

# PLAYS FOR YOUNG AUDIENCES

A PARTNERSHIP OF SEATTLE CHILDREN'S THEATRE AND CHILDREN'S THEATRE COMPANY-MINNEAPOLIS

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## *The Brementown Musicians*

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Music by  
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Based on the Tale by  
The Brothers Grimm

*The Brementown Musicians* was first presented by Seattle Children's Theatre for the 2009-2010 season.  
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## *CAST*

*(6 actors playing various roles: 3 females; 3 males)*

*Actor One:* Virgil.....a farmer

Karl.....a giant thief

*Actor Two:* Irene.....a farmer's wife

Fritz.....a small thief

Songbird.....a songbird

*Actor Three:* Billy.....a robust goat

Rusty.....a gentleman rooster

*Actor Four:* Slim.....a tender piglet

Minnie.....a bitch/dog of a certain age

*Actor Five:* Donny.....an aging donkey

*Actor Six:* Nell.....a mature cat

Additional parts played or voiced by the actors include: Patrons; Announcer;  
Mrs. Sphinktur; Townspeople

## *SETTING*

The play takes place in the German countryside, back when things were quaint and animals served a purpose other than being our pets. The action happens in a variety of settings, including: a barnyard; a country road; the Black Forest; the stage of a small performing venue; a town square. Ideally, the sets would be simple, evocative, and highly mobile; this is a traveling story.

## *TIME*

Another time, some distance in the past.

ACT ONE

*The end of day at the Klinger farm. Feedin' time.  
A farmer and his wife are in the midst of a heated  
discussion.*

VIRGIL

I don't like it either, but that won't change things, Irene. If a creature-- if a stubborn, absent-minded, carrot-stealing donkey is no longer able to earn his keep, then something's got to be done.

*Billie lifts his head out from a wheel barrow  
and listens in; Irene tosses some feed to him.*

What am I supposed to do with a lame *animule*? Broken as a three-legged table and half as useful, that's what he is.

IRENE

Here you go, Billie.

VIRGIL

Don't *do* that, Irene, don't name them like they're your kids! Next you'll start giving them *feelings*.

*Slim thrusts her ears up from behind a trough  
and listens in.*

IRENE

Don't be shy, Slim. It's mama.

VIRGIL

Do you have any idea how expensive it is to keep a lame donkey what's not doing anything but eating and day-dreaming? I'll give you a hint: *very*.

*Nell jumps up on a bale of hay.*

IRENE

Hello Nell. Yes, you're a princess.

VIRGIL

We're losing money on him, Irene. We lose too much, we can't afford to feed what animals *is* producing. You listening?

IRENE

What's that, Virgil?

VIRGIL

I'm saying, without a doubt, that, that donkey--

IRENE

Donald.

VIRGIL

Has got to go! He's useless and there's nothing in that bony head of his but--

IRENE

Alright.

VIRGIL

There's no arguing this, Ire-- Alright-?

IRENE

I suppose it's time. Still...

VIRGIL

It's decided, then. First thing in the morning.

IRENE

First thing.

*Virgil exits.*

'night, kids. Sweet dreams.

*Irene exits.*

*Billy, Slim, and Nell gather onstage.*

*Music/song #1: What Should We Do?*

BILLY(singing)

Should we tell him?

NELL(singing)

I don't know

SLIM(singing)  
Oh I don't think so

BILLY  
But I'm sure you'd want to know if it was you

NELL  
Do we warn him of his fate?

SLIM  
Tell him before it's too late

BILLY  
What will we say

SLIM  
What do we know

NELL  
What should we do?

SLIM  
Do you think they'll stick him in the zoo?

ALL  
What should we do, what should we do?

BILLY  
He'll be trapped, his wandering days are through!

ALL  
Oh! What should we, what should we do?

NELL  
Little kids will shout at him all day

ALL  
What do we say, what do we say?

BILLY  
They'll make faces taunting him to bray

ALL  
Oh! What do we what do we say?

SLIM

Maybe they'll just set him free, that's not so bad a fate

BILLY

That old fool would starve to death

SLIM

Oh yeah, that's not so great

NELL

You're imagination has gone wild, we should just wait

BILLY/SLIM

For what! We've got to tell our chum his future's looking pretty glum

ALL

Oh my!

NELL

I've just had a thought that scares me so

ALL

What do we know, what do we know

NELL

After him who'll be the next to go?

ALL

Oh what do we, what do we know.

NELL

It'll be the petting zoo for me that's sure to be

BILLY

I could get stuck giving rides to children under three

SLIM

No more lying in the mud relaxing lazily

ALL

Could it be our final days we'll end up living in a cage?

Oh no

SLIM(*hysterical*)

I don't want to end up a piece of greasy bacon on Farmer's plate! I don't want my ham hock to be a soup bone! I don't—

*Nell grabs Slims arm to quiet her.*

NELL

Wait a minute let's think of our friend

ALL

What should we do, what should we do?

