

The pied piper of Hamelin.

A Children's Play in Four Scenes by
Helene Scheu-Riesz.

Arranged for the musical score and supplied
with song-texts by Rudolf St. Hoffmann.

English translation by Sylvia Spencer Welch.

Music by Karl Weigl.

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VERVIELFÄLTIGUNG:
PERMANENTER
MASCHINSCHREIB- UND VERVIELFÄLTIGUNGS-
DIENST
TAG- UND NACHTSCHALTUNG U 49-4-77
WIEN, IV. SCHELLEINGASSE 43.

Characters:

The Mayor of Hamelin Town
Kunz, the Cobbler)
Hinz, the Tailor)
Kauz, the Hatter) Aldermen
Schnauz, the Teacher)
Riebeisen, the Stone-cutter)
Sleepy, Night-watchman and Servant at the
Town-hall

The Pied Piper, (Tenor)
Haustock, the Cabinet-maker
Mrs. Haustock
Klara, their daughter
Mrs. Kunz
Mrs. Riebeisen
Anna)
Johanna)
Peter)
Otto) Children
Karl)
Hans)
Fritz)

Citizens and Children of Hamelin

Scene 1: Aldermen's room in the town-hall of
Hamelin.
Scene 2: Open square at the foot of the Koppel-
berg near Hamelin.
Scene 3: Inside the mountain.
Scene 4: Same as Scene 2.

F i r s t S c e n e .

(Aldermen's room in the town-hall of Hamelin;† conference-table covered with green cloth; around it five chairs for the Aldermen and an armchair for the Mayor. Door at the back. In the dim light of the room the rats frolic about, climbing upon table and chairs.)

Chorus of Rats:

We are the folk of Rat-dom,
We gnaw the timbers and crack them,
We roam through kitchen and cellar-way,
We plunder pitcher and breakfast-tray;
In pantry-closet and dining-hall
We bite and chew and empty all.

We are the folk of Rat-dom,
We chase and hunt and batten,
We're quite determined to feast and eat,
To glut ourselves with drink and meat.
The fattest rat in the Bacon-ring
Shall be our chosen Rat-land king!

We are the folk of Rat-dom,
We shadow mankind and track them,
They shake and tremble by day and night
For rats are a plague and a source of fright
And rags and misery add their wails

† Hamelin to be pronounced "Ham'lin" throughout the play.

To music made by lashing tails.

We are the folk of Rat-dom,
We never set foot in Cat-dom,
There's nothing we fear in this world of sin
But a tom-cat's mew and a she-cat's grin.

(On the back-drop appear two enormous, transparent, green cat's eyes; at the same time the sound of hissing, spitting and miaowing.)

A hiss? Oh, Heaven! A purr! Miaow!
Whatever can save us from terror now?

(All disappear.)
(Daylight comes. Sleepy enters; frightened, he peers into every corner and under each piece of furniture; he has a broom and sweeps and cleans during the following speech.)

Sleepy:
If I see one, I'll swear an oath,
For, male and female, I hate them both!

(Seeing nothing, he becomes suddenly brave, speaks loudly and threatens with his broom.)

You filthy rats, clear out of my sight!
Hunt up some other ball-room to-night.
The town-hall's in such a state of woe
It's hardly the place for a gay tango.
You'll find as well not a snick nor a snack
Of eatable food to bring you back.
The cellar and pantry-closets are clean,
No sugar, no meat, no lard's to be seen;

You licked and nibbled and chewed it all
At the feast you held in the servants' hall.

(Stretching himself)

Well, now that I've chased away the rats,
The elders may come and hang up their hats.
(Seats himself in the Mayor's armchair, sleeps, snores loudly; the Mayor enters, opens a wardrobe, jumps back angrily, finally examines it cautiously and hangs up his coat; he goes towards his chair, hears the snoring, is greatly frightened, recognizes Sleepy.)

Mayor:
Sleepy, you scoundrel, wake up, man!
Do you think I made you night-watchman
So you could snore at me? Take warning---

Sleepy: (yawning)

I had so much to do this morning.
My work is hard, it affects my head.

