

# Director's Notes

## SUMMARY

Rats have taken over Hamelin, led by the Big Cheese! Grumpy street cleaner Mr Brümhandel fights a losing battle to keep the town clean; Hamelin's other citizens are too lazy to lift a finger to help, and the incompetent Mayor isn't handling the situation. A boy called Peter (who struggles to keep up with the other children) is left behind in a game of chase. This turns out to be a good thing, as it leads him to meet the magical Pied Piper, who enchants birds and animals by playing tunes on his magic pipe.

When things in Hamelin reach breaking point Peter calls the Pied Piper, hoping he'll enchant the rats and lead them out of town - which he does! Everyone is delighted until the Piper returns to claim the 1,000 guilder fee promised to him by the Mayor. The Mayor has cheated him: there isn't anything like 1,000 guilders in the treasury. 'A promise is a promise,' says the Pied Piper. To teach Hamelin's people a lesson he plays a tune to enchant their children, leading them off into a mountain. Last as usual, Peter is the only one who isn't trapped and returns to tell the horrified citizens of Hamelin what has happened.

All hope seems lost until Peter takes the initiative, suggesting that everyone contributes what they can to pay the Piper. When he returns, the Piper surprises them by saying that the only payment needed was their change of heart, which Peter has brought about. Now the people have learned their lesson, Peter – the true leader of Hamelin – is able to bring their children home.

N.B. In many versions of this story, the children remain stuck in the mountain and never return. This version allows the citizens to change the outcome through a change of heart.

## CAST

### Main Characters

PETER ( <i>soloist</i> )	Central character, walks with a crutch. Dependable, responsible.
PIED PIPER ( <i>soloist</i> )	Magical figure, the 'conscience' of the show, enigmatic, all-knowing.
BIG CHEESE ( <i>soloist</i> )	Chief rat, behaves like a military leader (G.I. style). Play for humour.
MR BRÜMHANDEL ( <i>soloist</i> )	( <i>pron. Broomhandle</i> ) Grumpy central character, cleans up after all the others.
MAYOR	Superior and self-centred, out of touch with the citizens
PETER'S MOTHER	Peter's mother! Protective of Peter.

### Other Major Roles

MR & MRS AMSEL	<b>The Amsel Family</b> Parents of Axel, Alvin & Astrid. Not caring parents until end of show. Mrs Amsel is more assertive and has more dialogue than Mr Amsel.
AXEL, ALVIN & ASTRID	Two brothers and their sister, friends of Peter. Axel has less dialogue than the other two. Alvin needs to be the best actor of the three.

MR & MRS BRANDT	<b>The Brandt Family</b> Parents of Bruno & Bess, careless litterbugs, not great parents. Mr Brandt is more assertive and has more dialogue than Mrs Brandt.
BRUNO & BESS	Brother and sister, friends of Peter. Bruno has less dialogue than Bess.
RATS 1, 2, 3 (+ non-speaking extras)	Small spoken parts, played for humour. Act as a pack, but a sloppy one! Funny, greedy and disgusting, with ad lib 'scavenging' around the stage. Once 'drowned', may return as extra citizens.
COUNCILLORS 1 & 2	Mayor's sidekicks. Councillor 1 always proposes motions (should be given to a child with good 'focus'), Councillor 2 seconds them.

### Minor Roles

CITIZENS 1, 2 (or more)	Very small speaking parts. Additional 'adult' population of Hamelin.
BIRDS	Non-speaking dancers in Scene 1 only; may return as extra children.
CHILDREN	Any number, to be led away by the Piper Sc. 7, and to return in Sc. 8.
CITIZENS	Additional (Sc. 1, dance). Always react to Rats with disgust!