NELL

He's the one who's freedom's 'bout to end

ALL

What should we what should we do?

*The singing animals are interrupted by Donald, who enters with a beat-up tambourine. The others bury their heads in their food.*

DONNY

Sorry I'm late.

*Donny gives his tambourine a quick shake.*

I was practicing.

*He puts the tambourine away in his satchel. The other's heads pop up when they sing.*

ALL(singing)

What should we do, what should we do?

DONNY

It's lovely in the shade of that pecan tree— and so relaxing.

ALL

What should we, what should we do?

DONNY

My mind was wandering one minute and I was asleep the next. And then it was now.

ALL

What should we say, what should we say?

DONNY

Uh, am I missing something?

ALL

What should we what should we  
What should we what should we

What should we what should we do?  
*(end of song)*

DONNY  
I am so hungry I could eat a horse!

*A horse whinny's nervously in the distance.*

Only kidding.

NELL  
Oh! Hello Donald.

DONNY  
Good evening, Nell.

NELL  
Scoot over, Billy. Make room for poor, sweet Donald.

*Billy inadvertently bumps against Donny.*

DONNY  
Watch the game leg!

BILLY  
You mean lame leg.

NELL  
Billy!

BILLY  
I'm a stickler for accuracy.

DONNY  
It's alright. We all know I'm no spring chicken. What have you got there, Slim?

SLIM  
Corncobs, vegetable peels, mush. Want some?

DONNY  
Sounds tempting...

BILLY  
Have my carrots, old chap.

DONNY

That's awfully nice of you, Billy.

BILLY(*morose*)

Enjoy them while you can.

DONNY

What's that supposed to mean?

NELL

He just meant...

SLIM

He wants you to eat before...

NELL

Before...

SLIM

Breakfast.

NELL

Bedtime.

*pause*

Bedtime.

Breakfast.

*pause*

Lunch!

Lunch!

DONNY

Very considerate of you. I just remembered a dream I had under that old pecan tree.

BILLY

Great, another dream.

NELL

Sssh!

DONNY

This one was particularly instructive. It was morning. The Farmer was coming toward me with something in his hand. I remember being frightened...

BILLY (*under his breath*)

You should be.

DONNY

I wanted to run away but my legs wouldn't move.

BILLY

What did I tell you? *Lame.*

SLIM

Sssh!

NELL

Never mind him. Go on with your dream, Donald.

DONNY

Then he started to make an announcement...

*We hear the Announcer's Voice.*

Music #2: Donny's Dream

ANNOUNCER

Ladies and Gee-entlemen, Boys and Girls, Animals of all stripes and sizes, welcome to the live music capital of the world—*Das Schwingenhaus*. We are thrilled and proud (proud, proud...) to present, for the first time ever (ever, ever...), in the history of history (re...re...), a one-of-a-kind talent like you've never seen or heard or even thought about before!

DONNY

Suddenly, a spotlight was shining down on *me alone*.

*A spotlight shines down on Donny.*

Everyone was looking at *me alone*. And that was very scary.

ANNOUNCER

And now, here he is...

DONNY

It was then I realize something.

ANNOUNCER

The One, the Only...

DONNY

He's talking about--

BILLY

Let me guess.

DONNY

Me!

ANNOUNCER

...Donny D.!

DONNY

The crowds are standing and cheering.

BILLY

What crowds?

NELL & SLIM

Sssh!

DONNY

They begin chanting my name.

NELL/SLIM

“Donny! Donny! Donny!”

DONNY

I'm about to begin when suddenly it occurs to me...it occurs to me...

NELL

Yes?

SLIM

Go on.

BILLY

Just say it.

DONNY

I don't have my tambourine!

BILLY

That piece of junk?

DONNY

And I am sweating like a horse.

*An indignant horse whinnies in the distance.*

Sorry. There I am, petrified, frozen in the spotlight in front of a huge audience.

SLIM

What did you do?

DONNY

It was then I realized...*I know how to improv! And I sing!*  
*And he lets loose with an oddly dissonant bray.*

BILLY

Sounds to me like a bagpipe played from the wrong end on a cold day.

NELL

Billy!

SLIM

Then what happened, Donald?

DONNY

Then a pecan fell on my head and I woke up.

*Music stops and we are back in the barnyard.*

SLIM

What a dreamer you are!

NELL

I wish something like that would happen to me.

BILLY

Fancy yourself a musician, do you Donald?

NELL

I think Billy's jealous.

BILLY

Jealous? Of what's going to happen to him?

NELL

Not yet--!

SLIM

Don't say it--!

DONNY

What's going on?

SLIM

It's complicated. Have some mush.

BILLY

We should tell him. He has a right to know.

DONNY

Tell me *what*?

*A light goes on in Farmer Virgil's house.*

VIRGIL(*offstage*)

QUIET! If I have to come down there, it'll be with a whip!