Mayor: (gruffly)

Where are the Aldermen -- in bed?

(Exit Sleepy; Mayor takes his seat in the armchair; Aldermen enter, one at a time, depressed and despairing; seat themselves, scratch behind their ears and rub their noses or spectacles.)

Mayor:
Gentlemen, we are in sore trouble
And daily the need for action is double.
Indeed, I should judge from what I see
That rats have attacked the Committee!
Their shoes look nearly gnawed in two
And some of their toes are sticking through!

Hinz: (embarrassed, hides his torn shoes under the chair)

His Honor the Mayor seems not distressed
That vermin have fed on his new vest.

Mayor: (looking angrily down at the holes in his vest)

Oh, damn the beasts!

Riebeisen: These nasty rats
Breed even in our Sunday hats.

Kunz: They steal the beer from my own kegs.

Kauz: They gnaw my bread and bite my legs.

Schnauz:
And when their families are fed
They dance their jigs right on my bed.
Some mornings, when I go to school,
I find them sitting on my stool;
They drown the words that I am speaking
By their rude and noisy squeaking.
The devil may come and teach a bit!
I'll bear it no longer. I shall quit!

Sleepy: (enters)

Your Honor, pardon my intrusion,
But there's a crowd, in great confusion,
Asking a hearing. If denied
I fear they'll smash the doors inside.

Mayor: Dear, dear, what more must I endure ?
Let them in — one by one, to be sure,

(Exit Sleepy; outside screaming and uproar; suddenly a crowd of men and women bursts into the room in angry excitement.)

Haustock:

We've had enough. We're quite well sated
With filth and rats. We've worked and waited
And now is the time for you to act,
To drive the rats from town, for a fact.

A Woman:

The devil may live here if he chooses,
Though I shall not wonder if he refuses.
Kill off these rats without a doubt,
Or we will drive you gentlemen out!

Haustock:

You low-down swindlers, lazy and fat,
If you can't save us from every rat
We'll sack and burn the old town-hall
And strangle you aldermen — one and all!

Mayor:

Hear me, good people ---

All: (screaming) We are not good,
We are enraged, we're after blood,
We'll hang and swing you with a strap.

Mayor: (quaking and trembling) -

Would I were in a big rat-trap!

Mrs. Haustock:

Why don't you put us each in one ?
There we could sit and watch the fun.

Haustock:

We'll give you three more days of grace
To rid the town and save your face.
If by that time the county's free
We'll honor you most royally;

But if it's not, -- you know your fate, -

All: (shaking their fists threateningly as they leave the room)

Just three days we propose to wait!

(The door slams with a crash; breathless suspense; Aldermen and Mayor look at one another with dumb, dismayed expressions.)

Kunz: Now we are in a pretty mess!

Hinz: The people will not endure such stress.

Kauz: Where shall we start? Who knows new ways?

Kunz: Drive out the rats! And in three days!

Schnauz:

The better thing, mark my advice,
Is to die a hero and pay the price.

(wistfully)

It might be a rather dramatic end --

Kunz: You call that glory? You'd even pretend--

Hinz: A cowardly way to draw a last breath.
May God grant me a quick and fast death!

(A sudden rap is heard and murmuring from the crowd outside.)

Mayor: (alarmed)

A rap! -- A rustling like bees in a hive!

All the Others:

They're coming, they're coming, they'll eat us
alive!

(Frightened, they jump on chairs and table; Mayor covers his face with his hands.)

Piper: (in motley dress, his pipe slung from his shoulder, enters and bows politely)

Good-morning, your worship, do I intrude?

Mayor: (mopping sweat from his brow, regaining his poise)

Bursting in unannounced seems a trifle rude!
(Haughtily)

Who is he? What is his errand here ?

What brings him to us? Why does he appear?

(Aldermen resume their seats.)

