

**AN AXIS THEATRE COMPANY PRODUCTION**  
**41 YEARS OF THOUGHT PROVOKING, AWARD-WINNING CREATIVITY**  
**Artistic Director: Chris McGregor**



*A comedic, heart tugging musical take on  
"The Pied Piper of Hamelin"*



**TEACHER'S STUDY GUIDE**

**PLEASE COPY AND DISTRIBUTE**

**THANK YOU TO OUR FUNDERS & SUPPORTERS**



We acknowledge the financial assistance  
of the Province of British Columbia



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*The Teacher Guide includes suggestions about preparing your students for a live theatre performance in order to help them to enjoy and respond to the performance.*

*Also included in the Teacher Guide are ideas about using the performance to enhance aspects of your Arts Education curriculum by responding both to themes presented in the performance and to dramatic and musical elements in the performance.*

**NEW FOR THIS PRODUCTION!**

A song from HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE is included so that a class (or two), can learn the words and sing along during the live performance!

**IMPORTANT NOTE TO TEACHERS**

Thank you for refraining from texting or taking photos during the performance and please do not record any portion of the performance.

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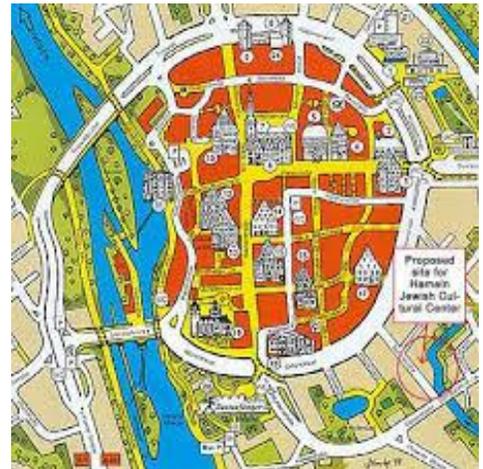
**HAMELIN**  
A NEW FABLE**HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE – Synopsis**

The year 1284: The Medieval German town of Hamelin in Brunswick, located just south of Hamburg on the Weser River.

In 13th century Germany, Medieval Hamelin Town is way too big for its lederhosen. Governed by a spoiled Mayor, his Mommy and stuffy corporate types who have no interest in its hard-working townsfolk, the town is primed to learn some important lessons in life from our heroes, 10-year-old twins Celeste and Ralph. When it seems that no one, other than their Opa Johannes, ever keeps their word, they come up with a plan to make the grown-ups wake up and smell the strudel. After the ridiculous new taxes render this tight-knit family homeless, desperate for help, they encounter a hapless “Minstrel”, a flute that has seen better days and of course, lots and lots of rats! With surprising plot twists, **HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE**, is an engaging revisit to one of the world’s most endearing fairy tales.

For a more extensive synopsis:

[http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre\\_Hamelin\\_Synopsis.pdf](http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre_Hamelin_Synopsis.pdf)

**HAMELIN Characters**

- Ralph and Celeste (ten year old twins)
- Johannes “Opa” (Ralph and Celeste’s Grandfather)
- Werner de Metzendorp (the Mayor of Hamelin)
- Frau de Metzendorp (the Mayor’s Mummy)
- Gerta “The Minstrel” (The Piped Piper)
- The Sheriff
- Herr Bombast, Herr Kline and Herr Gold (Corporation Types)
- Rats #1 to #5 (Narrators and members of the Band)



# HAMELIN

## A NEW FABLE

### Music Sheet – Hamelin Chorus

Lyrics: Leslie Mildiner

Music: Bob Buckley

C G C G/B

Hame - lin!\_\_\_ Hame - lin!\_\_\_ The

Am Am/G F C G

pic - ture per - fect spot Where no one lies and no one cheats We're

Am F C G/B

such an hon - set lot Hame - lin!\_\_\_ Hame - lin!\_\_\_ We

Am Am/G F C

al - ways keep our word To say we're un - re -

G Am F

li - ab - le Is real - ly quite ab - surd



## Vocabulary Words about the Characters

**Fraulein:** German title used for unmarried women, comparable to Miss in English

**Jester:** professional joker or “fool” at a medieval court who typically wears a cap with bells on it and carries a mock scepter