*The animals fall silent and still.  
Billy pushes food toward Donny.*

BILLY

Might as well eat up, pal. It's probably your last meal.

*Music cue #3: Doomed*

DONNY

Slim? Nell? Is it true?

*Nell and Slim each give a sober nod.  
Maybe a death knell tolls here.*

Holy horsefeathers.

*A confused horse whinnies; Donny  
waves it off.*

But *why*?

SLIM

I'm afraid you've outlived your usefulness, Donald.

DONNY

Why can't they just sell me?

BILLY

Nobody wants a lame old donkey.

NELL

Nobody wants an old anything.

DONNY

But I'm too young to be old!

*A light goes on in the farmer's house.*

BILLY

Now you've done it. You're going to pay for this.

DONNY

Only if they find me—which they won't, because I'm leaving!

SLIM

You better hurry. I hear Farmer's footsteps and they're the angry kind.

DONNY

Farewell, Friends.

Music cue #4: Heading Out

NELL

Where will you go?

BILLY

What will you do?

SLIM

Can I have your carrots?

*Donny runs offstage; the others exit.*

*Donny reenters alone, spent from running.*

DONNY

Where *will* I go? What will I do? All my life I've been a working stiff-- pulling plows, hauling wood, carrying sacks of flour. Maybe it's time to be something other than a beast of burden. But what? How do you figure out what you want to be when you grow up *when you're already grown up*? Do you just pick something?

I could be a fireman. No, I'm afraid of fire. A doctor? No, too much blood. A teacher. Too much *work*. I know, I could be president! Who am I kidding? Who would vote for a donkey for president?

*Thunder rumbles; lightning flashes.*

*Donny seeks shelter under a pecan tree.*

I could really do with a nice, dry barn, maybe some warm molasses--

*A very large pecan falls on his head.*

Ow! Why do these things keep hitting me in the head?

*He picks up the pecan.*

Wait a minute. So what if it's a dream. It's something I've always wanted to do.

Music/Song #5: Schwingenhaus

DONNY(singing)

There's a place in Bremen town so famous and so grand  
Jazz musicians gather there from all across the land  
It's the spot that anyone who's anyone has played

That is where I'll head, my reputation to be made

There is a cool joint, it's in the center of town  
They call it the Schwingenhaus, Schwingenhaus  
And the musicians, they come from miles around  
To play at the Schwingenhaus, Schwingenhaus

It's a jazz musicians paradise, they're swingin' all day  
And late into the evening they're still wailing away  
It's always been a dream of mine that someday I'd play  
At the Schwingenhaus I'm on my way

*Music continues under the following scene.  
Minnie enters, a knapsack on her back.*

DONNY

Well, if it isn't Minnie's Pride of the River Rhine!

MINNIE

That was my registered name, back when I was my master's prize show dog-- before the Bassett Hound showed up with puppies. Now I'm just plain old Minnie. Nobody cares about an old dog when there are puppies around!

DONNY

Want to play in a band?

MINNIE

Why would I do that?

DONNY

I'm going to Bremen Town to perform at *Schwingenhaus*-- and you can come with me!

MINNIE

I don't know. This sounds like one of your cock-eyed optimist schemes. Where will we sleep? What will we eat? How will we get there? I don't have any money.

DONNY

We don't need money, Minnie—we've got talent!

MINNIE

Well...it's not like I'm going to be missed. And I do have an accordion.

MINNIE(singing)

I've really had it with this old 'man's best friend' routine

MINNIE/DONNY (singing)  
We're off to the Schwingenhaus, Schwingenhaus

DONNY  
So long to Virgil, good-bye to loony Irene

MINNIE/DONNY  
We're playing the Schwingenhaus, Schwingenhaus

*Nell runs onstage.*

NELL  
There you are! I brought a pillow I made.

DONNY  
Nell, I'm touched.

NELL  
It's for me. I'm running away too!

DONNY  
Farmer isn't going to like that, Nell. Who's going to catch the mice?

NELL  
I can't do it anymore, I feel bad for the mice. Besides, I know how it works. It's just a matter of time before they replace the scruffy old cat with a bouncy new kitten. I'm getting' out while the gettin's good. Where are we going?

DONNY  
*Schwingenhaus!*

NELL  
Isn't it exciting?  
(singing)  
Someday they'll hear about my fame and they'll understand  
That I became the coolest cat in all of the land

NELL/MINNIE/DONNY(singing)  
Then they'll be feeling guilty for whatever they planned  
That is why we are leaving this pop-stand

DONNY  
Good-bye and so long, doubt I'll be missing this place

ALL  
Come see us at Schwingenhaus, Schwingenhaus

NELL

I think I hear them

ALL

We're off and won't leave a trace

You'll find us at Schwingenhaus, Schwingenhaus

We're headed to Schwingenhaus, Schwingenhaus

We'll headline at Schwingenhaus Schwingenhaus!

