

Tails of Hamelin – Full Production

Scene I

{ A Germanic village, and market square, mountains in the distance, and a river can be seen between the houses. There is a fountain centre. The Storyteller moves to centre stage as the overture comes to an end.

Storyteller Once upon a time, as all the best stories begin, in the little town of Hamelin, on the banks of the river Weser...

Glocken *(wheeling on a cart full of cuckoo clocks)* Oi! Are you going to be there for long?

Storyteller Sorry?

Glocken Are you going to be there long? It's just that that's my spot.

Storyteller What?

Glocken That's my spot. I've got a permit from the council.

Storyteller A permit?

Glocken Yeah, you've got to have a permit if you're going to be selling stuff.

Storyteller I'm not selling 'stuff', as you so eloquently put it.

Glocken So what are you doing in market square if you haven't got anything to sell? It's pointless if you ask me.

Storyteller I'm telling a story.

Glocken And how much is that then?

Storyteller It's not for sale.

Glocken Just as well really. You need a permit if you want to sell stuff. Besides, that's my spot.

Storyteller Can I get on?

Glocken *(thinking she wants a ride)* Not really the cart's full of clocks. I sell clocks. That's why I need my spot. Place is full of tourists crying out for cheap tat come nine o'clock, so come on, shift it. I got work to do.

Storyteller So have I. Once upon a time...

Strudel *(entering with a tray full of cakes hanging from his shoulders)* Tasty buns. Get your tasty buns. All fresh today. Big buns, small buns, buns for every budget. *(To Glocken)* Oi, you're in my spot.

Glocken Don't tell me, tell 'im.

Strudel *(to Storyteller, indicating Glocken)* Oi, he's in my spot.

Storyteller What's that got to do with me?

Glocken You're in *my* spot. Move it, buster, you're knocking everything out of whack.

Strudel Yeah, we got stuff to sell. Market opens at nine. *(To Glocken)* Have you got the time?

Glocken *(incredulous and sarcastically indicating his cart)* Really?

Mechants and customers are starting to fill the market square as. Children play games around them.

Blumenkohl *(with a box of vegetables)* What's going on here?

Glocken She's in my spot.

Blumenkohl Here, you, you can't just take a man's spot. You need a permit.

Storyteller So I've heard.

Blumenkohl What's she doing anyway?

Glocken Says she's telling a story.

Blumenkohl What's it about?

Storyteller It's about an hour or so.

Strudel Oh, I like a good story.

Blumenkohl Have you heard the one about that little girl and the wolf?

Strudel Ooh, no! Is it romantic?

Blumenkohl Not really. Wolf ate her... and her granny. Bits of them everywhere. Terrible. In all the papers. That's the trouble with wolves, you see. Messy eaters.

Storyteller Can I just tell the story?

Glocken That's not the problem, mate. We all like a good old yarn. The problem's not the story. The problem is where you're telling it. Why don't you get over there? It's as good a spot as any.

Storyteller Fine. I'll go over there. Honestly! Some people! *(Composes herself)*
Right... Once upon a time...

Strudel I hope you don't mind the interruption...

Storyteller *(exasperated and sarcastic)* Why break the habit?

Strudel Well, I'm no storyteller, ducky, but I do know how to get an audience going. I've done a few plays myself.

Blumenkohl He has. Wonderful posture. Stands ever so still.

Glocken That's because he's so wooden. Put him next to a tree and there'd be squirrels going up his trouser leg.

Strudel Critics everywhere. Anyway, as I said, I've done quite a few plays. Hamelin Amateur Dramatics, don't you know.

Glocken Of course we do. You never stop talking about it.

Strudel You're just jealous because I got the lead part in Hamlet.

Glocken With the emphasis on the ham.

Strudel Philistine. *(To Storyteller)* Anyway, I was in last year's outdoor production of 'A Midsummer Night's Dream'. You might have seen me. Rave reviews.

Blumenkohl Oh, yes. You should have seen his Bottom in the park. Marvellous.

Strudel What you want, dear heart, is bells and whistles...a pinch of pizzazz.

Storyteller Pizazz?

Strudel Yes. Old school musical theatre. Everyone likes a few jazz hands and a couple of step-ball-changes. Give' em something to wake them up.

Glocken How about an alarm clock?

Strudel Is everything a business opportunity to you?

Glocken I have to make a living. No one's been through here in an age. What are we supposed to live on? Air?

Strudel *(To Storyteller)* Look, forget him. You need to wow the crowds. 'Once upon a time' is so last year. Why don't you start with a big opening number?

Storyteller You think so?

Blumenkohl Of course, that's the way to pull an audience. I'll get my jazz shoes.

Storyteller Well, if you'll let me begin, then I'll give it a try.

Strudel Good for you, dear heart. Maybe you'll get a Tony.