**Mayor:** elected head of a city, town, or other municipality

**Minstrel:** medieval singer or musician, especially one who sang or recited lyric or heroic poetry with musical accompaniment for the nobility

**Opa:** German word for Grandfather

**Poppet:** an older spelling of puppet, from the Middle English popet, meaning a small child or doll

**Sherriff:** officer of the law

**The Corporation:** elected members of a town or city

**Urchins:** mischievous young children, especially those who are poorly or raggedly dressed

## Other Vocabulary Words

**Adversity:** dealing with difficulties and/or misfortunes in life

**Cord of wood:** a large pile of firewood measuring four feet high by four feet wide by eight feet long (4 ft. x 4 ft. x 8 ft.)

**Düsseldorf:** capital city of the German state of North Rhine-Westphalia and centre of the Rhine-Ruhr metropolitan region

**Guilders:** German currency

**Kopplelberg Hill:** a mountain with a cave, outside the town of Hamelin where the Pied Piper is said to have trapped the children

**Nursery:** room in a house for the special use of young children

**Pestle:** a heavy tool with a rounded end, used for crushing and grinding substances such as spices or drugs, usually in a mortar

**Pfenning:** old German currency (coins)

**Steeple Headdress:** a conical or heart-shaped hat, sometimes extremely high, with a flowing veil or piece of starched linen about the crown

**Taxes:** a compulsory contribution to state revenue, levied by the government on workers' income and business profits or added to the cost of some goods, services, and transactions

**Turnip:** a European plant of the cabbage family that produces the turnip

## Theories about the origins of the story

There have been proposed theories suggesting that the Pied Piper is symbolic of the death of children by plague or catastrophe. Other theories liken The Piper to figures such as Nicholas of Cologne, who is said to have lured away a great number of children on a disastrous Children's Crusade. The current theory, generally accepted by scholars and historians, ties the departure of Hamelin's children to the Ostsiedlung, in which a number of Germans left their homes to colonize Eastern Europe. Below are two versions of the story:

- 1) This version is in the form of a poem by Robert Browning that can be found online:  
<http://www.poets.org/poetsorg/poem/pied-piper-hamelin>
- 2) This version is one that was collected and written down by the Brothers Grimm:  
[http://www.yankeeweb.com/library/storytime/grimmbros/grimmbros\\_41.html](http://www.yankeeweb.com/library/storytime/grimmbros/grimmbros_41.html)

## Themes and Curriculum Connections

### Themes

- Keeping Promises versus Breaking Promises
- Bullying and Greed
- Courage, Cooperation and Honor
- Music and Songs as a Form of Communication

### Curriculum Connections

#### Arts Education, K to 7

- Drama Curriculum (responding to, reflecting on and analyzing drama presentations)
- Music Curriculum (responding to, reflecting on and analyzing music performances) Music is created and performed within a wide range of historical, cultural, and social contexts.
- Literary Curriculum (recognize advanced vocabulary, analyze oral language and communication strategies, read and demonstrate comprehension)

### Performance Standards Connections

#### Social Responsibility, K to 7

- The themes in the production support an understanding of the importance of



contributing to community, solving problems in a peaceful way, defending human rights and exercising democratic rights and responsibilities.

## **Pre-Performance Activities**

1. Talk about the similarities and differences between watching a movie, a television show and a “live” theatre presentation. Include discussions about how the performers prepare for their roles in each of the situations (for instance, how an actor in a movie or a television show can redo a scene if a mistake is made versus an actor in a “live” performance who must carry on regardless of mistakes) and how an audience member impacts each type of performance.
2. Prepare your students for watching a “live” performance by discussing the characteristics of a positive audience member. For example, a positive audience member:
  - will sit quietly so everyone around can see and hear the performance
  - will listen attentively and remain focused on the actors and musicians
  - will not distract performers by moving about or by waving or calling out to performers
  - will laugh and applaud appropriately
  - will contribute to the performance when asked to
3. Remind your students to notice the way that the set, costumes and live music help to make the performance of **HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE** exciting and fun to watch!
4. Review the list of Characters, Vocabulary Words, Synopsis and Themes and choose what information is most useful and appropriate to share and discuss with your grade level class prior to viewing the performance.