*(end of song)*

*In darkness, we hear thunderous applause, bravos. The applause thins considerably as lights reveal the "stage" at Das Schwingenhaus, a formerly grand music showplace that has seen better days. Onstage, a rooster bows deeply.*

RUSTY

Thank you, thank you, you're too kind, I am truly humbled. That song was...oh what's the name of it?

*He addresses the audience.*

Oh, hello. Find a seat, there's room-- sadly. There was a time when every seat in the house would have been filled, standing room only! Of course that was back when *Schwingenhaus* was famous and I was...younger. Indeed, I was fortunate enough to grace this stage in its heyday. Ah, those were the days! I'll never forget...

*pause*

What was I was talking about. Well. How about a little violin music?

*Music cue #6: Fritz's Entrance*

*Before Rusty can play, a large shadow cast by an offstage figure looms. And now a very small person of indeterminate gender enters. This is Fritz.*

Do you realize you've barged right into the middle of a performance? Shame on you!

FRITZ

I feel really bad about that. Now clear out, turkey!

RUSTY

I've never been so insulted in my life! I madame, am a *rooster*.

FRITZ

Beat it, Birdface. My associate and I are taking over this establishment.

RUSTY

You can't just waltz in and take over. Really, who do you think you are?

FRITZ

I'm the new Sheriff-Mayor-Chancellor and Tzar of Brementown. Who are *you*?

RUSTY

I am a *musician*.

FRITZ

I should have known from the *smell*.

RUSTY

I beg your pardon?

FRITZ

Nothing stinks worse than a rotten musician. Now get out or I call Karl!

RUSTY

Who's Karl?

*Music/Song #7: Karl-the-Crusher*

FRITZ

Little Brother!

*Karl enters; he is something of a giant.*

FRITZ(*spoken in rhythm*)

May I introduce my colleague, this is Karl

ALL

The-Crusher

FRITZ

He will usher you politely to the door

RUSTY(*spoken*)

Crusher?

FRITZ

Or perhaps you'd rather go on with this conversation  
But I warn you when we're done you could be sore.

RUSTY(*spoken*)

What kind of name is "Crusher"?

FRITZ

Aren't you curious how Crusher got his name?  
It's quite a story. He got furious when cheated at a game  
I could give you details but I think you get the picture  
'cause the details my dear friend do get quite gory.  
I suggest you simply walk away with no commotion  
Or I've some notion Karl might fling you through the door  
'cause if he does not keep calm and starts to lose his temper  
you'll remember very little, that I'm sure.

KARL

Fritz I really think it's time this guy should go

FRITZ

Karl please be patient

KARL

'Dis guy's buggin' me I thought that you should know

RUSTY

Karl don't lose your temper, there's no reason to get violent  
Once I take my vows I'll make a proper exit

FRITZ

Karl you now have my permission to discard this loser  
There is nothing more to him I wish to say  
I no longer wish to have this poultry in my presence  
Please do show him out in your own special way  
I bid you sir good day  
There's nothing more to say.  
*(end of song)*

RUSTY

But...why?

FRITZ

Because I said so!

RUSTY

And what if I refuse?

FRITZ

Karl here will reduce you to a boneless chicken breast. Am I right, Karl?

KARL

It would be my great pleasure.

RUSTY

Was that a threat, sir? Because if it was I shall take great offense.

*Karl grabs hold of Rusty's violin.*

RUSTY

Not the violin! You go too far!

*Karl grabs hold of Rusty's arm.*

RUSTY

Ow, ow, ow.

FRITZ

Karl, escort this former musician to the city-line.

KARL

Whatever you say, Fritzzy.

FRITZ

I told you not to call me that!

RUSTY

At least allow me to make an exit.

FRITZ

Do it quickly.

*Music cue #8: 'Rusty's Farewell'*

RUSTY

Good-bye, *Schwinginhaus*, old friend. Good-bye, good-bye. Good-bye, gentle table.  
Good-bye wooden chair. Good bye--

FRITZ

Okay that's enough!

RUSTY(*looking offstage*)

Is that a marching band I see?

FRITZ

A band-?

*Fritz and Karl rush to the edge of the stage  
and look off; Rusty ducks behind curtains.*

FRITZ

I don't see any marching.

KARL

Uh oh. Where did that chicken go..?

FRITZ

Never mind him. We have a job to do.

*Fritz dons a bandit mask; Karl does the same.*

KARL

Trick-or-treat?

FRITZ

No, you big dope. We have many houses to sneak into.

KARL

Are we going to take more shiny things?

FRITZ

Yes, Karl. Shiny things. The more the better.

KARL

Isn't that stealing, Fritz?

FRITZ

Of course it's not! One more thing. I want *you* to collect any musical instrument you find—*especially* violins. Understand?

KARL

What are we going to do with--

FRITZ

Just do it!

KARL

What ever you say, Fritz.

*Karl just stands there.*

FRITZ

Go!

