

The Bremen Town Musicians

Script by Jennifer Davis

adapted from the Brothers Grimm Story

Original music by Bob Nicoll

Characters:

Donkey, scared and kind

Master, heartless

3 Mill Workers, comical-

Bart, worker 1

Harry, worker 2

Finn, worker 3

Fido the Hound dog, sad, mopey, can't hunt anymore

Father, wants to shoot dog because he's old

Mother, considers dog another mouth to feed

Esther, daughter, wants to save dog

Abe, son, wants to save dog

Toddler, upset because siblings are sad

Duchess the Cat, white long-haired pure bred, lived the high life with a rich owner, feels betrayed, too old to catch mice

Rich lady, possible British accent, very snooty, wants to make a fur hat out of the cat

The Maid, possible Yorkshire accent, sympathizes with the cat

2 Mice, they make fun of Duchess the Cat

Rooster, more like a zany parrot, big ego, angry, funny and old, always wanted to be famous singer

Mother, wants to make soup out of rooster

Grandmother, kind, identifies with rooster

3-4 Bratty Kids

5-12 Robbers, possible Mafia-style New York accents

Synopsis: This is a story about four elderly animals who were going to be killed by their owners, so they escaped. All four animals meet each other on their journey after escaping and decide they're going to go to the town of Bremen to start a band. Each animal has their own distinct personality and story which they share with each other. The donkey had become too old and weak to carry grain for his master and therefore his owners wanted to kill him. The dog was no longer able to hunt, the cat was too old to catch mice, and the rooster always crowed driving their owner crazy. As the animals are traveling through the woods together they become friends and then come across a house that is inhabited by robbers. They devise a plan to scare away the robbers, so they can enter the house and enjoy the feast. Once they are in the house, the animals decide to live out their days there rather than travel to Bremen.

Production Notes: The play is a little over an hour long. The cast could be comprised of around 27-40 members for ages 6 and up. The songs allow many from the cast to participate in them and provide opportunities for lots of solos. When characters are finished with a scene and their character does not appear again, they can play trees or nocturnal animals so that they can sing in the songs. Creative gender casting is always encouraged, and my use of pronouns used for the animals is arbitrary. We suggest having some sort of choreography for most of the songs. If microphones are available, either standing or body mics, we recommend using them during the music and songs. Everyone back stage can join in on the group songs even if they're not in the scene. There are stage directions throughout the script.

Costumes: The four animals dress as such: a donkey, hound dog, cat, and rooster and have wrinkles and/or gray hair to show they're old. Fido, the Hound dog could have some Elvis pieces in his costume. Try to have

the color of the cat's costume (The Duchess) match the color of the Rich Lady's fur coat. The Mill workers are dressed as mill workers from either the 19th or early 20th century and could have some flour on their faces and clothes. The other characters such as the mother, grandmother, and kids could also be dressed from the 19th or early 20th century. The robbers could be dressed in black and white stripes with masks and a black hat or in all black. Most of the cast should have trees that they can hold up in front of them, so they can be in many of the songs. The cast should also dress in black underneath their scene costumes for some songs and dances. The 4 animals do not need to wear black under their costumes because they don't have any costume changes.

Sound Effects and Songs are labeled by track numbers in the script which match the CD.

The Set and Stage Props: Because budgets vary, take whatever creative liberties needed to design the set. Some props may include the following:

During many of the songs, the rest of the cast is on stage either dressed as trees (which can be made with cardboard, tissue paper, and paint) or nocturnal animals such as owls or dressed all in black. There are notes throughout the script specifying this. There is a bush down stage left in front of the curtain line which the Robbers will hide behind during their scene.

Scene 1-The Donkey;

This scene takes place in a flour mill. There could be lots of burlap bags filled with whatever is available scattered about the stage. There could be a mill in the background; we made ours from cardboard and wood. There is a small side table or a crate where the coffee mug should be

placed. The Donkey is carrying a lute and a sack of grain when the curtain opens. There is a fake rifle back stage right.