## Post-Performance Activities

Now that your students have seen HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE, it is the perfect time to expand on their excitement and interest in drama and music and to discuss ideas and themes presented in the performance.

There are a variety of ways for students to respond to, reflect on and analyze Drama and Musical Performances: for example, through talking, writing, stories, art, singing and playing drama games.

The following suggestions will help to engage your students in activities where fun and laughter are often as important as the building of skills to increase critical thinking, self-awareness and confidence. Choose the activities that are best-suited to your grade level and, if necessary, modify the skill level of the activities to meet the needs of your students.

### ***Discuss the theme of BULLYING***

In HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE, the Mayor was a bully who was also bullied (by his Mother). Bullying is a serious problem for many students and may cause them to be afraid and lonely. “Standing up for themselves” like Ralph and Celeste did when the Mayor kept breaking his promises, is one way to respond to bullying. Review your school’s procedures for dealing with bullying at school.

Story Books about BULLYING:

- *The Recess Queen* by Alexis O’Neill
- *The Bully Blockers Club* by Elizabeth Kennedy
- *The Ant Bully* by John Nickel
- *Bully* by Judith Caseley

Non-fiction Books about BULLYING:

- *Cyber Bullying* by Nick Hunter
- *We Want You to Know: Kids Talk About Bullying* by Deborah Ellis
- *Are You a Bully?* by Addy Ferguson
- *Bullied: What Every Parent, Teacher and Kid Needs to Know About Ending the Cycle of Fear* by Carrie Goldman



***Talking (or writing) about PROMISES***

In **HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE**, the Mayor made promises and broke promises. Why do we make promises? Who do we make promises to? How does it feel when someone makes a promise to us and then later breaks that promise? Is it possible to trust someone who breaks a promise? Why or Why not?

***Talking (or writing and drawing) about HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE***

The following questions can be used for whole group discussions or for sharing with a partner or in a small group. After sharing with a partner or in a small group, students can take turns sharing ideas with the whole group.

If using the questions as sentence starters for a writing activity, the students can also draw pictures to accompany their writing.

- Who was your favourite character? Why?
- How did the actors use their voices and bodies and movements to make the characters more believable in the performance?
- What character would you like to have as a friend? Why?
- What character would you not want to have as a friend? Why?
- If you could be an actor in the Hamelin, which character would you like to be? Why?
- How did the musicians make the performance more interesting?
- What instrument did you enjoy listening to the most? Why?
- If you could learn to play an instrument, what one would you like to know how to play?
- What do you think it takes to be a good actor or musician?
- What was the scariest part of the performance? Why?
- What was the funniest part of the performance? Why?
- What part of the performance surprised you the most? Why?
- If you were the writer of the play, what would happen next in Hamelin?
- Celeste and Ralph work hard to help their Opa. Who, in your family, do you help?
- What did you notice about the costumes, masks and puppets in the performance?
- How did the costumes, masks and puppets make the performance more interesting?



***Have FUN with Drama Games***

PANTOMIME

A great way to start playing with drama is with simple pantomimes. Explain to your students that “acting is showing.” By NOT using words during a pantomime, they become forced to show, not tell.

Copy the list of animals (below), cut the names of animals and put them into a basket. By themselves or with a partner, students can take turns acting like their chosen animal. Encourage the students to exaggerate their body movements in order to help their classmates to guess the animal they are portraying.

deer	fox
mouse	bear
rabbit	owl
frog	skunk
rat	chipmunk
beaver	bird
hedgehog	moose



The students can be encouraged to come up with their own ideas for pantomimes. Get them started with these suggestions: tying a shoe, brushing teeth, eating spaghetti, riding on a skateboard, playing basketball, painting a mural.