*Karl and Fritz exit. Rusty emerges from hiding.*

RUSTY

This is awful! Me, Rustimer Piebald Paravotti the Third, *kicked off the stage*. I've never been so humiliated. How has it come to this? Maybe I should just give up...become a wandering minstrel...playing the violin, passing the hat for coin from cultivated passersby. Well, what more does a musician need? His talent, his audience, and his--

*He stops short, realizing--*

They've got my sweet violin! I must save her!

KARL(offstage)

Fee-fi-foe-fum!

RUSTY

But first, I'll hide.

*He ducks under the table as Karl enters, pushing a cartful of violin cases.*

KARL

I smell the blood of a—

*He takes a whiff of air.*

Chick-Un!

RUSTY

Oh me.

*During the following Karl stalks the stage. When he looks under the table, Rusty hops on top; when Karl looks on the table, Rusty hides underneath or behind, etc.*

KARL

Here chick, come chick, plump chick.  
Don't make me find you, little one  
If you play that game it won't be fun  
Here's the farmer-in-the-dell  
When you get caught it don't end well!

*Rusty ducks under the table, then, using it as cover, he begins to make his way across the stage.*

KARL(faster)

Here chick, come chick, plump chick.  
This is what I now surmise  
The table moves before my eyes  
Here's Jack, so nimble and so quick  
He's going to catch that sneaky chick!

*Karl lifts the table up, exposing Rusty.*

RUSTY

Is it just me, or do you feel a breeze?

KARL

I WILL CRUSH YOU INTO TINY PIECES.

*Rusty rolls out of the way as Karl comes  
in swinging the table to-and-fro.*

RUSTY

I never imagined it would end so horribly!

KARL

I WILL MASH YOU INTO POTATOES!

RUSTY

There's only one way to slay a giant.

KARL

I AM KARL-THE--

RUSTY

Crusher, yes, we're all aware of that. But-- do you know how to make an elephant float?

KARL

NO.

RUSTY

Root beer and three scoops of elephant.

*pause*

KARL

Three scoops of...

*Music/Song # 9: 'Joke Song'*

Ha! I get it! Three scoops of elephant! Ha-ha-ha!

*Fritz enters, carrying a single violin case.*

RUSTY(singing)

Why was the tomato embarrassed?

FRITZ

What's going on here?

RUSTY  
Because it saw the salad dressing

*Karl doubles over with laughter.*

Karl?!  
FRITZ

*Karl straightens up.*

RUSTY  
What is it pirate's love to eat?  
Arrr-tichokes!

*Karl collapses in a fit of glee.*

FRITZ  
Stop that!

KARL  
Tell more! Karl wants more!

RUSTY  
Why did the lion spit the clown out?

FRITZ(*to Karl*)  
Snap out of it!

RUSTY  
Because he thought it tasted funny

FRITZ  
Wipe that smirk off your face!  
Grab that bird before he tries to flee.

*Fritz and Karl circle and entrap Rusty.*

RUSTY  
What do you call a butcher's party?  
A meat ball

*Rusty rummages through the pile  
of violins as Karl cracks up.*

*spoken*

RUSTY

Which one of these is mine?

FRITZ

Well you call that a joke  
Just so funny I forgot to laugh

RUSTY

What kind of room has got no walls  
A mushroom

*Dead silence as Karl tries to  
figure this one out.*

KARL

*He gets it*  
Ahhh! More! Tell more!

RUSTY

What does a grape say when it's stepped on

FRITZ

Karl—

*Karl grabs Rusty forcefully*

RUSTY

It just lets out a little wine

*Karl releases Rusty, laughing.*

FRITZ

Get him!

*Karl stops laughing long enough  
to lunge for Rusty-- who ducks out  
out of his grasp, leaving Karl to  
grab Fritz.*

RUSTY

This is nuts, it's insane  
All these cases look the same to me

FRITZ

I'm starting to get angry now!

RUSTY

Why is it all male deer get braces  
They've got buck teeth

*Karl giggles as he makes a swipe for Rusty.*

Why did the book join the police force  
He wanted to work under cover

FRITZ

Catch that bird catch him now  
Make sure that he doesn't get away

*Rusty digs through the cartful of violins*

RUSTY

Why was the leather belt arrested

*spoken*  
Where is it?

*sung*

It got caught holding up some pants

*Rusty retrieves two identical violin cases—  
his, and the one Fritz brought in.*

*spoken*  
Which one's mine?

*sung*

Why did the cookie see the doctor

*Fritz and Karl make a grab for the violins.*

RUSTY

*spoken*  
Uh oh.

*sung*

He said that he was feeling crummy

*spoken*  
Yikes!

*They each grab a violin case; a pause,  
then they swap cases; a pause, then they  
swap cases again.*

*Rusty chooses a case.*

KARL

No, no, no!

FRITZ

Now, Karl, now!

*(end of song)*

*Karl descends on Rusty, clamping his arms tightly.*

RUSTY *(to Karl)*

Why do watermelons get married?

