

The Pied Piper

Script by Jennifer Davis

adapted from the story/poem by Robert Browning

Original music by Bob Nicoll

Characters:

Pied Piper, a mysterious, oddly-dressed fellow from an unknown place with special abilities

8-12 Rats, these are Hip Hop rats that rap

Mayor, arrogant, cowardly and kind of clueless

The Corporation-2 males (can be played by any gender) buffoon-like

Mayor's Son-a spoiled little prince

Odilia, Mayor's wife- snooty and contemptuous of both her son and husband

5-10 Townspeople, earnest

10-12 Children

Rapunzel and Townsperson, scene during set changes

Synopsis:

In this classic children's tale dating back centuries, the Pied Piper arrives in the town of Hamelin, a small village in Germany, where he promises to rid the town of their rat infestation with his magical charms if he is paid. Once the Pied Piper accomplishes the goal of getting rid of the rats, the town's Mayor and his corporation renege on their promise to pay the Pied Piper. In this humorous version, the Rats are Hip Hop rats that can rap and are quite loveable. The Corporation, the Mayor's sidekicks, offer plenty of laughs as well as the Mayor's spoiled "little prince" son. There is a playful hopping between modern times and the middle ages throughout. The variety of music in this play is astounding from opera to rap to songs the actors waltz to along with the Pied Piper's haunting and

evocative music both sung and played on his pipes. This play promises to delight all types!

Production notes:

The play is about 40 minutes. The cast could be comprised of around 30-40 members for ages 6 and up. The songs allow many from the cast to participate in them and provide opportunities for lots of solos for various cast members. Creative gender casting is always encouraged. 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. Narration could also be done with microphones. Otherwise any background music can be turned to a low volume and the actors/singers will need to project. Everyone back stage can join in on the group songs even if they're not in the scene.

Costumes:

There are many ways you could dress the Pied Piper but if you want to stay as close to the classic poem, here is a description of him: "his...long coat from heel to head was half of yellow and half of red, and he himself was tall and thin, and light loose hair, no tuft on cheek nor beard on chin,". The Pied Piper should always carry his flute or "his pipes". The Rats dress as both rats and Hip-Hop artists because they rap in the play so they could have ears and tails and wear sideways baseball caps or wear big gold chains and sunglasses. The Mayor, the Corporation, Odilia and their son could either dress in clothes from the Middle Ages or from modern times since there is a playful crossing over of the centuries; for example, at one point the Mayor takes out his cell phone or another example is the fact the Rats are Hip-Hop and rap. The Townspeople and the Children should dress like working class people from the Middle Ages/Medieval Times.

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.

Introduction;

The Introduction happens in front of a closed curtain.

Scene 1- Hamelin Town Center;

The first scene, the Town Center, takes place outside so there could be a backdrop of an old German town with rolling hills, the Weser river and old style German houses. We used large cardboard boxes, white sheets, and dark colored duct tape to make the old German style houses. We painted the hills in the background on large cardboard slats, used a long blue cloth for the river and used green plastic table clothes and colored tissue paper to make bushes and flowers. During the song, ‘They Say I’m Rich’ a chair needs to be placed center stage to prepare for the song, ‘I’m Scared’.

Scene 2- The Rat’s Alleyway;

This scene takes place in the Rat’s alleyway. There could be trash cans, a dumpster (made out of cardboard with graffiti), and crates for rats to sit on. Trash could be scattered all over the stage. In this scene the rats eat cheese, loaves of bread, chicken, etc. and they play with decks of cards.

Scene 3- Mayor’s Office, Town Hall;

There is a desk up stage right with a large chair or throne behind the desk. There could be a candelabra or anything to make the set look medieval. We used a standing knight. There should be a wallet in the desk with money (guilders) in it. There could be a drawbridge stage left that is the door the Pied Piper enters through. We used large cardboard to construct this.

Scenes 4 & 5 take place in the Mayor's Office (same as Scene 3).

Scene 6- Town Center-The Reunion;

The final scene is back in Hamelin Town Center, the same set as in Scene 1.

Introduction to the Pied Piper:

Person 1: Ladies and Gentlemen, we'd like to welcome you to our show.

Person 2: Today's production is called Rapunzel.

Person 1: No it's not.

Person 2: Yes, it is. I saw Rapunzel back stage.

Person 1: That's just a lunatic from the town of Hamelin. All the rats in her house drove her crazy.

Person 2: Then what play is this?

Person 1: The Pied Piper of course!

Person 2: Well then, whichever play this is, please turn your cell phones off and keep the aisles clear.

Person 1: And a very big thank you to all the people who helped with this production.

Both: Enjoy the show!