Piper: (sings)

I roam through field and country wide,
I pipe my tune on every side,
A minstrel blithe and gay;
No threats nor fears can harm me,
Nor bird nor beast alarm me,
Save rats -- and rats I lure away!

That you may understand the game
I'll pipe the tune that brings me fame -
No rat withstands it long;
The pests, so sleek and nauseous,
Approach, subdued and cautious,
Enchanted by the song.

(Plays a few measures)

From cracks and holes and rotting roots,
From coats and caps and bulky boots
Appear the loathsome blight;
They dance they know not whither
To death within the river.

Like moths around a light.

I'm off now to annihilate
From heart and land the seeds of hate
Of devastating care.
No longer can I linger,
I am a wand'ring singer.
Agreed ? I'll pipe an air !

(Short pause)

Hinz: To me the man looks like a faker
And somewhat of a merry-maker.

Kunz: He's holding us up to ridicule.

Riebeisen:

If he is, I'll shoot him dead, the fool!

Piper:

Your need brings me here. I fully mean
To stand by you till the town is clean.
The rats will have jumped the farthest fences
If you, in turn, will pay the expenses.
How can it harm you, if I fail?
You keep your money, and put me in jail!

Mayor: If he could really ---

Kunz: --- not just as a trick,

Kauz: Free us indeed ---

Hinz: --- that would be slick!

Schnauz: If it were true ---

Riebeisen: --- no empty chatter,

Piper: (firmly)

A thousand guilders will settle the matter!

Mayor: A thousand guilders is little indeed,
(expansively)

We'll give you more, if the town is freed.
You shall be our guest and drink our wine,
My hand upon it!

Piper: (shaking the Mayor's Here is mine!
proffered hand)

A thousand guilders!

Mayor: (laughing) After the rout!
When there's not a trace of a rat about.
Then we shall give you a high degree
And you shall sit at this table by me!

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Second Scene.

(At the back stands the Koppelberg, skirted by the river Weser. In the foreground is an open square in the center of which stands an old fountain; on the right is the church. Time, early morning. The Piper sits alone on the high rim of the fountain and attracts the rats by the magic of his playing. One after another they appear until all are assembled. They dance about him while he plays untiringly. Finally he draws them after him to the river-bank where they all jump in headlong. The stage remains empty for a time. Loud drum-beats are heard approaching.)

Mrs. Riebeisen: (dressed in her best, accompanied by her children)

Do you see, my dears, here they ran down
To the water, one after the other, to drown.
The Stranger blew on his pipe so sweetly
That suddenly one, then ten, then fifty,
Then thousands of rats sprang out of hiding,
Tumbling and squeaking, jumping and sliding
And followed the man to the water's brink --
I watched them plunge headlong in and sink!
Thanks to the Piper the pests are dead,
So at last you can all sleep soundly in bed.
None of them now will keep you awake,
Nor nibble the icing off your cake.

A Citizen:
Did the Stranger accomplish this alone ?

His pipe must have an enchanting tone!

Sleepy: (enters beating a drum and calling out, townspeople gather)

Get you to church, to praise the Lord
And your parish-fathers, with one accord.
They've won the respect that is their due
By painstaking effort and wisdom too.
See with what zeal they carry poles
To poke out nests and block up holes!

(Hinz, Kunz, Kauz, Schnauz and Riebeisen enter with long poles which they flourish and poke about in all possible holes and corners with great importance and solemnity.)

Mayor: (in robes of office, a golden chain about his neck)

Has no single nook escaped your eyes ?

Aldermen: (with dignity, in chorus)

There's naught for your Honor to criticize
The town is freed!

People: Praise be to God !

Mayor: Is none of them left above the sod?
Have respite and quiet been finally found?

Aldermen: (as before)

On our honor, the last of the rats is drowned.

Mayor: Then let us fall upon our knees
In gratitude for their decease --
Sheer grace from Heaven! All renown.

To God, who saved our Hamelin town!

Piper: (suddenly appearing before him in the market-place)

First, if you please, my thousand guilders!