Scene 2-Fido;

This scene takes place in a kitchen. There is a high chair down center stage and a kitchen table to the left of it with two chairs. On the table there are plates, a few spoons and forks and a dish rag. On the high chair tray there is a bowl with whipped cream in it (this is supposed to be mashed potatoes) with a spoon. The father is holding the fake rifle when he enters the stage with Fido. Inside Fido's backpack there should be a drum, a loaf of bread, and a blanket which should be back stage right. The blanket could be a queen-sized sheet that the 4 animals will later use to cover them in order to look like a ghost. If the drum doesn't fit inside the backpack, it can be carried separately.

Scene 3-The Duchess;

This scene takes place in a luxurious living room. There is a couch center stage, a fireplace back stage left. There could be fancy lamps, framed portraits, a candelabra, fancy side tables and any other furniture to make it look ritzy. The Maid has a broom in this scene. Duchess, the cat has a violin.

Scene 4- The Rooster;

This scene takes place on a farm. There could be a barn backdrop, a farm yard fence and anything else that makes it look like a farm. There is a step ladder for the Rooster to perch upon. The Bratty Kids are throwing "rocks" (scrunched up pieces of gray paper) at the Rooster.

Scene 5- The Robbers;

This scene takes place inside a house in the woods. The Robbers are sitting in chairs at a long table with a big feast on it along with all the goods they stole from others such as diamond and gold necklaces, money, fur coats, the rifle, etc.

Scene 6- The Sleeping Animals;

The set for this scene is the same as scene 5 but without the table and chairs.

Scene 7- Home Sweet Home;

The set for this scene is the same as scene 6.

THE BREMEN TOWN MUSICIANS

Play Track 1 (Overture)

Scene 1: The Donkey

(Curtain opens to a flour mill.)

Donkey: It's too heavy master. I'm sorry.

Master: What do you mean, it's too heavy? I need you to carry that sack of grain to the mill or there won't be no flour. And without no flour, there's no bread. And no bread means no money to be made!

Donkey: But master, I'm getting' old and my back just ain't what it used to be. I just can't do it. Please forgive me.

Finn (Millworker 3): You should do away with him sir. He ain't nothin' but trouble now.

Harry (Millworker 2): Yeah, I'm not feedin' that donkey or takin' care of him if he can't do nothin' for us no more.

Donkey: (*said meekly*) I've been hauling grain for all of you most of my life. How can you do this to me?

Bart (Millworker 1): That's life ya darn fool. What did you expect? For us to carry you around until you kick the bucket?

Donkey: I wasn't planning on dying anytime soon.

Master: That's the problem! What are we supposed to do with you until then?

Donkey: I promise I won't be a burden master.

Master: The money I'd spend feeding you would cost me more than all the grain growing in these fields here. Someone get me the rifle. (*short pause*) Bart, you go.

Bart: (*hesitantly*) You want me to get it boss?

Donkey: (*pleading*) I'll play my lute for you all day long! You love it when I play the lute! Right? Master, I thought you loved my music. (*Master grunts.*)

Finn: You call brayin' along to your lute playin' music? All I hear is donkey noise.

Donkey: Please fine men, have mercy on me!

Master: There's one thing I can't stand and that's groveling.
I said to go get me the rifle!

(Bart goes back stage to grab the rifle. He returns and starts to hand it to the Master.)

Master: You do it. I don't want no stains on my new coat.

(Bart holds up the rifle and aims it at the donkey who is staring at him pleadingly.)

Bart: *(drops the rifle by his side)* I can't do this. It just don't feel right.

Master: Well, then let Harry do it. *(Bart hands the rifle to Harry).*

Harry: *(He hoists the rifle up, aims it at the donkey, and holds it there for 5 seconds. Then he drops it by his side.)* It's that sorry look in his eyes. I feel a little bad for him.

Finn: Oh, give me that you namby pamby. *(He takes the rifle and aims it at the donkey.)* Turn around ya dumb mule. *(The mule turns around so his behind is facing Finn. Finn cocks the hammer ready to shoot but suddenly, the donkey kicks the rifle out of his hand and the gun goes off. It shoots the master in his leg.)*

Play Track 2 (Gunshot)

Master: Owwww! The darn hinny got me in the leg! (*The Master falls to the ground but stays sitting up and grasps his leg in pain. All the mill workers surround the Master.*)

Bart: Are you okay sir? What can we do?