Blumenkohl Let's not push it.}

No 1 : Hamelin Swing

Storyteller **There's a tiny town near Hanover City**
It might be small but, gee, it's pretty

Chorus **Ask any guidebook that it's in**

Storyteller **They'll praise the little hamlet of Hamelin**

Chorus **Hamelin, hale and pretty hearty**
Hamelin, book yourself a party

Storyteller **Take a trip down Hamelin way**

Chorus **It's a fun filled, five star holiday**
Woo-hoo, Hamelin
Yoo-Hoo, Hamelin

Storyteller **If you like your mountains panoramic**
And you like cuisine that's quite Germanic
Pack your bags, and jump right in
To the hale and hearty hamlet of Hamelin

Chorus **Hamelin, if you're in the mood'll**
Surely shower you with strudel

Storyteller **For souvenirs, think outside of the box,**

Chorus **We do a lovely line in cuckoo clocks**

Ya, ya, Hamelin

Alles klar, Hamelin

Storyteller And don't forget your lederhosen

To stop your Bratwurst getting frozen

Chorus The mountain breeze blows fresh and free

It'll freeze your yodel-odel-odel-ay-dee-ee

All Hamelin Saurkraut and pickle

Hamelin Bier and Pumperknickel

Watch the cash come rolling in

To the money grabbing tourist trap of Hamelin

Storyteller Just one more thing, please bring your cats

Chorus What we sort of failed to tell you about

Not a thing you want to hear us shout

Alright, so you've found us out

We've got rats!

Filthy rats!

Stinking Rats!

(spoken) Rats!

{ **Scene II**

Blumenkohl Look at this place. It's like a ghost town. Not a single solitary customer.

Glocken What do you expect? The place is overrun by rats.

Strudel No wonder no one wants to buy our stuff. No one wants an éclair with a rat in the middle.

Glocken Call me old fashioned but I'd rather fresh cream.

Strudel I don't think I've got anything without teeth marks in it. Not even the wife.

Blumenkohl Looks like they've really had a go at her face.

Strudel They bit her legs.

Blumenkohl Oh.

Glocken There's more and more every day. They must think us easy pickings.

Blumenkohl Most of my vegetable store has been chewed. Look at this. *(She holds out an apple.)* This apple is the only thing that I have left that hasn't been nibbled.

A rat dressed as a gangster walks by and takes it, bites it and puts it back in his hand and exits.

Blumenkohl *(calling out)* Second hand apple. Half price today. One careful owner.

Strudel Oh, this is unbelievable. They're not even frightened of us anymore.

Glocken I found one in my bed last night. Didn't get a wink of sleep. Kept hogging the duvet.

Trader 1 Someone needs to do something. They're eating us out of house and home

Trader 2 My cat is a nervous wreck. I caught her eating a ball of wool this morning.

Trader 1 What happened?

Trader 2 She had mittens.

Suddenly a number of different clock chimes and alarms are heard loudly. The others cover their ears. Glocken runs around his cart furiously turning them all off.

The alarms stop one by one.

Glocken There we go. Sounds like it's time to shut up shop.

All You don't say?

Glocken Another market day finished and not a single sale. Even if we had the money to buy food, there's none to be had. The rats have had the lion's share.

Trader 1 They're terrorising us. I'm afraid to go out at night.

Trader 2 This place used to be full of tourists. Wallets overflowing and money to spend on anything we had to sell.

Trader 1 More money than sense. Those were the good old days.

Blumenkohl Ever since the rat king moved in with his mob, no one comes to Hamelin.

Strudel Little wonder. You're not going to have the best of holidays if you keep getting robbed in the street by a horde of rats. It gets wearing.

Glocken They don't want Old Hamelin nowadays, not with its wall-to-wall, hot and cold running rats.

Trader 2 They're all opting for all inclusives in Corfu these days

Strudel Sun, sea, sand and all the hummus you can eat.

Trader 1 I hear it's quite reasonable.

Trader 2 I've seen the brochures. Some lovely destinations.

Trader 1 Barbados... Mauritius... Hull. (*Substitute the last with somewhere that few people would holiday*)

Strudel Who cares? They're going anywhere other than here.

Glocken Who can blame them? No one likes a rat in their swimming trunks. Gets a bit nippy.

Trader 2 You know, I've had enough. I'm packing it in. There's got to be something more rewarding to do. Maybe I'll emigrate.

Trader 1 That's a bit drastic.

Trader 2 I haven't sold anything for months. I'm so poor these days, burglars break in to my house and leave me stuff.

Strudel I could do with a drink. Anyone? Who fancies a beer?

Blumenkohl The rats have had it all.

Strudel Wine?

Blumenkohl (*whines*) The rats have had it all.

Strudel We may as well go home, then.

