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# The Piper of Hamelin

## Introducing the show

In this package you have everything you need to stage a production of *THE PIPER OF HAMELIN*. Please read these notes through first, as they will help you to get the most out of the show.

## What is the play about?

The play is very loosely based on the famous poem by Robert Browning, but has been given a modern twist. The rubbish in Hamelin town is piling higher each day, and King Rat and his cronies are taking over. Only the children realize the damage being done, and they realize they must persuade Tom the Piper to use his magic and save the town.

## Who is the play for?

*THE PIPER OF HAMELIN* was written to be performed as a Key Stage 2 or Lower Secondary school musical. The cast of characters is a large one, but the script has been deliberately written so that it could easily be condensed if necessary, with correspondingly fewer characters. It has a strong environmental message.

## How long is the play?

The play runs for approximately seventy five minutes and has five songs and two dances. It is therefore ideal for a major end of term production.

## What is on the CD?

You don't have to read music, or know anything about music, to put on this show. The CD has everything you'll need! On all our CDs there is a vocal version, an instrumental version, any sound effects that are needed, and quite often a piano version too. A full musical score has also been provided in the booklet, for teachers who are musically accomplished.

## How many parts are there in the play?

There are parts for forty five children in the play, and this can easily be expanded with the children who perform the dances, the villagers, etc. The main characters are naturally the most challenging roles, though straightforward enough for reasonably able children to cope with, but there are

plenty of parts for children who are very keen to be in the show but only have average acting abilities. Jimmy Bean, the 'hero', is most successful when played by a younger child, as he or she quickly gains the empathy of the audience.

## What should I do next?

Read through the play first, and get a feel for the story and the setting of each scene. Even after reading it once, you'll probably know which children will be ideal for the main parts.

Then, play through the music on the CD, but as you do this, follow the words to the songs in the script. Remember, we haven't used 'professional singers'. The children you hear are children actually performing the show... that's why we know our plays work so well!

Next, read the section below called 'PEOPLE, PROPS AND SCENERY'. This will tell you about stage arrangements, props, how important pieces of scenery might be made and any characters who need special attention.

Finally... off you go... and don't worry if you want to change, adapt, shorten, or extend the play. It isn't, of course, possible to know all the situations in which *THE PIPER OF HAMELIN* is likely to be performed, and you will need to suit it to your own school 'theatre' environment. However, in our experience teachers are very creative people, and easily able to do this.

## The performance licence

An application form for a performance licence, and details of the fee, are on page 8 of this book. The licence will cover public performances of the play to an invited audience of parents and other guests. For any other kind of public performance, the producers should contact Hopscotch.



## People, props and scenery

There are a large number of characters, but the script has been deliberately written so that it could easily be condensed, with correspondingly fewer characters. The three cooks, for example, could become one cook; there could be fewer 'speaking' townspeople; there need only be one taleteller or mountain watcher. And, of course, there can be as many rats as you like!

If the play is going to be a 'whole school' production, there are ample opportunities for both younger or older children. The dance of the village children, for example, is particularly attractive if the younger children perform it, whereas the dance of the Piper's People gives older children a chance to invent a dance of real precision. And older primary or younger secondary children are very good at that!

All children love humorous situations, whether they are performing in them or just watching and enjoying them. There is plenty of humour in this show, and children should have lots of fun with the rats and the councillors. It is likely that they will want to improvise a few extra comical actions in these scenes too!

The responses to the taletellers and the choruses to the songs are intended to be sung by the section of the

school sitting watching the show. The idea is to have EVERYBODY involved, so that even a child who can't act at all can still have a lot of enjoyment from answering the Taletellers back or singing along with everybody else!

Finally, as you'll notice when you read the script, the show has been written to have a strong '**care for our environment**' theme, a subject which is of immense importance and very topical. With a bit of imagination, a great deal of interesting classwork could also arise from it... apart from the production itself!

Since there are a number of scenes in this play, details of the scenery and props have been provided at the start of each scene, so that what needs to be done will be readily apparent on a first reading of the script. Naturally, people creating the scenery can then interpret it as they wish once they set about making it. Nothing is particularly difficult... indeed, we have kept everything reasonably simple for those schools who do not have an abundance of resources.

*We hope you thoroughly enjoy producing and performing  
THE PIPER OF HAMELIN.*

*Mike Kent & Terry O'Brien*

# Scene 2. Just outside the town.

*It is late at night. We see one of the shop fronts, back left of stage. The rest of background is grassy mounds covered in litter.*

**School.** *(As King Rat creeps on stage)* Boo! Hiss!

**King Rat.** Who made that noise!

**School.** We did.

**King Rat.** Well keep quiet! If I want you lot to make noises I'll let you know. All right lads, no body's about. *(Rats enter and squat round king)*. Now then, I know we've come a long way and you're all tired.