KARL

Why?

RUSTY

Because they can't elope!

*Karl doubles over with laughter; Rusty dashes offstage with the violin case.*

KARL

Can't elope... Ha-ha-ha! That's a good one.

FRITZ

You let him get away with his violin!

*Karl's laughter turns to shameful sobbing.*

KARL

I was...I didn't...I'm sorry, Fritz. Are you going to be mad at me?

FRITZ

Only if you keep crying like that!

KARL

Sorry, I'm sorry.

FRITZ

Put away the tears, little brother. At least he didn't get away with *our* case, thanks to me. We don't want *anyone* to get their nosy hands on this little jewel.

*Patting the case*

Get it, "jewels"? Ha ha ha ha ha!

*pause*

Come on.

*They exit.*

*Music cue #10: 'Road to Schwingenhaus'*

*The road to Schwingenhaus.  
Donny, Nell, and Minnie enter.*

NELL

Just think of it: our names will be up on the marquee for everyone to see!

DONNY

'Donny D. and His Jazz Band.' I like the sound of it.

MINNIE

What about 'Miss Minnie's *Polka Dots*'?

NELL

I was thinking more like 'Nell, and Some Others'.

MINNIE

What kind of band name is that? It's got to have pizzazz, it's got to be memorable.

NELL

I think it's memorable.

DONNY

Maybe we should keep our names out of it.

MINNIE

That's right, no names. I hate my name anyway. I always wanted to be a Sheila. Actually, what I wanted was to be a poodle, with the pom-pom and the big bow? Who wouldn't love that?

NELL

I'll do the costumes. I see myself in a plaid kilt with a lacey blouse and fancy leggings. And a feather boa!

*She struts and sashays in her imaginary costume.*

Look at me, look at me.

MINNIE

What about us?

NELL

*looking Minnie over.*

We're going to need a *lot* of material for you.

MINNIE

Why did I ever agree to this? I should've stayed home.

NELL

You hate all my ideas.

DONNY

No, she doesn't.

NELL

You always take her side.

DONNY

No I don't.

NELL

See! I don't want to be in a band where everyone's so mean to me.

DONNY

Nobody's mean. Minnie was just saying—

MINNIE

What did I say? Why are you blaming me?

DONNY

I'm not blaming you, I just meant that Nell was—

NELL

Don't twist my words!

DONNY

Nell I didn't... Minnie I was only...

*They turn away from him.*

I wanted to start a band, not a fight.

*Rusty enters with the violin case, breathless.*

RUSTY(*to audience*)

I wasn't built for the marathon, but for the more enlightened sprint.

*He notices the others.*

What's this, highway robbers? I shall have to be on my guard.

DONNY

Hello good fellow.

RUSTY

Come not a step closer or I shall be compelled to respond with brute force!

DONNY

We mean no harm, friend.

RUSTY

Friend, indeed! I have no money, I'm a *musician*.

DONNY

*We're* musicians.

RUSTY

What kind of "musicians" are you?

DONNY

Jazz.

MINNIE

Polka.

NELL

Celtic. I've always wanted to do the Highland Fling.

RUSTY

A rather unusual combination for a band.

DONNY

We haven't actually had a chance to rehearse much.

MINNIE

Or at all.

RUSTY

I come from a long line of classically trained singers.

*Music cue #11: 'Rigoletto'*

RUSTY

My father had a three-octave free-range.

DONNY

*Very* impressive.

RUSTY

My grandfather was the soloist on a dairy farm. He woke the girls for milking every morning-- seven matinees a week. I myself just finished a sold-out engagement at *Schwingenhaus*.

DONNY

You mean the famous place in Brementown-?

RUSTY

Is there any other?

DONNY

*To Rusty*

Could you excuse us for just a minute?

*Donny turns to Nell and Minnie; Rusty leans in closely to listen.*

Ladies, this is just the break our band has been waiting for. This fellow has got the goods, he's the real deal, a bona fide star. I think we should invite him to join us. What do you say?

MINNIE

I say he's full of himself.

NELL

I say he'd look good in a toga.

*Donny turns back to Rusty.*

RUSTY

Ahem!

DONNY

We know a talented gentleman like yourself has probably had other offers, but we'd be honored sir, deeply honored, honored beyond honored—

MINNIE

Cut to the chase.

DONNY

Would you consider joining our band? We could really use you.

RUSTY

You're *amateurs*.

NELL

Thank you!

DONNY

Of course you'd get star billing.

MINNIE

Whoa-- he gets to be the star?

NELL/MINNIE

Why does he get to?! We were here first!

RUSTY

There is a certain amount of *talent* involved. Look here, I'm strictly a soloist-- except for her.

*caressing the violin case*

My sweet, my precious, my beautiful...

*Rusty opens the violin case.*

She's gone-- my beautiful violin is gone!

