my favourite animal. I don't mind white mice. They can be very friendly. A young girl I once met called Cinderella found them very useful – but that's another story!

LORELEI I thought you might be able to help them out.

PIPER That may be a possibility. Hamelin you say? Mmm, I've never been there. Maybe I should pay them a visit.

LORELEI I think it could be to your advantage.

PIPER Then visit them I shall. *[The PIPER pulls his wagon off left. With a wink at the audience.]* I shall see you all later.

LORELEI Good luck my friend.

[The lights fade and the scene changes to.....]

SCENE 2 THE CITY OF HAMELIN

[The Square with the Burgomaster's House to one side and the entrance to Freida Von Froth's Beer Garden on the other. The CHORUS of Townspeople are getting ready for the beer festival. KARL enters during the number.]

OPENING NUMBER – COMPANY AND KARL

[At the end of the number a large rat runs across the stage. Some of the GIRLS scream.]

KARL What's the matter.

1st GIRL Karl, didn't you see it?
MAN *[Small measurement with his hands.]* It was only that big.

[GRETCHEN, a typical fraulein with a larger than life comic personality, enters from the Beer Garden.]

GRETCHEN No it wasn't. It was that big. *[Arms wide]* I just chased it out of the Beer Garden.

KARL Hello Gretchen.

2nd GIRL The rat problem is getting worse.

KARL They do seem to be bolder. Venturing out in broad daylight!

GRETCHEN Something has to be done you know. The whole town is overrun with them.

KARL The Burgomaster doesn't seem to care. Every time the problem is mentioned by the Town Council he ignores it and says there are more – *[Imitating the BURGOMASTER]* – important things to worry about.

MAN More important?

GRETCHEN This plague will ruin the Annual Festival.

MAN Can't you talk to him? You work in the council offices.

KARL I'm only a simple book clerk. I have no influence.

GRETCHEN What about the Burgomaster's daughter? *[Giving KARL a nudge.]* You must have a bit of influence there!

[ALL agree.]

KARL Liesl and I are just good friends. *[HE doesn't see LIESL enter behind him.]* We've know each other since we were kids.

GRETCHEN But you'd like to be a bit more than 'just' friends, wouldn't you?

KARL Well – yes – I suppose so.

GRETCHEN And what about her?

KARL Oh, I don't know.

GRETCHEN I think she'd like to be.

KARL Do you?

LIESL Oh yes please.

KARL *[Looking at GRETCHEN.]* Your voice just changed. *[GRETCHEN turns him round to face LIESL.]* Oh, hello!

LIESL Hello!

GRETCHEN We were just talking about this problem with the rats. What is your father going to do about it?
[ALL ad lib questioning Liesl.]

KARL Now wait a minute. Liesl can't answer for her father.

LIESL I'm sorry everyone. I've tried talking to him, but he just won't listen. He's changed so recently and is convinced the rats will just go away.

CROWD That'll never happen. They're eating us out of house and home. Etc.

LIESL I wish there was something I could do.

KARL Don't worry. We'll get through this.

[There is a crash off stage and WILLY is heard shouting. The CHORUS run off.]

WILLY *[Off.]* Owwww! Help! Gerroff!

KARL Willy?
[WILLY enters running around the stage with a rat attached to his rear.]

WILLY Help. Get this thing off me.

KARL Stand still.

WILLY *[Still running round.]* I can't. He's chomping away at me. He's finished his starter and soon he'll be moving on to his main course!

KARL *[To GRETCHEN and LIESL.]* Hold him steady. *[The two girls hold WILLY whose legs are still 'running'. KARL pulls the rat off WILLY'S behind and throws it off stage.]* There. All gone.

WILLY *[Hiding behind LIESL.]* Are you sure he's not coming back for dessert?

KARL Quite sure.

WILLY *[Rubbing his backside.]* I hope that rat's got a nasty taste in its mouth!
Do you think it has done any permanent damage?

GRETCHEN *[Advancing on him.]* Would you like me to look?

WILLY 'Ere, gerroff!

GRETCHEN Why are you so shy, my little Willy.

WILLY Not so little!