**Chewer.** And hungry, chief!

**King Rat.** And hungry. But if we play our cards right, I think we can clean up in this town.

**Scruffy.** Clean up? What for? We like it dirty.

**King Rat.** I mean we can take advantage of the people here.

**Thinker.** What's he mean, take advantage? I can't do them big words.

**Sharptooth.** He means stick around for a while. The people here chuck food and all their rubbish in the streets.

**Chewer.** Ooh, goody! I love food. Who wants to throw food at me?

**King Rat.** Keep quiet, Chewer. Do you want them to know we're here?

**Sniffer.** Some of 'em do know, chief.

**King Rat.** How do they know. Who's the squealer?

**All Rats.** Not me, chief.

**Telltale.** It was Cheesey, chief. He didn't stay in hiding.

**Cheesey.** Yes I did!

**All Rats.** No you didn't!

**Cheesey.** All right, I didn't. But I never went far, chief. I got this lovely whiff of gorgonzola cheese. It was all green and mouldy.

**Chewer.** Cor! Mouldy cheese! Can I have some mouldy cheese, chief?

- King Rat.** Now wait. If we start running about, we'll blow our cover.
- Thinker.** What's he mean, blow our cover?
- Sharptooth.** He means they'll see how many of us there are.
- Thinker.** We'll have to hide, then, won't we.
- Sharptooth.** You should be scavenging around for some brains, mate!
- Thinker.** Scavenge? What does that mean? I don't know them big...
- Sniffer.** Ssshh! So what's the plan of action, chief?
- King Rat.** Well lads, we attack quickly and then eat as much as we can get hold of. We shouldn't get much bother from the people. People hate us rats! *(Rats chuckle)*
- Sharptooth.** I wonder why! All we do is bite 'em! *(Rats laugh)*
- Scruffy.** Can we have a bit of fun with 'em, chief?
- King Rat.** Do what you like lads. If we're nasty enough the people will go, and we'll have the place to ourselves.
- Sharptooth.** I fancy a good fight. I shall tear the cats and dogs to bits. Then I'll probably eat 'em.
- Sniffer.** Personally, it's humans I hate. Specially the little 'uns.
- Chewer.** I shall just stuff myself with cheese. Cheddar, Edam, I don't care what it is as long as it's mouldy and really smelly.
- Telltale.** I'm going to chase the humans. Especially the ones with skirts on. I like to hear 'em scream really loud.
- Cheesey.** Can I go after that big juicy human, Chief? The one that wears the fancy robes, big shoes and a silly hat?
- King Rat.** He's called the Mayor, lads. He's their leader.
- Cheesey.** Can I bite his bum, chief?
- King Rat.** Terrify him, son. Then we can take over the town!

## Song 2. The song of the rats

### Chorus

We're the roughest, toughest rats around,  
 We're known from here to London town,  
 Our teeth are sharp and our tails are long...  
 And we bet you're frightened by our song!  
 Don't let your dinner sit around,

# The children's dancing song

Music by Terry O'Brien

Lyrics by Mike Kent

Intro *Grandioso*

*ff* *f* *mf* *rit* *pp*

Tempo: ♩ = 87

*Leggiero* (Lightly)  $C^{minor}$  VERSE

♩ = 160 *mp*

We chil dren tell our mums and dads and  
 chil dren tell our mums and dads but  
 chil dren tell our mums and dads They

$B^b$

sing this lit tle ver — se Don't throw your rub bish in the town You'll  
 they don't seem to care — The coun cil does n't seem to hear And  
 think we make a fu — ss We could keep Ham 'lin clean er but It's

$C^{minor}$

on ly make things wor — se For Reg in ald who sweeps the roads Thinks  
 nei ther does the May — or We tell the grown ups ev 'ry day But  
 up to all of u — s If Ham 'lin town goes on like this We

$B^b$

peo ple should be sto — pped For why should Reg gie pick up things that  
 then they al ways ca — ll 'Just hold your noise and don't butt in' You're  
 fear it won't last lo — ng And that is why we dance and sing This

# Rat attack (Tone Poem)

Music by Terry O'Brien

Lyrics by Mike Kent

♩ = 95

Spoken: Taletellers And that's what hap pened The

rats at tacked at dawn They fought the dogs and chased the cats They

broke the bar rels filled with sprats They made their nests in Sun day hats They

stole the chee ses from the vats *ff*

*p* *pp*

The musical score is written for piano and voice. It consists of six systems of music. The first system includes a tempo marking of ♩ = 95 and a 'Spoken' section. The lyrics are: 'Spoken: Taletellers And that's what hap pened The'. The second system continues the lyrics: 'rats at tacked at dawn They fought the dogs and chased the cats They'. The third system continues: 'broke the bar rels filled with sprats They made their nests in Sun day hats They'. The fourth system includes the lyrics 'stole the chee ses from the vats' followed by a fortissimo (*ff*) dynamic marking. The fifth system features a complex piano accompaniment with a treble clef staff containing a rapid sixteenth-note melody and a bass clef staff with a steady accompaniment. The sixth system concludes with a piano (*p*) dynamic marking and a final section marked *pp* (pianissimo).