### MIRRORS

Mirrors is a great group activity that gets students working together and paying close attention to each other. Have the students pair off in A/B partners around the classroom. To begin with, A will be the actor and B the mirror. The two partners face each other and partner A begins to move and partner B will mirror everything that that partner A does. When you call out “freeze,” partner B will become the actor and partner A will be the mirror. Do this a few times throughout the activity.

### ***Playing with Song and Story***

Using a familiar song that the students love to sing, write a class story related to the song. Add characters, simple dialogue and actions that can help to make the song come alive! By combining the story and the song, the students will experience the fun of participating in a musical drama. Challenge the students to vary the tone of their voices and to use their body movements to help portray the personalities of the characters in the story. Experiment with using simple sound effects, props and costumes.

### ***Teacher: Be the Director!***

Short scene for your students:

[http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre\\_Hamelin\\_Scene.pdf](http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre_Hamelin_Scene.pdf)

This version of “The Pied Piper of Hamelin” is recommended for students in Grades 2 to 4. After rehearsing, the play will be ready to present to a lower grade group. The teacher or a student is the narrator and students play all of the other characters as cast by the teacher.

Other Grimm stories appropriate for Grades 2 to 4 that you may find interesting: [The Billy Goats Gruff](#), [Cinderella](#) and [Hansel and Gretel](#).

### ***Masks and Puppets***

Children love the magic and intrigue associated with masks and puppets. Although

creating your own masks and puppets in the classroom requires extra time, effort and expense, the result will most certainly outweigh all considerations. The use of masks and puppets will enhance the enjoyment and deepen the understanding of many classroom activities related to drama, story-telling, music, singing, body movement and art. More about masks:

[http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre\\_Hamelin\\_Masks.pdf](http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre_Hamelin_Masks.pdf)

***Many thanks to you! Let's keep in touch!***

Everyone at Axis Theatre Company thanks you for taking the time to use the HAMELIN: A NEW FABLE Teacher Guide as a resource to support and strengthen your students' positive experience of our production.

We want to hear from you and your students!

We welcome letters and drawings as well! Send letters and drawings to:  
Axis Theatre Company,  
1405 Anderson Street, Vancouver BC V6H 3Y7.

You can also add our link to your classroom website to explore the site as an activity.

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**E-mail:** [tours@axistheatre.com](mailto:tours@axistheatre.com)

**Facebook:** <https://www.facebook.com/pages/Axis-Theatre-Company/132569140123292>

**Web:** [www.axistheatre.com](http://www.axistheatre.com)

**Twitter:** @AxisTheatreCo

**Axis Theatre Company wishes you all the best in the school year  
and we hope to see you next year!**

**Thank you so much for booking our production!**



## ABOUT AXIS THEATRE COMPANY

Axis has created shows for family and school audiences for 41 years and this will mark our first production that combines live music with physical theatre, masks and puppetry. Axis has been touring its unique brand of physical theatre since its formation in 1975. The company has developed over 55 original works and has captured the hearts and minds of audiences the world over. In addition to its adult programming, the company is recognized for having one of the most effective theatre-in-education programs in Canada. Axis Theatre Company celebrates the arts and its role in society through presentations of visually stimulating works that activate the imagination, inspire creativity and have a social impact.

For more bios of the cast and creative teams:

[http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre\\_Hamelin\\_Bios.pdf](http://axistheatre.com/shows/hamelin/media/AxisTheatre_Hamelin_Bios.pdf)

### STAFF

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Axis Theatre Company is a member of The Greater Vancouver Professional Theatre Alliance, Alliance for Arts and Culture, Arts in Education Council of BC, BC Touring Council, Canadian Council of the Arts, Vantage Point Vancouver, the Professional Association of Canadian Theatres, International Performing Arts for Youth and The Granville Island Business & Community Association. Axis Theatre Company engages, under the terms of the Canadian Theatre Agreement, professional artists who are members of the Canadian Actors' Equity Association.