KARL Come on Liesl, I think these two want to be alone. *[THEY exit.]*

WILLY Here, hang about. Don't leave me.

GRETCHEN What is the matter with you? Everyone knows you and I are going steady!

WILLY Everyone might – but I don't.

GRETCHEN Oh don't be so bashful my little pumpernickel!

WILLY Stop saying 'little'! Haven't you got work to do? My mother will get mad if things aren't ready for the festival.

GRETCHEN Don't worry my lit--- *[HE looks and SHE stops herself.]* --- my big knockwurst sausage. Everything is going fine. As long as these awful rats don't ruin the day. *[Seductively.]* I will see you later. *[SHE exits into beer garden.]*

WILLY Ohh! I don't know what to do. Gretchen is always chasing after me - and I'm a young man. I don't want to settle down yet. *[CHORUS girls now start entering from various parts of the stage.]* I mean there are plenty of fish in the sea so to speak. *[Looking at the girls.]* Hello girls.

GIRLS Hello Willy. *[THEY gather round him.]*

WILLY See what I mean!

NUMBER – WILLY and CHORUS

[During the number the MEN enter and join in. At the end of the number the BURGOMASTER enters from his office. HE is an irritable man.]

BURGOMASTER What's going on here? Why aren't you all working? Don't you know the festival is tomorrow? We'll never be ready at this rate.

WILLY We'll never be ready unless you do something about this rat problem.

[ALL agree.]

BURGOMASTER The Town Council and myself have the matter in hand. The rats will be exterminated.

- WILLY He sounds like a Dalek!
- CHORUS But when? They are worse than ever. Etc.
- BURGOMASTER Already a lot of treasury money has been spent on the problem.
- [KARL has entered followed by LIESL. KARL'S lame brother, CARROTS, also enters. HE is a likeable and, if possible, red-haired lad of about 15.]*
- KARL That's not true. Hardly anything has been spent.
- BURGOMASTER *[In a rage.]* Mind what you are saying or else you will be looking for alternative employment.
- CARROTS My brother Karl is right. I've just come from the children's playground and it's overrun by rats.
- BURGOMASTER Children's playground! Children should be in school or working to help with festival arrangements.
- LIESL Father!
- KARL Why can't more money be spent to eradicate these rats.....
- [At this point the lights change and the stage freezes. We hear the RODENT LORD'S voice.]*
- RODENT Be careful Burgomaster. Don't let this young upstart ruin our arrangement.
- BURGOMASTER *[In a trance.]* No. I will keep avoiding the question of ridding the town of rats.
- RODENT Good. You will have your reward when I once more materialise in human form.
- BURGOMASTER My reward! To become Chancellor of all Germany?
- RODENT Of course. Just let my rats keep working for me.
- BURGOMASTER I will do as you ask.
- [The lights return and the stage unfreezes. The BURGOMASTER stops KARL from speaking further.]*
- Hold your tongue. Unless you remember who you are speaking to the consequences will be severe. Now all of you go about your business.
- [The CHORUS, WILLY and GRETCHEN exit, grumbling. The BURGOMASTER turns to go and finds CARROTS in his way.]* Out of my way boy. *[HE pushes CARROTS, who falls over, then exits.]*
- LEISL *[Going to CARROTS.]* Oh my goodness. Are you all right?

CARROTS Yes thank you, miss. *[LEISL and KARL help him up.]*

KARL Carrots will be fine, won't you?

CARROTS Of course I will. I'm tough!

LEISL *[Laughing.]* I'm sure you are.

KARL This is my younger brother who has been away at school in Dresden. Carrots, this is Leisl.

CARROTS Pleased to meet you.

LEISL Likewise. *[Pointing to his crutch.]* But whatever happened to you.

CARROTS I've been like this since birth.

LEISL Oh I am sorry.

KARL *[Making light of it.]* We hardly notice it now, do we old chap?
[The BURGOMASTER appears from the House.]

BURGOMASTER Leisl. What are you doing fraternising with the hoi polloi? *[To KARL.]* Get about your business and leave my daughter alone.

KARL But sir.....

BURGOMASTER Did you hear me?