Master: I don't know! Do somethin'! Owwww!!!! (*continues to moan*)

Finn: That stinkin' mule kicked it straight out of my hand!

Harry: Maybe you shouldn't have told it to turn around. You know what they say about standing behind a donkey.

Finn: Well if the two of you hadn't been acting like such a bunch of daisies, maybe this wouldn't a happened in the first place! (*During this conversation the donkey sneaks slowly off back stage left while keeping an eye on the workers.*)

Bart: Hey, you callin' me a daisy?

Harry: And me too?

Finn: (*He starts to walk toward the two workers.*) Yeah, you got a problem with that? (*The two workers back away scared.*)

Master: Hello! Do any of you knuckleheads remember that I just got shot in the leg? Stop your arguin' and get me something for it!

Bart: What do you need sir?

Master: (*sarcastically*) Perhaps a cup of tea and a biscuit would be nice.

Harry: Oh sir, I got myself a hot cup of joe right here. (*He grabs a cup of coffee from a side table and starts to hand it to the master*) Here, have a sip. (*He trips and spills the coffee on the Master's leg.*)

Master: Yeow!!! What the devil are you doing?

Harry: You said you wanted a cup of tea, so I thought you'd be okay with coffee.

Master: I was kidding you moron! How about a bandage or a cold press?!! (*Harry turns around to run to get a bandage and bumps into Bart. Bart stumbles and falls to the floor which causes the gun to go off again. This time it gets Finn in the foot.*)

Play Track 3 (Gunshot)

Finn: Yikes, it got me in my pinky toe! (*He starts to wail.*)

(Curtain closes. *Trees enter stage behind curtain line ready for the song, 'Now is the Time'.)*

(Donkey enters stage left in front of the closed curtain holding his lute. He starts to play 'Now is the Time'.)

Play Track 4 (Beginning of 'Now is the Time')

(Music stops after a few seconds.)

Donkey: (*speaking to audience*) What good is it for me to keep playing when I've got no one to play with? (*pause 5 seconds*) I can't believe how they treated me after all I've done for them. (*pause*) I should just sing the blues. (*Donkey looks down for a few seconds. Suddenly he looks up with hope in his eyes.*) I know! I'll go to the town of Bremen and join a band! Then I can play my lute all day long and I won't have to carry nothin' for nobody! (*Donkey smiles and exits stage right.*)

Play Track 5 (Now is the Time)

Song: Now is the Time-Sung by the Donkey and Trees

(*During this song, other members from the cast dressed as trees join the donkey part way through the song.*)

(*Donkey*) It's hard to believe
That I'm on my own
I have to leave the land
That I grew up on

It's just the way it is
It's time for a change
I'm gonna walk away
I'm gonna leave this place

(**Curtain opens,** *Trees are on stage*)

Is it too late
Is this the final call
Did I waste my time always doing what I'm told
I stand here alone
All the friends I had are gone
Is it too late to start all over

(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) A time of new beginnings
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) A time to start again
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) Looking towards the future
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) Leave the past behind
I'm ready to start my life all over again

(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) I'll go out towards the future
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) I know this is my time
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) An end a new beginning
I'm ready to start my life all over again

(*Donkey*) I have to away
I know that I can't stay
I must be on my way
I'm moving on.

(*Small group*) Look out in the distance
See what you will find
On this brave new journey
now it is the time

(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) A time of new beginnings
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) A time to start again
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) Looking towards the future

(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) Leave the past behind
I'm ready to start my life all over again

(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) I'll go out towards the music
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) I know this is my time
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) An end a new beginning
(*Group*) Now is the time
(*Donkey*) This is the end
I'm ready to start my life all over again
(*All*) Now is the Time

(Curtain closes. *Set change to kitchen).*

Play Track 6 (Now is the Time Set Change)

(There could be a short dance during this set change.)