*He displays the contents with disgust.*

There's nothing in here but jewelry and money!

NELL

My-oh-my.

MINNIE

Now *that* is worth something.

DONNY

Well done, old fellow.

RUSTY

Good heavens, do you know what this means?

MINNIE

You're filthy rich?

RUSTY

It means *they* have it.

DONNY

They who-?

RUSTY

The most unpleasant of siblings! Oh what's to become of my sweet violin?

MINNIE

Who cares? With what you've got there you can buy a hundred violins.

NELL

A thousand!

RUSTY

I don't want another one. My father bought that violin for me when I was just a chick.  
Now I'll never see it again!

*He collapses dramatically and begins to sob.*

DONNY

Cheer up, friend.

NELL

It'll be alright.

RUSTY

No, it won't!

MINNIE

It isn't the end of the world.

RUSTY

It *is* the end of the world!

*Rusty weeps louder.*

DONNY

There must be some way we can help him.

*Rusty abruptly stops his crying.*

RUSTY

Actually--

*Music/Song #12: 'Rusty's Plan'*

There is.

*During the song, Rusty transfers some of his clothing/affects to Donny.*

RUSTY(singing)

If you all come back with me to Bremontown  
I'm quite famous you will see in Bremontown

Help me get my violin in Brementown  
Then I'll help you to break into Brementown

DONNY  
So you think we could be famous?

RUSTY  
Absolutely

MINNIE  
We'll have people flock to hear us?

RUSTY  
Without doubt

NELL  
Maybe we could tour the country?

RUSTY  
Now you're thinkin'

DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
We'll have fans in every city

RUSTY  
You'll sell out  
Well that was easier than I thought

DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
We're off to Brementown

RUSTY  
Talent these chumps haven't got

DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
We'll sing in Brementown

RUSTY  
I can tell that they're no band

DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
We'll start in Brementown

RUSTY  
But I need them for my plan

DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
To fame in Brementown

NELL  
I just can't wait to get started

RUSTY  
Just be patient

MINNIE  
Soon we'll have our name in lights

RUSTY  
For all to see

DONNY  
Oh how can we thank you?

RUSTY  
It's my pleasure

DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
This is such a dream come true

RUSTY  
And true for me

DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
Our road to fame will soon begin

RUSTY/DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
In Brementown

RUSTY  
Once we get my violin

RUSTY/DONNY/MINNIE/NELL  
In Brementown  
Just can't wait till we drop in to Brementown  
Brementown.

*(end of song)*

RUSTY  
There. Now you look like a musician!

DONNY

We'll be on the same stage as some of the greatest talents of our time. Mooney Armstrong, Elephants Gerald, Billie goat Holliday.

NELL

I've always wanted to be great.

MINNIE

It's almost too good to be true.

DONNY

If this gentleman says it, you can believe it. After all, he's a *professional*.

RUSTY

There's no time to lose. My violin...and your fame, awaits!

*Lights dim as the sun goes down.*

Oh drat, sundown.

*He steps up to a higher vantage poing and crows, loudly.*

R-R-R-R-rrrrr! It is officially the end of day.

MINNIE

*rubbing her feet*

Now that you mention it, my people are killing me.

DONNY

Find a spot to bed down, everyone. We want to be fresh for our debut.

NELL

Bath time.

*Nell gives herself a quick but thorough cat bath, does some stretches, puts on a sleeping mask, fluffs her pillow, and curls up to sleep.*

RUSTY

Are you quite finished?

NELL

'Night 'night.

*They rest. Minnie tosses and turns, sighs, walks in a circle on hands and knees, lays down again, tosses and turns, sighs.*

RUSTY

What's all the racket!

MINNIE

I can't sleep.

NELL

Count people, that's what I do.

MINNIE

Thinking about people makes me lonely for my master. And my bed. And my big bowl of kibble...

DONNY

You're just homesick, Minnie. Everything will feel different when we get to Bremontown.

MINNIE

I don't know. I think I'm having an anxiety attack.

RUSTY

Oh for goodness sake, count needles in a haystack if you must! Just let those of us who *can* sleep!

Music/Song #13: Counting

MINNIE

One. Needle in a haystack. Two. Needles in a haystack. Three...needles in a haystack...four...five...

*Lights come up on Schwingenhaus.  
Music continues as Karl attempts to count a growing  
pile of contraband musical instruments.*

KARL(*over Minnie's counting*)

One-two-three-four-five-six-eight  
One-two-three-four-five-eight-nine  
One-two-three-four-five-six-seven-ten  
Counting, how I wish I could be  
Counting, knowing just which number follows another  
That's something my sister can easily do and I wish I could too

Adding, let's talk confusion oh  
Adding, finding solutions  
Just what is the sum boy am I feelings dumb it's so

Awfully confusing, why is this so hard

Subtraction is taking away something  
Subtraction means that I will have some less than before  
'cause I gave someone more which means  
That there's not so much here that's left for me

Counting, someday I'm gonna learn  
Counting, but until then I'll just  
Have to get by it's not easy but I  
Will just hope I don't run out of finger and toes.  
*(end of song)*

*Fritz enters, carrying the violin case.*

KARL(quickly)  
One-two, buckle my shoe  
Three-four, there's some more  
Five-six, fiddle sticks  
Seven-ten...start again.