Mayor:

My good young man -- I and the elders
Must hasten to church. You hear the organ,
If we are late it will anger the warden!

Piper: I understand your state of mind,
For I am in haste, and somewhat behind
My schedule. Now pay up what you owe,
Or you'll live to wish you'd been less slow!

Mayor:

By God! He's a most impatient cuss
And rude as well to make such a fuss
Here in the market-place. My son,
Come to the town-hall to-morrow, at one,
I have no small change with me to-day.

Piper:

Small change? There's a thousand guilders to
pay!

Hinz: Out of the question! Besides our debt --

Kunz: The taxes haven't been paid in yet.

Kauz: Hollow and empty are safes and tills,
We haven't a penny to foot the bills.

Schnauz:

For rat-catching on so small a scale
Your claim is enough to turn one pale.

Riebeisen:

For a labor of less than half a day --

Mayor: (gruffly)

I should judge fifty guilders plenty to pay.
We have bound ourselves to no fixed sum
And this seems to us quite a sugar-plum
In exchange for the bit of music you played.

Piper: Gentlemen, I am frankly dismayed
To find you haggling and bargaining
In view of all that you are gaining.
I've saved you from rats and from vermin too,
Now pay me the wage that is my due!

Mayor: We must now move on to the church to pray
And since you are so head-strong to-day
We shall appoint an able committee
To sit on the matter. 'Twould be a pity
For either of us to rob the city! (He moves on)

Piper: I'll not deduct a single coin
(threateningly)

From what you owe, -- and I enjoin
That it be paid within an hour
Else you may hear a tune turned sour!

Mayor: You impudent rascal -- how do you dare
To threaten the Aldermen and Mayor?
I'll summon the sheriff -- now do your worst
And blow on that pipe until you burst!

(Mayor, Aldermen and townspeople disappear into the church. Only the children remain behind in the market-place and stand looking at the Piper inquisitively.)

Children:

We want to see the Piper here
And watch him play his flute from near.

(They circle about the Stranger, viewing him curiously)

(The Piper, playing a sweet melody on his pipe, goes first backstage, then from the back walks slowly towards the front of the stage, followed by the children who stream in towards him from all sides; during the following their numbers grow continuously.)

Piper: (singing)

Children, listen to my lay
Listen to my singing,
You shall see this summer's day
Christmas candles shining.
Candle-light
Glistening, bright,
What a pretty sight !

Children, come and follow me
Up into my kingdom,
All I own I'll share with glee
Boys and girls are welcome.
Countless toys,
Christmas joys
Made for girls and boys !

Children, hear my piping flute
Dance and skip in measure,
Children, you must follow suit
If you'd win my treasure.
Children dear,
Follow near,
Dance with zest and cheer !

(Children dance to his piping.)

Piper: Children, do you want to see

Children: (timidly)

Yes !

Piper: My mountain dwelling ?

Children: (brightly)

Yes !

Piper: Then you must run with

Children: (with enthusiasm)

Yes !

Piper: — with numbers swelling!

Parents kind
Will not mind
Nor objection find.

Children: (with enthusiasm)

Friendly Piper, lead away
Over hill and hollow,
Pipe and sing and sweetly play
One and all will follow.

Piper: "You are mine"

Children:

"We are thine"

All together:

"You are mine" "We are thine"
In this venture fine !

(He has led the delighted children, who press

close about him, backstage towards the mountain
which opens at their approach. Light pours from
within as the Piper and children disappear into
the mountain which closes behind them. Tones of
the flute are still faintly heard; the organ peals
from the church and the bells ring.)

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Third Scene.

(Huge cavern in the mountain, radiant with light. At the back a garden with fruit-trees and a gingerbread house. In the center a big Christmas-tree trimmed with lighted candles. On the walls are many small Christmas-trees, one for each child. The children of Hamelin are playing with toys which lie about everywhere, picking fruit from the trees, nibbling from the gingerbread house.)

Karl:

Does anyone know what it is that feels
The very nicest in this place ?
Not to sit down to regular meals
And have to wash your hands and face.