## COSTUMES

Pied Piper	Oversized long sleeved shirt of two or more colours including red and yellow, preferably patchwork, cord around waist. Different coloured tights on each leg is effective. Red & yellow cape. Pointed hat. Felt shoes with pointed toes, if possible.
Peter	Cut off ragged trousers. Jumper with holes, over T- shirt. Bare feet.
Rats	Dark grey combat trousers and T-shirts. Face-paint or mask, ears on headband. Although heavy shoes make for a good military sound, bare feet look more rat-like and won't drown out the chanting in 'The Rat Pack'. <b>Suggestion:</b> RATS should stand when singing or when performing 'drill'. Default position for paws should be dangling in front of chests. For background mime, being on all fours is effective.
The Big Cheese	As rats but with peaked combat hat (ears stuck on). Dark glasses.
Mr Brümhandel	Grandad shirt, dark trousers. Caretaker's jacket or hi-vis waistcoat. Flat cap.
Mayor	White shirt, neck ruff, black trousers. Red cloak, gold chain, tricorn hat.
Councillors	White shirt, black trousers, waist coat, tie.
Birds	Colourful leotard or skirt/shorts and T-shirt. Bird head masks.
Boys	Cut off trousers, open necked white shirt, braces.
Girls	White blouses, skirts and colourful head scarves.
Citizens - Male	Long sleeved blue shirt, cummerbund. Trousers tucked into long socks.
Citizens - Female	Long, colourful dresses and mob caps.

## PROPS

Litter set on stage from the start (including some for Alvin to fiddle with in Scene 1).

Penny Whistle, recorder or other pipe for Pied Piper.

'Medicine' and spoon for Peter's Mother to give him. Crutch for Peter.

Broom and bucket for Mr Brümhandel.

Military cap or helmet, whistle on string and dark sunglasses for The Big Cheese.

Handkerchief for Rat 1, disgusting item for Rat 2.

Small bag of money for the Mayor. Money for Councillors, Citizens, etc.

Random items in Mayor's pocket, eg. dirty hankie, tube of sweets, conker on string, yo-yo, etc..

Biscuits for Mr and Mrs Brandt to give to Bruno and Bess.

# Director's Overview

## SCENE 1 WELCOME TO HAMELIN

**Song WELCOME TO HAMELIN (Cast)**      Ⓞ Track 1 / 24

The children of Hamelin run off to play, and Peter is left behind. Due to his limp, he is always last. Fed up, he sits down with his head in his hands. Almost immediately hears the sound of a piper piping. The Pied Piper enters with birds following.

**Incid. PIPER'S THEME**      Ⓞ Track 2 / 25

The Pied Piper introduces himself, then points out that it's a good thing Peter can't run as fast as the others. Because the other children ran off, they aren't there to hear him play his magic pipe, which – when he plays – makes creatures follow him.

**Instr. BIRD DANCE**      Ⓞ Track 3 / 26

The Pied Piper tells Peter that being last can be a good thing, and that he'll be there if Peter ever needs him. All he has to do is call out the words "Peter needs the Piper!" They both exit.

## SCENE 2 THE RAT PACK

**Song THE RAT PACK (The Big Cheese, Rats)**      Ⓞ Track 4

The rats enter, G.I. style, doing training exercises led by the Big Cheese. When Peter enters they scatter and sneak about.

## SCENE 3 THE TOWN SQUARE

**Incid. WELCOME TO HAMELIN**      Ⓞ Track 5 / 27

The children return to play a clapping game. The people of Hamelin demonstrate their slovenly habits and bad attitudes. Mrs Amsel dismisses her son, Alvin, when he says he is not feeling well. No-one takes responsibility for their actions and the children are disrespectful to Mr Brümhandel, who is the only one doing any work. Hamelin is full of easy picking for rats.

**Incid. TROUBLE AHEAD (short)**      Ⓞ Track 6 / 28

**Song EASY PICKIN'S (Rats, Cast)**      Ⓞ Track 7 / 29

The citizens blame Mr Brümhandel for the state of Hamelin, but he points out the council's responsibility. The citizens, up in arms, talk about sending for the Mayor but as no-one actually makes a move to do anything Mr Brümhandel goes himself, irritably.

**Song SEND FOR THE MAYOR OF HAMELIN (Citizens)**      Ⓞ Track 8 / 30

The pompous mayor arrives, appearing to be very out of touch and more concerned about missing his lunch than he is about the problems of his townspeople. Once aware of the issue, the solution offered by the Mayor and Councillors is that Brümhandel should work harder.