KARL *[Defeated.]* Yes sir. Come on, Carrots. *[HE and CARROTS exit.]*

LEISL Father, why are you behaving like that? Karl is a good and kind man.

BURGOMASTER *[With disdain.]* Good and kind. All he's after is a way of bettering himself. He's a book-keeper and that's all he'll ever be.

LEISL That's not true.

BURGOMASTER Leisl, I won't hear another word. Come in at once.

LEISL Yes father.
[SHE exits with the BURGOMASTER. Some shouting is heard off.]

MAN *[Off.]* Mind your backs. Special delivery.
[Two MEN bring on a large beer barrel and place it centre stage. They are about to exit when then there is some shouting from inside the barrel. It is FRIEDA VON FROTH.]

FRIEDA Will someone get me out of here? Can you hear me? Get me out of here.

[The MEN open the barrel. NB. It is split in two and hinged at the back. FRIEDA staggers out.]

FRIEDA Finally! You two idiots. Didn't you hear me shouting? *[The MEN shake their heads.]* You must be drunk! Get out of here. *[The two MEN exit laughing.]* And don't think you'll get served again in my beer garden. You're barred! It'll be the Rover's Return from now on for you. *[FRIEDA moves to look out at the audience.]* Hello there. Have you all come for the festival? *[Audience reaction.]* Well I better introduce myself. I'm Frieda Von Froth and I am the proprietor, owner and head cook and bottle washer of the local *hostility!* *[SHE points to the beer garden.]* Well that's what they call it after a Saturday night! I used to run the place with my late husband, Fredrich Von Froth, but he was taken from me. It was very sad. We were having our evening meal and he just keeled over stiff as a board. A chill went right through my marrow. And it didn't do much for my Brussels sprouts. So here I am. A widow with one son to help me run this place. You've met Willy, have you? *[Reaction.]* Not the sharpest knife in the box but he's a good boy but one of these days he'll get himself married and leave me and then I'll be on my own. A lonely old woman. Years ago we used to compare age to different parts of the world. When you're in your 20's you're like the plains of Africa. Fresh and unspoiled. Your 40's are like America. Rich and exciting. But when you get to your 60's you're like Leicester. *[Or local town.]* You know where it is but you don't want to go there!

NUMBER – FRIEDA

[At the end of the number KARL and CARROTS enter.]

KARL Hello Frieda. How are you?

FRIEDA Oh Karl, I've just had the most awful experience. I'd just popped round to the wine merchant to make sure my order for the festival would be delivered on time and I noticed this keg of beer just standing there minding its own business. It was a new brand, so I thought I just have a taste to see if my customers would like it. Well there was only a few pints at the bottom of the barrel so I had to lean in to get at it. Well the next thing I'd fallen in head first and some big brute of a store man had nailed the top on! The next thing I'm being whisked off.

KARL *[Looking in the barrel.]* A few pints you say? But the barrel's empty.

FRIEDA Well I had to have something to steady my nerves! *[SHE staggers.]* Oh it was such a shock! My whole life flashed before me – all twenty-five years of it! *[CARROTS falls about laughing.]* And who might this be?

KARL Carrots, my brother. *[Introducing FRIEDA.]* This is Frieda Von Froth. She runs the beer garden where we hold the Hamelin Festival.

CARROTS Very pleased to meet you, ma'am.

FRIEDA *[An attempt at being posh.]* Lukeways I'm sure! Well I better get on. Have you seen Willy?