Glocken Yeah, I want to get back before the rats do. Maybe I can keep hold of the duvet tonight. }

No 2: Villager's Lament

Storyteller **What a dreadful situation to be in**

Chorus **All our tourist trade is growing rather thin**

Who would want a nice vacation

With a heavy rat migration

From a stinking sewer just outside Berlin?

{ The traders make their way off sadly as it gets dark. Rats start to creep on, all dressed as rat-eared mobsters in black and white with whiskers, trilbies and spats.

No.3 The Rat Pack

Rats **When Old Man Trouble comes to find you**

Take a look just right behind you

It's the Rat Pack

The Rat Pack's back

If something vicious grabs attention

Just be sure it's time to mention

The Rat Pack

The Rat Pack's back

Ev'ry scuttling scratching we determine

Comes from that partic'lar type of vermin

With disease that could be catching

All our darkest plans are hatching

It's the Rat Pack

The Rat Pack's back

So when there's dirty deeds a doing

You can bet you'll be pursuing

That deadly pack we've sung about before

It's the Rat Pack

The Rat Pack

The Rat Pack

Come knocking at your door

Scabs (spoken) *And here he is, the one you've been waiting for, old red eyes himself, the Rat King*

The Rats cheer and applaud.

No.4 Good to Be Bad

Rat King enters, like a Chicago gangster.

Rat King **It's time to make my mark**
Like all the bad guys do
So here's a special little song
That's going out to you
I'd rather be a sinner than a saint
You may think this ditty pretty – well, it certainly downright ain't

Scabs *Tell it like it is, Boss*

Rat King *Did I say you could squeak?*

During the song, the Rat King manhandles, beats, hits and generally pushes Scabs about

Rat King **I've got a yearning to be evil**
Always find something up my sleeve'll
Terrify you and make you raving mad
Rather not be the chap who's sat in chapel
Better be he who stole that ole forbidden apple
Look at me: I've a smile that's winning
Nobody knows the sin I'm sinning
A - Number-One', a cutthroat, thief and cad

How can it feel so good

Being a no good hood

Hey, don't it feel so good

To be bad

Scabs

Excellent rhyming, chief

Rat King

Are you still here?

I can do anything that pleases

Spreading a thread of dread diseases

Some of you think it might be just a fad

Top of the heap, I'm still the reigning master

What other creep could make you weep with this disaster

We're gonna take your food and houses

Make no mistake we ain't no mouses

Scabs

(correcting) Mice!

Rat King

Just take a bite of what we've never had

Oh, ain't it just so good

Being a no-good hood

Hey, don't it feel so good

To be bad

Rats

To be bad

Rat King

Making you mad and now I think of it

Leading you to the very brink of it

Rats

Mayhem and fuss the order of the day

Villainy is our thing and betcha we

All got a PhD in treachery

These're our streets and we are here to stay

Rat King You gonna stop interrupting? Whose moment is this? This is my moment. Who's King? I am.

Scabs You are.

Rat King Who am I?

Scabs The Rat King.

Rat King That's right and don't you forget it. And stop that scratching.

Scabs I'm a rat. It's what we do. Besides, my scabs are itching.

Rat King That's disgusting.

Scabs *(proud)* Thank you.

Rat King Back to the matter in hand... I want to take this opportunity to thank you for all your work so far, but we got more to do. Oh yes, so much more.

Scabs Yeah. We're gonna run those pestiferous villagers right out of this town.

Rats cheer.

Rat King That was my line.

Scabs Sorry, boss.

Rat King As for that fat cat mayor, he ain't gonna be sitting pretty for much longer. Soon, we're gonna take over city hall and they're gonna have to answer to us. One last push and the world's our oyster!

Scabs One small scuttle for rat, one great leap for ratkind.

Rat King Yeah, what he said.

Rat You think they're gonna lay down without a fight?

Rat King No they ain't so I want every scabrous, scaly, disease ridden rodent here on their guard. That Burgomeister Shmalz is one slippery customer so keep your eyes peeled and your whiskers twitching.

Scabs Now go do some mischief, minions of mayhem!

Rat King Are you deliberately trying to make me lose my cool? That's my line.

Scabs Sorry, boss.

Rat King Go do some mischief, *my* minions of mayhem!

Scabs Nice!

Rats cheer and scuttle off. Rat King turns on Scabs.

Rat King How many times do I have to tell you, don't mess with my speeches?
You don't mess with the King. Get it?

Scabs Got it.

Rat King Good. Sometimes, Scabs, I think you got eyes on my job.

Scabs No one could do it like you, boss. You got charm. You got grace, you
got... (*batting at him*) ...fleas.

Rat King That's what I like about you, Scabs. You're such a grovelling little creep.

Scabs I aim to please.

Rat King You see? Where's Ratzella? I got a date with her round the back of the
trash cans.

Scabs Who knows? That dumb broad is probably staring at orange juice again.

Rat King Why?