Peter:

That's right, Karl, here we eat all day,
Or when we happen to be in the mood;
It's surely the best and easiest way
Not to be so strict about food.
Back home we were called to eat our stew
Just when we had something better to do.

Fritz:

The thing I like the very best
Is not being made to go to bed;
Whenever we're sleepy we take a rest.
It works like magic — the story is read,
The game is over, eyes shut and it seems
The reading and playing go on in our dreams.

All: It's just like a fairy-tale come true!

Klara: What will there be to-day to do ?

Anna: Do you know the thing I'm going to try?
To build a house so broad and high
That I can live in it when it's done.

Otto: What good is a house for you alone ?
What can you do with it when it's built,
Paint it with gingerbread and gilt ?

Anna: I wish I could build my parents one
And send it to Hamelin town for fun,
To take the place of the hut they use.
For everything besides mending shoes.
I'd paint it green and the shutters blue
And fill up the cracks with sand and glue.

Johanna: Of course you can! That's easy here
Where wishes come true. Now don't you fear,
If your wish is deep and your will is strong
You'll get what you want before very long.

(The children sit about in groups playing. Anna,
on the floor, builds a house out of blocks; Karl
sets a wind-mill in motion; Hans draws; Otto reads.)

Anna: (to Hans)
What's that you're making ?

Hans: Drawing a map
Of the best path through the mountain-gap
Past the spring and over the ridge
Then down the slope to the Weser bridge,

And figuring out the time and the way
To get to Hamelin by Christmas day.

(A few children jump up, run to Hans and peer
eagerly over his shoulder.)

Children:
Well, how far ? What do you make it?

Hans: (counting up on his fingers)
Some nights on the road, however we take it.
We're now just three short miles past
Christmas
Making the stretch to the next one tedious-
So let's prepare to march them back
And play upside-down with the almanac!

Karl: Why not go straight? Why strain our legs?
We'll be home in time to hunt Easter eggs.

Otto: You're right, it makes no difference to me.

Klara: But we want to be home for the Christmas-
tree !

All: That's what we want -- to be home for
Christmas
When mother and father will chiefly miss us.

Anna: How many miles back? Is it only three?
We won't have to walk so very quickly,
Just march along at an easy pace---

Fritz: (interrupting)
And scatter presents all over the place!

Johanna:

I know what we'll do, we'll take some trees
Trimmed and lighted. and bright like these,
We'll hide in the branches and when we peek
out
Mother and father will laugh and shout!

All: What fun it would be to march away
And get back home by Christmas day!

(The Piper enters, unnoticed by the children and
watches them attentively.)

Chorus:

Though we laugh and we play
Through the whole live-long day
Yet our home's far away
And our parents not here;
Many toys we have had
Yet we feel a bit sad
And we'll never be glad
Till our mothers are near
La la la, la la la,
Till our mothers are near.

Here are dolls that are sweet
Here are soldiers so neat
And fine candy to eat
But there's something we lack.
We try not to sigh
And we don't want to cry
But we hope bye and bye
We can surely go back
La la la, la la la,
We can surely go back.

At home we shall find
Both our parents so kind
And the things left behind
We shall see them at last.
Our mothers we'll call
In their arms we shall fall
They will say we've grown tall
Let us run back home fast
La la la, la la la,
Let us run back home fast!

(The children, in wistful mood, join hands and hum
the melody over as they weave in and out around the
large tree center-stage. Pause. Silence. Soft sighs
are heard.)

Piper: (steps in among the children)

Children, you're no longer happy here?

Karl: Oh, yes -- only, sometimes

Johanna: (bravely) -- we wish home were near.

Piper: You want to go back ?

Anna: Does that mean we must?
Of course I'd like to kiss mother, and just
Tell her how happy we've all been here.

Klara: And then --

Piper: What more do you want, my dear ?

Klara: I'd like you to whisk our parents away
From Hamelin here and see what they'd say.

Don't you ever bring grown-up people along?