FRITZ  
How many instruments did we collect today, little brother?

KARL  
A whole bunch.

FRITZ  
How many?

KARL  
Don't really feel like counting it.

FRITZ  
Why is that, Karl?

KARL  
A lack of interest and fingers. Fritz, why don't we like music again?

FRITZ  
You know why.

KARL  
Will you tell me again, please?

FRITZ

Because when Fritz was Little Fritzy, our mother made her take violin lessons.

KARL

And that's when you met the dreaded—

FRITZ

The horrid—

FRITZ & KARL

Mrs. Sphinktur.

Music/Song #14: Mrs. Sphinktur

*Mrs. Sphinktur enters—or perhaps she appears as an angular shadow on a wall—rigidly stirring a steaming cup of tea with a little metal spoon. She keeps a sharp beat, tapping her cup mercilessly.*

FRITZ(*talking in rhythm*)

Misses Sphinktur she was my teacher  
I never liked her 'cause she made me play my scales  
Over and over and over and if I would play a wrong note  
Well she would take her teaspoon from her cup  
And hit me on the head and boy it really hurt me

KARL(*in rhythm*)

She was so nasty, Misses Sphinktur  
That Misses Sphinktur

(*talking*)  
It's too horrible. What else did she do?

FRITZ

I'm sure that in a former life she was a witch

KARL

Just thinking of her makes my body start to twitch

FRITZ

She must have been insane, inflicting all that pain  
No wonder music is a thing I hate!

The memories that I recall are terrible

The hours I spent alone with her unbearable  
But Momma made me go although I pleaded no!  
And that is why all music has to go!  
Blame Misses Sphinktur  
Old Misses Sphinktur

KARL  
She was a stinker  
Old Misses Sphinktur

FRITZ  
Because of her

FRITZ & KARL  
Music has to go!

*Mrs. Sphinktur disappears as lights dim on  
the music lesson.  
(end of song)*

FRITZ  
Worst of all was what she told our mother. That I was a *poor student*. And that I had  
*no talent*.

KARL  
Ah, that's so mean. Everyone has some talent, right Fritz?

FRITZ  
I told you never to call me that!

KARL  
Sorry.

FRITZ  
We'll see who's "poor" now.

*Fritz sets a violin case onto the table,  
rubbing hands together with delight.*

Inside this instrument case lies a fortune in gold, silver, and jewels. And now it's all  
ours. We're rich, dear brother!

KARL  
Let's see, let's see!  
*He tries to peek into the case.*

FRITZ

Patience, little brother. First let us lower our heads in a moment of silent gratitude for what we are about to get.

*They lower their heads; Karl then turns and sneaks a peek inside the violin case.*

KARL

Ooh. Pretty.

*Fritz slaps Karl's hand away from the case.*

FRITZ

Don't be greedier than me! Ahem. Thank you, Whoever is listening in, for our bounty of stuff. Please help us get more, so that we might enrich ourselves. Would you like to say something, Karl?

KARL

Thank you for the violin.

FRITZ

What in Mrs-Sphinktur's-tea-cup are you talking about?

*Karl lifts the violin from the case.*

KARL

Just this, Fritz.

*Fritz looks inside the empty instrument case.*

FRITZ

How can that be? It's the wrong case!

*She frantically looks over the other cases.*

This can't be. Our stolen loot has been stolen! Who would stoop so low?

KARL

I don't know, Fritz.

*Music/Song #15: 'Fritz's Warning'*

*Karl cradles the violin; Fritz abruptly grabs the instrument from him.*

FRITZ

I'll tell you-- that dirty bird, that's who. The only thing worse than a musician is a

thieving *chicken* musician.

FRITZ (singing)

That sneaky bird won't get a way  
And for this crime he'll dearly pay  
We'll track him down and when we do  
I'll gladly hand him off to you  
He is going to learn that crusher is really  
Much more than just your name

KARL (singing)

He will hurt in places that he never even knew

FRITZ

Oh what a shame  
Dear brother this makes me so mad  
To think that we have just been had

KARL(singing)

Yes sister dear I understand  
But soon we'll have him in our hands  
And when I am done with him  
I'll tell you he'll be looking pretty pale.

FRITZ

He'll be wishing that we would have let him  
Spend his days to rot in jail

FRITZ/KARL

That fool bird should not have messed with us  
But he'll pay for causing such a fuss

KARL

Ha! Eenie meenie minee moe  
We'll catch that chicken by the toe

FRITZ

Then when he hollers make him pay  
Oh with his neck by end of day

**END OF ACT ONE**