- KARL He's around somewhere. Hiding from Gretchen I expect!
- FRIEDA Oh that boy. He's just like his father. Never knew when a good woman was staring him in the face! See you all later. *[With a wave SHE exits into the beer garden. The music for the PIPER'S entrance starts. The CHORUS and CHILDREN run on excitedly. WILLY and GRETCHEN join KARL and CARROTS. The PIPER enters with his wagon.]*
- PIPER Good day my friends. Come gather round and see what I can do to entertain you. *[To a CHILD.]* Would you like to hear a tune? *[The CHILD nods and the PIPER plays a happy tune. One CHILD is standing apart from the CROWD looking sad.]* What's the matter with you? You don't look very happy.
- CHILD She never does.
- PIPER I bet I could make her smile. *[The CHILD looks away as the PIPER starts to play. Then SHE starts to smile. ALL react. HE speaks to another CHILD.]* Can you dance? *[The CHILD shakes his/her head.]* Oh yes you can. *[HE plays again and the CHILD starts to dance. ALL applaud.]* Would you like to see a magic trick?
- ALL Oh yes please. Etc.
[The PIPER performs a trick to which they all applaud.]
- CARROTS Can you do any kind of magic trick?
- PIPER Any magic trick you like.
- CARROTS I bet you can't magic these awful rats away.
- PIPER I bet I can! *[ALL react.]*
- KARL *[Smiling.]* Now Mr Piper. Don't go filling the children's heads with promises you can't keep.
- PIPER But I can get rid of the rats for you. If the price is right.
- GRETCHEN How?
- PIPER You saw how I got that child to smile and that one to dance. There is a tune for everything.
- WILLY You mean you can rid Hamelin of this plague of rats – just by tooting on your flute?
- PIPER From the very smallest to the very biggest rat.
- WILLY Talking of big rats – look who's coming.
[The BURGOMASTER enters followed by LEISL.]
- BURGOMASTER Are you people still hanging around here? Be off with you at once.

KARL Burgomaster, we may have solved the rat problem.

BURGOMASTER What do you mean?

KARL Our friend here says he has a way of ridding Hamelin of the rats.

BURGOMASTER Oh he has has he? *[Looking at the PIPER.]* And how can a mere street entertainer do what no-one else can?

CARROTS He plays a tune on his pipe.

BURGOMASTER *[Incredulously.]* Plays a tune? Be off with you, you charlatan – *[HE moves towards the PIPER backing him towards the beer garden.]* - or I'll have you arrested for inciting a disturbance.

[The PIPER is backing off as FRIEDA enters and HE almost ends up in her arms.]

FRIEDA Oh I say it's James Galway! *[Or a pop star.]* And who might you be you fine figure or a man?

PIPER *[With a bow.]* I am the Pied Piper at your service.

FRIEDA Ohhhh, you can be at my service any time!

WILLY Mother, have you no scruples?

FRIEDA No, but I've got a selection of pork scratchings!

CARROTS He says he can get rid of all the rats.

FRIEDA Really?

PIPER Indeed.

BURGOMASTER Poppycock.

FRIEDA How do you do it.

PIPER By playing a tune with a secret formula of transcendental perpleximism mixed with a basic form of mesmerism.

FRIEDA *[Bewildered.]* Oh!

PIPER You know what I mean?

FRIEDA *[First nodding and then shaking her head.]* No – but I'm all yours to demonstrate on!

PIPER Well first, before I evoke the occult, I have to know if you are a hypnotic subject.

FRIEDA No, I was born in Nuneaton. *[Or nearby town.]*

BURGOMASTER I've heard enough of this rubbish.

FRIEDA But it's a big problem. Do you know the other day I found a rat in the drawer where I keep my unmentionables.

WILLY You didn't *mention* it!

FRIEDA It was unmentionable! And do you know it was nibbling on everything. My stays are shattered and my corset's collapsed!

KARL Well I think we should give the Piper a chance?

RODENT *[ALL agree. Suddenly the lights change and the stage freezes. The LORD is heard speaking to the BURGOMASTER.]*

RODENT Be careful Burgomaster. I don't want anything to disrupt my plan.

BURGOMASTER Don't worry. I will put a stop to this.

RODENT See that you do.

[The lights change back and the stage unfreezes.]

BURGOMASTER Playing a tune to entice the rats away? I've never heard anything so absurd.

PIPER I have tunes that can make anything happen.

BURGOMASTER Like what?

PIPER I can play a tune to make you dance.

BURGOMASTER I don't dance.

PIPER Oh yes you do. *[HE plays and the BURGOMASTER starts to dance.]*

BURGOMASTER'S DANCE

[EVERYONE laughs as the dance gets wilder. Finally the BURGOMASTER drops to his knees.]