Piper: No, no grown-ups — they don't belong,
They wouldn't understand our magic
But even in heaven find something tragic,
For they can no longer play nor dream
Nor follow a rainbow for its gleam.
But you may go home to them, when you've done—

Otto: Away from you ?

Karl: Leave all this fun ?

Hans: And if we give up this garden, what then?
Can't we ever come back again ?

Piper: Each of you here who has been my guest
Takes from the mountain all that's best
Carries as much as his heart will hold
To prevent his spirit growing old.
Come, choose the grown-ups a present each,
Everything's yours that you can reach,
And take some golden days along
To remember the Piper and his song.

Children: (crowding around him)

If you will lead us back we'll go,
If not, we'll stay here, whether or no!

Piper: It gives me no especial pleasure
To lead you home — but since to measure
Wish against wish proves yours the stronger
I shall delay but a moment longer
To watch your will construct the bridge

Out from the mountain, across the ridge
And back to Hamelin town again.
Are you sure you see the issue plain?
I wish— I want— is lightly said
Whenever a fancy fills the head
But will, creative, sure to flower,
Calls forth fixed, abiding power.
If this is your will, it shall build the way
To Hamelin town within a day!

Children: (exultantly)

We will it ! We will it !

Piper: Then make you ready,
I'll lead you home if your will is steady.

Children:
Back home again ! Hurrah, hurrah !

(Excitement reaches tumultuous heights as the children run hither and yon, stuffing toys and playthings into their knapsacks. The children, each taking a small Christmas-tree, form in marching order and accompany the following chorus with toy drums and trumpets.)

Chorus: Clap, clap and sing, clap, clap and sing
The bells we will ring
On father we'll spring
And hug and kiss our mother
And dance with one another
Clap, clap and sing, clap, clap and sing,
Oh, ring - ring-a-ling, we've wished the
thing
Oh, ring-a-ling, we've wished the thing

We've wished the thing.
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah !

Clap, clap and cheer, clap, clap and cheer
The children are near
The children are here
They follow where you lead them
Where pipe and Piper speed them.
Clap, clap and cheer, clap, clap and cheer
Back home we'll appear, we've wished it here
Back home we'll appear, we've wished it here
We've wished it here.
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah !

Piper: (leading them)

March, march in line, march, march in line
I think it a sign
These children of mine
Are wiser than I thought them,
And know more than was taught them.
March, march in line, march, march in line
Back home they shall go, won't that be fine
Back home they go, won't that be fine
Won't that be fine.
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah !

Piper and Chorus:

Boom, boom, away! Boom, boom, away!
The drums we will play
In Hamelin to-day
We'll tell them by the fountain
What happened in the Mountain.
Boom, boom, away! Boom, boom, away!
Where-e'er there's a will there is a way
Where there's a will there is a way

There is a way.
Hurrah, hurrah, hurrah !

(A cleft is disclosed in the mountain, through which one looks out upon the little sun-drenched town. With the Piper in the lead, the children march out into the open.)

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Fourth Scene.

(Scene the same as the second. Men and women are assembled at the foot of the mountain. Among them are Haustock and his wife, Mrs. Kunz and Mrs. Riebeisen who stand nearer front-stage than the others. A scaffolding has been set up for workmen who are in the process of nailing a memorial tablet to the face of a cliff jutting out from the base of the mountain.)

Four Citizens: (pointing to the mountain)

Here is the tomb of our sons bewailed
Here their memorial stone will be nailed.

A Woman: (sobbing)

How happy we were with rat and mouse
So long as the children were in the house.

A Citizen:

It's quite unbearable at home,
I'm going to leave it, going to roam;
Perhaps new scenes will make me brave --

Mrs. Haustock: (to her Husband)

Oh, this is where they went in to their graves

Haustock:

Can't you leave off that whining tone?

Sleepy: (enters, full of dignity)

Keep silence! The Aldermen with the stone!

Riebeisen:

Lay the stone here for us to behold.