THE PIED PIPER

Scene 1: Hamelin Town Center

(Curtain is closed. Children enter stage left and skip and twirl to down stage right. They sing the following. Microphones could be used if available.)

Play Track 1 (Hamelin Intro)

Play Track 2 (Hamelin Song into Rat song)

Hamelin Song: Sung by Children

(Children sing)

Hamelin Town in Brunswick,
By famous Hanover city;
The river Weser (*pronounced Vazer*),
deep and wide
Washes its wall on the southern side
A pleasanter spot you never spied
But so begins my ditty,
almost five hundred years ago

Child 1: *(This is spoken)* ...to see the townsfolk suffer so from vermin,

Child 2: ...was a pity! *(Children remain stage right.)*

(Curtain opens to Town Center and Townspeople are stage left with the Rats crawling about wreaking havoc and stealing the food. Townsperson 1 has a broom in hand trying to shoo away rats. Townspeople 2 & 3 are standing on chairs. Townsperson 4 is trying to gather all the food. Townsperson 5 can come up with something else to do.)

Rat Song: Sung by Children

(Children sing)

Rats!

They fought the dogs, and killed the cats,
and bit the babies in the cradles,
and ate the cheeses out of the vats,
licked the soup from the cooks' own ladles,
split open the kegs of salted sprats,
made nests inside men's Sunday hats,
and even spoiled the women's chats,
by drowning their speaking with shrieking
and squeaking in fifty different sharps and flats.

Rats!

(Rats begin to slowly approach children stage right.)

Rat 1: Rumors. Rumors! Why you always talkin' trash about us?

Children: Rats! *(Children scream.)*

Rat 2: You didn't answer the question.

Child 7: They're gonna eat me! *(Rats shake their heads annoyed but continue to approach the children.)*

Child 4: Mommy, help! (*Children exit stage right and rats follow them.*)

(*Townspeople walk down stage.*)

Townsperson 1: I've just about had it with these rats.

Townsperson 2: They've eaten everything in my kitchen leaving my cupboards bare!

Townsperson 3: Why won't the mayor do anything about it?

Townsperson 4: Because he's selfish and stupid. And so is his pathetic Corporation.

Townsperson 5: All they care about is their money.

Townsperson 2: Have you seen how many fur coats the mayor's wife, Odilia owns?

Townsperson 3: And all her ermine gowns?

Townsperson 1: And I can't stand their spoiled brat son.

(*The Mayor, the Corporation, Odilia, and the son enter stage left. The son is eating some pudding.*)

Son: Father, I want more strawberry pudding!

Mayor: Yes son. You can have whatever you want 'cause you're the most special boy in the whole wide world.

Son: I know papa.

Odilia: (*to the Mayor*) Why do you speak to him that way? He gets enough attention as it is. What about me?? (*Mayor looks at her puzzled.*)

Townsperson 1: (*points*) There's the Mayor!

Townsperson 2: Mr. Mayor, you've got to do something about these rats!

Mayor: Rats? Rats? Oh rats! For a guilder, I'd my ermine gown sell. I wish I were a mile hence! Oh for a trap.

Odilia: And must you always talk like you're from the middle ages?

Son: Yeah papa, no one can understand you.

Mayor: But I *am* from the Middle Ages.

Corporation 1: What does that mean?

Corporation 2: Perhaps we're middle-aged? (*They shrug.*)

Townsperson 3: Mr. Mayor, how do you plan on ridding this town of rats?

Townsperson 4: Yes, they're everywhere we go. My clothes were chewed to shreds.

Townsperson 5: They frighten our children as well!

Townspeople: (*said rhythmically*) Give your brains a ‘racking to find the remedy we’re lacking, or, sure as fate, we’ll send you packing.

Odilia: (*annoyed*) Dear, you should not let these peasants speak to you in this manner.

Mayor: You’re absolutely right, Odilia. (*clears his throat*) I don’t recall seeing a meeting with all of you on my agenda.

Son: And where (*stomps foot*) is the strawberry pudding you promised me father? (*Odilia rolls her eyes and mimics her son silently behind his back.*)

Mayor: (*addresses Townspeople*) Leave me be. Obviously I have more important matters to attend to. Skadaddle!

(*Townspeople just glare at him.*)

Mayor: I said shoo or I’ll call my guards and have you all locked up in a dungeon or something.

(*Townspeople exit stage right. Mayor walks to center stage and the Son and Odilia stand on each side of him. Corporation stand behind the Mayor on either side of him a few feet back.*)

Play Track 3 (They Say I’m Rich)

Song: They Say I’m Rich

Sung by Mayor, Odilia, Son and the Corporation

(*Townspeople and children dance upstage during song*)

(Mayor sings)

They say I'm rich

They say I'm haughty

They say I'm stupid

But I have money

Lots of money

They all complain

Always whining

They interrupt me when I am dining

(plastic wine glasses are brought to them. They take a sip and throw the glasses behind them.)