BURGOMASTER Enough! *[HE gets up and looks at the PIPER.]* I expect you will require a fee for this work?

PIPER A thousand guilders is my price.

BURGOMASTER A thousand..... impossible. The town treasury doesn't have that sort of money.

KARL As book-keeper to the town I think we can afford it. Besides, think of the money the festival will generate – as long as there are no rats to keep the people away.

[ALL agree.]

BURGOMASTER It's throwing money away. He'll never do what he says. *[At this moment a group of rats run across the front of the stage. They stop centre as everyone backs upstage. The PIPER moves down to the rats and starts to play. The rats follow him and he leads them off stage. ALL applaud as HE returns.]* Oh very well. I'll pay you five hundred guilders now and the rest when the job is done - if it gets done.

PIPER It'll be done all right, I assure you.

[ALL cheer. The BURGOMASTER exits as the next number start.]

CHORUS NUMBER

[During the number the PIPER plays as more rats appear. The BURGOMASTER enters with a bag of money which he gives to the PIPER. At the end of the number the lights fade to black out and the scene changes to...]

SCENE 3 THE BANKS OF THE RIVER WESER

[The scene is a front cloth with a cut out of a river bank stage left. During the scene change recorded voices are heard chanting.]

VOICES *[Off.]* Great rats, small rats, lean rats brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats,
Grave old plodders, gay young friskers
Cocking tails and pricking whiskers.
Fathers, mothers, uncles, cousins,
Follow the Piper in your dozens.

[The lights come up and the PIPER enters right playing his pipe and followed by an army of rats. They all pour into the River Weser stage left.]

PIPER Whew! That's the lot. Good riddance.

[LORELEI appears down right.]

LORELEI You have done well my friend.

PIPER All in a days work.

LORELEI I hope you get your reward.

PIPER Never fear on that account. I know the Burgomaster is a slippery customer, but he will regret it if he crosses me.

LORELEI What plan have you got up your sleeve?

PIPER One that I hope I don't have to use.

LORELEI You must take some care. There are great forces at work here. You're not invincible you know.

PIPER I know. But fear not dear lady, I have allies who will help me if the need arises.

LORELEI That is good to know. And see - there are some new-found friends coming now. I will no doubt see you again.

PIPER I look forward to it. *[LORELEI exits. The PIPER looks in the river.]*
Great rats, small rats, lean rats brawny rats,
Brown rats, black rats, grey rats, tawny rats.....
[WILLY enters right.]

WILLY Have they gone.

PIPER Yes. All despatched. You won't be troubled any more.

WILLY Well done Piper. The whole of Hamelin is in your debt.

PIPER And the debt is the rest of my fee!

WILLY Don't trust our Burgomaster. He's worse than – *[Name of the Chancellor of the Exchequer.]* - for breaking promises! Make sure you get your money while the town is celebrating what you have done.

PIPER Another five hundred guilders I am owed – and I intend to collect.

WILLY I know, claim it tonight at the opening of the festival. Everyone will be there so the Burgomaster will have to honour the agreement.
[GRETCHEN enters right.]

GRETCHEN I can't believe it. Not a rat in sight.

WILLY The Piper has been true to his word.

GRETCHEN The Burgomaster will be so pleased.

PIPER And pleased to pay up I hope. *[With a bow to them he exits right.]*

WILLY We I'd better be getting back to work.

GRETCHEN Oh not so fast. We could make the most no one else being around.

WILLY What do you mean 'make the most'?

GRETCHEN We get so little time to be alone my little apple strudel.

WILLY Why are you obsessed with comparing me to food?

GRETCHEN Because I would like to eat you up, you tantalising little trifle.

WILLY Trifle?

GRETCHEN Can't you see how perfectly we go together? Like sugar and spice, apples and pears, peaches and cream

WILLY You make me sound like a fruit salad!

GRETCHEN Oh Willy, why do you play so hard to get?

WILLY Who says I play at it?

GRETCHEN Aren't you driven wild by my feminine charms?

WILLY Feminine charms? *[Butch male celebrity.]* has got more feminine charms!