## SCENE 4 TRYING TO FIND A SOLUTION

**Song I'VE TRIED TRAPS (Mr Brümhandel, Cast)**      Ⓞ Track 9 / 31

Peter tries to get everyone's attention, but as usual nobody is interested in what he has to say. Finally they do listen. He shows them that Alvin is really sick. Everyone is afraid that it could be the plague, but the council say there is nothing they can do. Peter tells them about the Pied Piper, who might be able to help.

**Song LISTEN TO ME (Peter, Cast - except Rats)**      Ⓞ Track 10 / 32

Everyone is hopeful apart from the mayor, who rubbishes the idea. With no other option, Mr Brandt seizes the initiative, organising Peter to call the piper.

## SCENE 5 PETER CALLS THE PIPER

Peter calls the Pied Piper, who duly arrives.

**Song** PETER NEEDS THE PIPER (Peter, Children) ◉ Track 11 / 33

**Song** SOMEONE CALLED (Piper, Cast - except Rats) ◉ Track 12 / 34

The Mayor and the Pied Piper make a deal – the Piper will remove the rats for the fee of 1,000 guilders. The Pied Piper leads the Rats off to drown in the river.

**Song** TO THE GORGONZOLA! (Rats, Cast) ◉ Track 13 / 35

#### **SCENE 6 THE RATS HAVE GONE!**

Everyone celebrates the fact that the rats have gone.

**Song** HAMELIN'S A RAT FREE ZONE (Cast - except Rats) ◉ Track 14 / 36

**Incid.** PIPER'S THEME (Short) ◉ Track 15 / 37

The Pied Piper reappears to collect his money. Everyone is shocked by the amount the Mayor promised, but he says it wasn't a serious promise. They all agree that you can't make a serious promise to someone dressed like that. Peter pursues the Pied Piper to apologise while the Mayor and Councillors congratulate themselves on a job well done, and set off for 'luncheon'. Mr Brümhandel repeats that there'll be trouble ahead.

**Incid.** TROUBLE AHEAD (Long) ◉ Track 16 / 38

#### **SCENE 7 THE PIPER LEADS THE CHILDREN AWAY**

The Pied Piper sits down sadly. He thinks the people of Hamelin need to be taught a lesson.

**Incid.** CURING ALVIN ◉ Track 17 / 39

Astrid, Axel and Alvin enter and find the Piper. They tell him that as soon as Alvin heard the Piper's music he got much better and is no longer sick. The Piper asks if they would like to hear some more music and that this time it will take them on a journey to a magical land made of confectionery!

**Song** FOLLOW THE PIPER (Children - inc. Peter) ◉ Track 18 / 40

Peter tries to keep up, but fails as the song ends. He watches, horrified, as the Piper leads the children to a mountain that opens up, and closes behind them.

**Sound effect** - MOUNTAIN RUMBLE ◉ Track 19 / 41

#### **SCENE 8 THE CITIZENS LEARN THEIR LESSON**

Meanwhile, the Citizens are delighted that everything is back to normal until they suddenly notice the children are missing. Peter brings dramatic news that the children are trapped in the mountain. As ever, the Mayor proves to be useless and everyone is up in arms until Mr Brümhandel quietens them. The Mayor realises that an apology might be in order.

**Song** IS IT TOO LATE? (Cast - except Children) ◉ Track 20 / 42

Peter suggests they all put money in a bucket to raise the 1,000 guilders they need. The remorseful Mayor is the first to dig deep. The money is counted...

**Incid.** IS IT TOO LATE? ◉ Track 21 / 43

...but it's not enough. Peter doesn't give up, he still calls the Piper.

**Incid.** PETER NEEDS THE PIPER AGAIN ◉ Track 22 / 44

Peter offers him the bucket, but the Piper isn't interested in their money, he just wants to know if their hearts are in the right place. The Citizens wonder if their children can come back. The Piper tells them that only the true leader of Hamelin can bring them back, and the Mayor guesses that isn't him. The Piper tells everyone that Peter is their true leader, which Peter questions, saying he's always last. The Piper explains how, without Peter, the rats would still be in Hamelin and the children would be lost forever. He hands the pipe to Peter, who plays to call the children back home!

**Song** COME BACK TO HAMELIN - reprise (Cast) ◉ Track 23 / 45

**Song** HAMELIN'S A RAT FREE ZONE (Cast) ◉ Track 14 / 36