(they put the tablet down and draw a deep breath while Riebeisen contemplates it, well-pleased)

Hewn out of marble, lettered in gold,
So fine a monument should evoke
The grateful pride of Hamelin folk!

Kauz: (grumbling)

Cost money enough --

Riebeisen: (furios) -- a ridiculous thrust,
Make one cheaper yourself! You dare mistrust
My word? This tablet's a bargain I tell you--
Do you think I profit by what I sell you?
There's no percentage for me to take,
I'm giving my work for my lost son's sake!

(He draws forth a red handkerchief and blows his nose with feeling)

Schnauz:

You have defaced my noble lines
With scrolls and dots and twisted vines
Till I can barely read the text;
For years I've hardly been more vexed!
Such ignorance of script and rule
Shows you were never long in school.

Riebeisen: (enraged, excited)

This is the script now most in vogue
And as for reading it, any rogue
Or fool can do that. I know my trade,
Which can hardly be said for you, I'm afraid!

Schnauz: (ironically)

and through the cleft are heard far-away pipenotes.
The hammering stops. All stand as if transfixed,
listening.)

Hinz: What's that ?

Kunz: Do you hear ?

(Now the marching-song of the children is heard,
first from afar, then nearer and nearer.)

Schnauz: A children's song!

Riebeisen: (unbelieving)

It's because we've heard none for so long!

Kauz: No — this is real —

(behaving like one listening in a dream)
I'm awake, I can hear!

All: The Piper himself must be coming near!

(All remain as if rooted to the spot, listening.
The cleft in the mountain grows wider, finally the
Piper appears, followed by the children who march
singing into the stage, as they had marched out
before. They carry small Christmas trees and
presents.)

Men and Women:

A dream! The children! Safe and sound!

Frau Riebeisen: (hugging her children)

Fritz, Johanna, Hans, you're found!

Frau Kunz:

There are the four -- my own, my boy!
My darling girls! I could die of joy!

All:

The children are back, each well and strong;
Praise be to him to whom thanks belong!

Mayor: (embraces his child, trembling)

This time, Piper, there's need of no threat
To make us pay our heavy debt.
The money we shall collect to-morrow;
Half of the sum we shall have to borrow.

Citizen:

For the children nothing's too much to ask,
We'll levy new taxes, whatever the task.

Piper:

Right and good! Otherwise you'll have a throng
Of rats again the whole year long.
He who makes a promise he fails to keep
Will dream of rats that gnaw and creep,
And he who tells a wilful lie
Will hear the vermin poke and pry;
Evil thoughts will nourish the rats
And evil words entice the brats.
Should I not pass this way again
Could you find a Piper to help you then?

Mayor:

You shall not go — we want you near;
We'll give you a post of honor here!

Children: (singing)

Friendly Piper, you shall stay
Through the years that follow,

We shall sing and shout and play
Every glad to-morrow.
All the year,
You'll be here
Come and dance and cheer!

Piper: (earnestly)

You friendly children must change your plan.
I am a wandering, restless man
And must, for love and oft for pity,
Save many another man and city.
Keep me in your hearts and on Christmas night
Think of your Piper by candle-light.
And after the lighted trees are down
Then set to work about the town.
If you yourselves are brave and true
Then all the state will resemble you.
Keep your land free from rats and deceit
And some day I'll gladly turn my feet
Again towards Hamelin, to ascertain
How you've improved the town, in the main.
Fare well, live long, and think me near
Whenever a song or a pipe you hear!

(Piper walks slowly off-stage, playing and singing
as he goes.)

"I roam through field and country wide
I pipe my tune on every side
A minstrel blithe and gay,
No threats nor fears can harm me
No bird nor beast alarm me
Save rats - and rats I lure away!"

(The melody is heard in the distance. Children and

grown-ups gather front-stage and sing to the
audience.)

The reign of rats is over
And we shall now live in clover
The fools and sinners have changed their ways
And children's wishes shall rule the days.
You seem displeased? You doubt our goal!
Then creep like rats into a hole!

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