



# Pied Piper of Hamelin

by Stephen Duckham

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## 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 CITIZENS 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  
 SCENE 6 BURGOMASTER'S HALL

SCENERY

## ACT ONE

SCENE 1- THE COUNTRYSIDE                      Front Cloth

SCENE 2- THE CITY OF HAMELIN              Full stage. Beer Garden entrance right. The Burgomaster's house is to one side. A pump upstage with a sliding top. This needs to be placed where it can be accessed from the back.

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 a rock and 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                      As 1 - 1

SCENE 6- BURGOMASTER'S HALL              Full set with Tudor woodwork and decoration. Banners hanging with various coats of arms, etc.

NOTE: These are only guidelines.

As long as there is a suggestion of Bavarian design in the pantomime style, the sets can be as grand or as simple as space and budget allow.

## CHARACTERS

<b>THE RODENT LORD</b>	Voice only, except for an appearance in the final scene. Should be of a good build to fight with Karl. (Double Mountain King & Chorus.) <i>See note.</i>
<b>LORELEI</b>	The good witch of the mountain. Not the 'Fairy' type. Young to middle-aged. Good, clear speaking voice – non-singing.
<b>PIED PIPER</b>	Young in appearance. Agile, likeable, and quick-witted with an ability to charm and amuse. A small amount of singing.
<b>KARL</b>	Good-looking, charming, with a good singing voice. Age mid 20's – mid 30's.
<b>LIESL</b>	Pretty and likeable. She is strong-willed as well as romantic. Good singing voice required. Age mid 20's.
<b>BURGOMASTER</b>	Pompous, authoritative and full of his own importance. As he is also under the control of the Rodent Lord, he must be able to show fear and humility. Singing is required with the company.
<b>FRIEDA VON FROTH</b>	Owner of the Beer Garden and Panto Dame. Big personality and must have a great rapport with fellow characters and the audience.
<b>CARROTS</b>	Karl's lame younger brother. Age approx 15. Singing with Company
<b>WILLY</b>	Frieda's Son. Energetic and comic. Good singing voice. Age mid 20's – mid 30's.
<b>GRETCHEN</b>	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.
<b>THE MOUNTAIN KING</b>	Larger than life and jovial. Can double with the Rodent Lord & Chorus.

The age ranges for the characters are 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.

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

OVERTURE

## ACT ONE

SCENE 1 THE COUNTRYSIDE

*[During the Overture, the silhouette of rats is seen on the house tabs or the show curtain. After the overture, the curtain rises, and 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 the 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. Looking around.]* 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 helping me to take over the city, I have said I will assist him in becoming the 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 your 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 visit.

**LORELEI** I think it could be to your advantage.

**PIPER** Then visit Hamelin, 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.

SCENE CHANGE 1 - 2

*[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 is 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?

**1<sup>st</sup> 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.

**2<sup>nd</sup> 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 known 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** 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 me 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 the 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 I 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** A lot of treasury money has already 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 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 for you two from now on. *[FRIEDA moves to look out at the audience.]* Hello there. Have you all come to the festival? *[Audience reaction.]* Well, I'd 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, Friedrich 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. 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 the 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 would just have a taste to see if my customers would like it. Well, there were 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 headfirst, and some big brute of a storeman 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'd 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** Who says I can't keep them? I can rid the town 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** I think we should give the Piper a chance?

*[ALL agree. Suddenly, the lights change and the stage freezes. The RODENT 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 bookkeeper 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 starts.]*

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.]*

SCENE CHANGE 2 - 3

*[The scene changes to...*

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SCENE 3 THE BANKS OF THE RIVER WESER

*[The scene is a front cloth with a cutout of a riverbank 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, 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 day's work.

**LORELEI** I hope you get your reward.

**PIPER** Never fear on that account. I know the Burgomaster is a slippery customer. 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 - some new-found friends are 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 dispatched. 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'd better be getting back to work.

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

**WILLY** What do you mean by '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, if it makes you feel better, I'll take you to McDonald's 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 has rid the town of rats. I wonder if he has one for bringing 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 CHANGE 3 - 4

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 the 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 riverbank. And under the twinkling stars, you know what happens.

**WILLY** He pushes her in?

**GRETCHEN** Willy! Just wait 'til I get my hands on you!

**WILLY** Oh no! I'm off.  
*[SHE chases HIM off.]*

**FRIEDA**

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.]*

STRIP MUSIC

*[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 CHANGE 4 - 5

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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 we have managed to eradicate the vermin that have been plaguing our 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 from 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 Weisbaden! *[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.
- [As if by magic, the PIPER appears in the crowd.]*
- PIPER** 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 the 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** Yes – 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.

**WILLY** Really? How did they find you?

**GRETCHEN** Very easy.

**WILLY** I'll bet!

**GRETCHEN** One of them said, when he was with me, time stood still.

**WILLY** That's 'cos you've got a face that would stop a clock!

**GRETCHEN** *[Ignoring the remark.]* You know we should make the most of the time we have. Tomorrow I could be run over by a bus.

**WILLY** They'd have to jack it up first! *[HE drinks.]* You know this beer is good. *[SHE pours more into his glass.]*