GRETCHEN Oh! *[Turning on the tears.]* How can you be so cruel? Treating a poor defenceless girl in such a heartless way.

WILLY Oh now don't cry. I didn't mean *all* those things really.

GRETCHEN You didn't?

WILLY Well not all!

[GRETCHEN cries loudly. KARL and LEISL enter right.]

KARL What's going on?

GRETCHEN *[Running to them.]* The man I love has stolen my heart and broken it into a million pieces.

LEISL *[Comforting her.]* Willy, how could you?

WILLY I haven't done anything. Honest! *[To GRETCHEN.]* Look of it makes you feel better I'll take you to MacDonalds and buy you a double cheeseburger and chips.

GRETCHEN *[Suddenly smiling.]* You will? *[To the others.]* Oh isn't he wonderful? *[SHE grabs WILLY and drags him off stage]* Come on my little wiener schnitzel.

WILLY Stop calling me little! *[And they are gone.]*

KARL *[Laughing.]* What a pair.

LEISL The Piper's tune rid the town of rats. I wonder if he has one for bring those two together.

KARL Maybe. He did say he has a tune for everything.

LEISL Do you think he would have one to make my father like you? Then we wouldn't have to sneak around behind his back.

KARL Don't worry Leisl. One of these days I'll make him understand how we feel about each other.

DUET – KARL AND LEISL

[At the end of the number the lights fade and the scene changes to ...

SCENE 4 FRIEDA'S BOUDIOR

[An inset or cloth with a clothes screen centre. FRIEDA enters excitedly.]

FRIEDA Oh what a day. Everyone is thrilled that we are finally rid of the rats thanks to that clever Piper. He's quite wonderful don't you think girls? Fancy having him serenade you to sleep every night. It would be like having your own personal version of – *[Name of latest male pop sensation.]* Oh he could top my chart any time!

GRETCHEN *[Off.]* Hello Frieda. Are you there?

FRIEDA Yes dear. Come in.

[GRETCHEN enters.]

GRETCHEN We've got the basket down from loft that you asked for.

FRIEDA Oh good. Bring it in here will you?

GRETCHEN *[Calling off.]* Bring it in here Willy.

[WILLY staggers in with a large wicker basket.]

WILLY I thought you were giving me a hand with this.

GRETCHEN But you are always telling me how big and strong you are. I assumed you could manage it all by yourself.

WILLY Mother what have you got in here?

FRIEDA Nothing special. Just a few odds and ends.

WILLY Well they're very heavy odds and ends.

FRIEDA Never mind the basket. Is everything ready for tonight's festivities?

GRETCHEN Yes. We have just finished putting out the extra tables in the garden.

FRIEDA Wonderful. This year's festival will be the best yet.

GRETCHEN I hope so. And perhaps we can restart that old Bavarian custom.

WILLY What custom is that?

GRETCHEN Where the young man takes the young girl for a stroll along the river bank. And under the twinkling stars you know what happens.

WILLY He pushes her in?

FRIEDA *[SHE chases HIM off.]*
Now they've gone I can show you what I've got in here. All my frocks for special occasions. I want something stunning for tonight.

[SHE takes out various dresses and comments on them which leads into a strip routine. At the end of the routine FRIEDA walks behind the screen and immediately emerges from the other side in a stunning outfit. The lights black out and the scene changes to....]

SCENE 5 THE BEER GARDEN

[A full set with tables and festival decorations. A bar is to one side containing bottles of beer. The COMPANY is on.]

CHORUS NUMBER

[Taking part are KARL, LEISL, WILLY, GRETCHEN and CARROTS. During the number the BURGOMASTER enters. At the end HE commands silence.]

BURGOMASTER Good citizens of Hamelin. This is a time for great celebration. Not only is it the start of the annual festival, but also we have managed to eradicate the vermin that have been plaguing out town. *[Cheers from the COMPANY. Then the lights change and the stage freezes as we hear the VOICE.]*

RODENT They may be cheering, but I am not. You have failed me Burgomaster. Letting that Piper deal with the rats has stopped me achieving my aim to take over the city.

BURGOMASTER *[In a trance.]* Only a temporary setback, my lord. I have a plan that will upset the Piper and then the rats will be able to return to the town and continue your work.