Scene 2: Fido

(Curtain opens *to a kitchen where mother is feeding a toddler in a high chair and the other two kids are eating at the table.)*

Mother: Here comes the choo choo train. Toot! Toot! (*Mother brings spoonful of mashed potatoes toward toddler's mouth.*)

Toddler: No choo choo. Train crash and fall down, go boom! (*Toddler knocks food onto floor.*)

Mother: (*gives a frustrated sigh*) Esther, would you get a cloth and wipe up this mess?

Esther: Yes mother. *(She grabs a cloth and gets down on the floor and cleans it up.)*

Toddler: *(points at sister)* Doggie! Doggie! *(Toddler laughs. Esther rolls her eyes.)*

Abe: Speaking of dogs, where is Fido?

Mother: He's out hunting with your father. They should be back soon.

Abe: Hopefully they'll return with a good catch this time.

Mother: I know. But at least we had a good harvest this past summer. We should have enough vegetables to get us through the winter.

(Father and Fido enter stage right looking defeated. Fido is panting.)

Esther: Daddy! Daddy! You're home! What did you bring home from the hunt?

(Father shakes his head no.)

Mother: No luck again? There's plenty of prey out there. I don't get it.

Father: It's Fido. He just can't keep up with the chase. *(mumbles)*
Stupid dog.

Toddler: Me love Fido! He no stupid! *(Toddler throws mashed potatoes at the father and it hits him in the face. Toddler laughs. Father wipes it*

off his face and throws it on the floor. Fido pretends to lick it up off the floor.)

Abe: He can't help it father. He's old.

Mother: He's another mouth to feed, that's what he is.

Father: *(Father looks at the Mother. Abe is watching them both.)* I think it's time. *(Mother nods her head yes looking sad.)*

Abe: Father, no! You can't do this! Please don't do this!!

Esther: What's he going to do?

Abe: They're going to kill Fido!

(The Trees should be on deck back stage ready to come on for the song, 'Eternal'.)

Mother: *(looks at Abe)* Honey, we have no choice.

Esther: Daddy, no! *(runs toward her father)* You can't do this! Please don't do it daddy, please!! *(She falls to her knees begging.)* Please no!!

(Toddler starts to cry. Fido walks down stage with a cane as the family continues to argue silently in the background.)

Fido: *(monologue-speaking to audience)* I knew my days were numbered. The last few hunts have been difficult. These ole bones ain't what they used to be. *(chuckles and takes a breath)* C'est la vie, as they

say. We're not meant to be around forever. (*pauses and shakes his head*)
I'll miss the children though. Good kids they are. We had a good run.

Abe: Father, can we at least take Fido for one last walk in the woods?

Father: Yes, son. But don't be gone for too long.

Abe: Come on Esther. We can take him down to the pond for a swim.
(*Abe winks at Esther.*)

Esther: That's a great idea! Fido loves to play fetch with a stick in the water!

Abe: (*turns to Fido*) Fido, come! (*Fido runs by his side.*)

Esther: Let's bring his drum. He loves to bang on it with his paws.

Abe: Great idea! (*Esther runs back stage right and grabs a backpack with the drum, a loaf of bread, and a blanket in it.*)

Toddler: I go! I go! Me wanna go!

Mother: No sweetie. It's too dark out there in the forest. You might trip.

(*Toddler grunts, pouts, and crosses his/her arms.*)

Abe: We'll be back soon. (*Heads toward stage left and motions as if he's opening a door.*) Fido, come on boy! (*Fido runs toward the door, stops and looks back at the mother, father, and toddler. The toddler*

throws some more mashed potatoes/whipped cream on the floor for him. Fido pretends to lick it up and the toddler giggles.)

*(**Curtain closes.** Trees, bushes, and nocturnal animals enter stage behind closed curtain.)*

(Abe, Esther, and Fido enter stage left in front of the closed curtain. They walk to center stage and stop.)

Abe: This is where we have to part Fido. *(Fido cocks his head sideways as if he doesn't understand.)*

Esther: Father is going to kill you! You must escape! Here. *(She reaches into the backpack).* I brought you a loaf of bread and some cheese in case you get hungry, your drum so you don't get bored and a blanket if you need a rest. *(She puts the backpack on Fido.)*

Father: *(yells from back stage)* Abe! Esther! Time to come in! It's getting late!