(The townspeople and children enter and do a dance upstage. One person places a chair center stage.)

(Odilia sings)

They are so crude

The working classes

We're so much better

Than the lowly masses

Always sitting on their_____

(Son sings)

My daddy's rich

My daddy loves me

The way he shows it

He gives me money

Lots of money

Lots and lots of money!

(break for regal dance)

(Mayor sings)

They all try to put me down
Make me out to be a clown
Instead of smiles they always frown
Try to bring me to my knees
I won't worry I am strong
I'm rich, good looking, they are wrong
And I know it won't be long
And everyone will see

(Mayor, Odilia, Son, and Corporation sing)

They say we're rich
They say we're haughty
They say we're stupid
But we have money
Lots of money
Lots and lots of money

(Rats enter stage right approaching them.)

Son: Father, look!! *(Mayor runs and stands on a chair cowering away and moaning, 'ahhhh' during the chase. The rats chase the Son, Odilia, and Corporation in a circle around the Mayor who is on the chair.)*

Son: Daddy help! Get these nasty rodents away from me. They're gonna eat me! I hate rats! Their tails are so icky and their beady little eyes make me cringe.

(After the rats chase them twice around the Mayor, everyone but the Mayor exits stage left with rats following them. Mayor gets off the chair and walks down center.)

Mayor: Oh what am I to do about these filthy vermin? These rats are going to be my downfall!

Play Track 4 (I'm Scared)

Song: I'm Scared with Rats-sung by Mayor and Rats

(Rats re-enter stage left to be in song.)

(Mayor sings) I'm Scared

(rats sing) he's scared he's scared he's scared

(Mayor) I'm terrified

(rats) he's scared he's scared he's scared

(Mayor) Want to get away get away get away

Run run run run run run away

Find a place to hide

All my wealth, my gowns, my possessions

Still I don't know what to do

I have no thoughts, no ideas, no answers

I just haven't got a clue

(Mayor sings) I'm Scared

(rats sing) he's scared he's scared he's scared

(Mayor) I'm terrified

(rats) he's scared he's scared he's scared

(Mayor) Want to get away get away get away

Run run run run run run away

Find a place to hide (Rats Chase Mayor)

I'm scared

(rats) he's scared he's scared he's scared

(Mayor) I'm terrified

(Curtain closes. Set change to Rat's Alleyway. Rapunzel enters stage left in front of the curtain and stops center stage.)

Rapunzel: I can't find my prince. Where art thy prince?

Townsperson: Rapunzel, you're in the wrong play! Get off the stage!
(They both exit stage right.)

Play Track 5 (I'm Scared Scene Change)

Scene 2: The Rat's Alleyway

(Curtain opens. Rats are hanging out eating the goods- cheese, loaves of bread, chicken, etc. that they took from the townspeople and playing cards.)

(Rat 1 laughs)

Rat 3: Sup?

Rat 1: Yo, yo-did you see the look on the wife's face? She be trippin'.
(laughs again)

Rat 2: Mayor's daughter besta stop runnin' her mouth 'cuz she ain't all that and a bag o' chips. Know wut I'm sayin'?

Rats: Fo shizzle!

Rat 6: And I'm tired of all these Townsfolk thinkin' we just a bunch o' thugs.

Rat 7: Yeah, the coppers take my mug shot every week, it seems.

Rat 8: I've ended up in the Can just for bein' hungry.

Rat 4: All we doin' is tryin' to eat and get outta the cold.

Rat 2: It ain't right, dog.

Rat 4: I'm a rat.

Rat 2: Yeah, yeah, whateveh.

Rat 3: We don't need to put up with this crap, aiight?

Rat 2: It just ain't right.

Play Track 6 (Lookin' For a Home)

Rat Rap/Song: Lookin' For a Home

(chorus) Lookin for a home

Lookin for food and shelter
Lookin for shelter
Lookin for a home
Lookin for food and shelter
Lookin for shelter

We're out here lookin for some cheese and bread
Lookin for a place I can rest my head
Find a nice place I can put my bed

Lookin for shelter

Trying to find food anyway that I can
The street, the house and the garbage can
Don't really care what you think I am

Lookin for shelter

(chorus) Lookin for a home
Lookin for food and shelter

Lookin for shelter

Been on the street all my life
Ain't no lawyer or bankster
We just trying to get by
We movin in, we takin over
That ain't no lie

Lookin for shelter