RODENT Make sure they do. My patience is running out.

[The lights return and the stage unfreezes. FRIEDA enters and greets everyone.]

FRIEDA Hello everyone. *[ALL greet FRIEDA.]* Hello Burgomaster. Why have you got that strange look on your face?

BURGOMASTER *[Defensive.]* What do you mean – strange? This is how I always look.

FRIEDA Yes, like a wet weekend in Weymouth! *[ALL laugh.]* Come on, it's a celebration. You should be laughing.

LEISL Yes, come on father, let's have a smile.

BURGOMASTER Oh don't be ridiculous.

FRIEDA Come on Burgy Worgy! *[SHE tickles him under the chin.]* Come on now. *[The BURGOMASTER attempts a pathetic smile.]* Well it's a start. What we need is the Piper to play another tune and get you dancing! *[ALL agree.]*

KARL Where is the Piper? I thought he would be back by now.

PIPER *[As if by magic the PIPER appears in the crowd.]*
Did somebody call?

WILLY Here he is. Three cheers for the Piper who has rid our town of the rats.

[ALL cheer and the PIPER bows with a great flourish.]

PIPER Thank you all for your kind words of appreciation. *[To the BURGOMASTER.]* And now sir, if you could show your appreciation.

BURGOMASTER I beg your pardon?

PIPER The rest of my fee as agreed – if you please.

BURGOMASTER Your fee? Oh well – I don't carry that sort of money around with me. You never know who's about. Come to my office in the morning.

PIPER But I

BURGOMASTER *[Trying to get away.]* Tonight is for celebrating. Come on everyone. Enjoy yourselves. *[He exits quickly. The PIPER goes to follow but is stopped by FRIEDA. During to following ALL exit except FRIEDA, PIPER and GRETCHEN.]*

FRIEDA Now then my good friend. How would you like to sample a little of what you fancy?

PIPER My dear lady, whatever are you suggesting?

FRIEDA A mellifluous mouth-watering malted melee to shove down your throat.

PIPER I'm sorry?

FRIEDA I have a new beer specially brewed for the festival just waiting to be tasted.

PIPER Oh I see. Your offer is almost too good to refuse, but I have some pressing business. Maybe later. *[HE exits after the BURGOMASTER.]*

FRIEDA What a strange fellow he is! *[SHE turns to GRETCHEN.]* Well my dear how are things going with you and Willy?

GRETCHEN They're going nowhere Frieda. I just can't get him interested in going out with me.

FRIEDA You need to get him relaxed. Make him laugh.

GRETCHEN Do you think so?

FRIEDA Oh yes. Try him on my new beer. I'm sure that will soften him up a bit!

GRETCHEN That's a good idea. After all it is a party.

FRIEDA *[Looking off.]* Here he comes now. Good luck.

[FRIEDA exits. GRETCHEN goes up to the bar and pours a glass of beer. WILLY enters.]

GRETCHEN Hello Willy.

WILLY Oh it's you.

GRETCHEN Won't you join me?

WILLY What for?

GRETCHEN I've just been trying this new beer. It's very nice.

WILLY New beer?

GRETCHEN Yes. Try it.

WILLY Well, maybe just a sip. *[HE takes the glass and downs it in one.]* Mmm. Not bad.

GRETCHEN Have another. *[SHE starts to refill his glass.]*

WILLY Oh no. I have to keep a clear head.

GRETCHEN Just half a glass then.

WILLY Oh go on then. It is nice. *[GRETCHEN pours half a glass.]* Aren't you having one?

GRETCHEN Why not – just to be sociable. *[SHE pours herself a drink but only pretends to drink. During the following when WILLY isn't looking SHE keeps topping his glass up.]* The festival seems to be going well.

WILLY Yes.

GRETCHEN You know it's always a romantic time of the year. A lot of couples get together.

WILLY Really?

GRETCHEN I met my first boyfriend at a festival when I was sweet sixteen.

WILLY You can remember that far back?

GRETCHEN *[Ignoring him and filling his glass.]* I've had many boyfriends from all over the country.