

## SYNOPSIS

### THE BREMEN SINGERS

My play / musical is based on the Brothers' Grimm story, The Musicians of Bremen. The setting is, therefore, northern Germany, several hundred years ago. The action has a time span of six months, this being the lapse of time between Act I and Act II.

In the cast of thirty or more, there are about fifteen speaking parts for the Hens, as well as a like number of singing parts for them in the musical, and ten or more speaking parts for Gang Members.

The play opens in the farmyard, and ends there six months later. The intertwining stories are of the Singers' journey to Bremen, their capture of the Thieves' hideout, their efforts to get it back, with a rebellion in the farmyard to boot.

The Four keep alive their dream of becoming entertainers in Bremen. Amazingly, they get there, not as lowly street musicians, but as guests of the Town Council, when they hand over the stolen loot to the Councillors. And everything goes up a gear, when they arrive in Bremen with the Gang ready to turn themselves in.

The play can be performed at three different levels:

1. as a play, with dialogue, and basic animal imitations, as the Four try out their voices together.
2. as a musical, with opening Fanfare, 'sung' duet, trio and quartet, and three songs, at least two of which have choreographed movement; plus a German folk song to "La-la-la", with accompanying impromptu dance by the Hens.
3. as a musical, plus yodelling.

The work would also easily lend itself to a full-length animated film.

Special note:

A hoist would be useful in three scenes:

1. in Act I, Scene 1, where rooster jumps or flies, to escape Liesl's broom, and later in the same scene, to get over the fence and away.

2. In Act I, Scene 2, in the famous animal tower scene, where Rooster flies up on to Cat's back to look in the window.
3. In Act II, Scene 3, during the battle for the house, when Rooster flies up on to a branch, and swoops down from it to foil the Gangsters' plan.

# THE BREMEN SINGERS

---

A Children's Musical in Two Acts

by

Moira Brown

Play - 60 minutes

Musical - 70 minutes

7305 words (play)

7535 words (musical)

## THE BREMEN SINGERS

### CHARACTERS

ROOSTER	Head of the Farmyard Flock, with pet name, Rudi.
CAT	
DONKEY	Friends of the Rooster.
DOG	
LIESL	Farmer, wife of Fritz.
FRITZ	Farmer, husband of Liesl.
HENS	Ten or more, with a strict pecking order, of whom Lotte is first.
GANG of THIEVES	Also called Robbers, Bandits and Gang. Six or more, including Leader, Sceptic, Rikki and Seppi.
DEPUTY MAYOR of BREMEN.	
TOWN COUNCILLOR of BREMEN	

## SCENE BREAKDOWN

The action takes place in northern Germany in the 1600s.

### ACT I

Opening FANFARE, cockcrow, and song, “Each New Day”.

#### Scene 1

Setting: The poultry yard of a small farm, façade of farmhouse upstage to one side.

Time: A sunrise in spring.

Action: The Rooster is threatened by Liesl, and he runs away. The Hens are left in shock.

#### Scene 2

Setting: A country road, with a grass verge, and trees behind, which can be parted later in the scene to reveal a house, hidden behind them, where the famous animal tower scene takes place.

Time: Dusk, becoming night.

Action: The Rooster makes three friends, and they dislodge a Gang of Thieves from the house.

#### Scene3

Setting: A clearing in the forest.

Time: The same night.

Action: The Gang plan to reconnoiter the house.

#### Scene 4

Setting: Inside the forest house.

Time: The same night, after dinner, bedtime.

Action: The Scout comes, but is terror-struck by the Animals.

### Scene 5

Setting: The clearing in the forest.

Time: The same night.

Action: The Scout reports back. The Gang, superstitious, decides to leave.

### Scene 6

Setting: Back at the farm.

Time: Next morning.

Action: Hens face up to the Farmers, who have a change of heart. Song, “Don’t Procrastinate”.

## **ACT II**

### Scene 1

Setting: Outside the forest house.

Time: Six months later. Daytime.

Action: The Four Friends have visitors, the first, two Town Councillors from Bremen, and the second, the Farmers with the Flock of Hens. The Thieves also return, surreptitiously. Song, “Each New Day”, v. 3

### Scene 2

Setting: The clearing in the forest.

Time: Afternoon the same day.

Action: The Thieves plan to take back the house.

### Scene 3

Setting: Outside the forest house.

Time: Same day, at dusk, becoming dark.

Action: The Gang is defeated, finally, and the Rooster lays down conditions.

#### Scene 4

Setting: Back at the farmyard.

Time: Two days later; afternoon.

Action: Joyful homecoming, with impromptu singing and dancing by the Hens.

Reminiscing about the wonderful time in Bremen. Exciting news for the heroes. Song  
“Bremen”.

---

ACT IScene I

*Setting: The poultry yard of a small farm in northern Germany. The façade of the farmhouse is visible, and part of a high fence. The windows have broken shutters. On the ground are a broom and a broken ladder.*

*Time: 17<sup>th</sup> century; sunrise.*

*At rise: the ROOSTER, on his perch, and HENS, crouched on the ground, are watching the sunrise. The ROOSTER crows intermittently, either a simple “Cock-a-doodle-doo”, or a yodel, as in Appendix A. As the daylight increases, a horn, or trumpet, plays a fanfare to the dawn, Appendix A.*

*For the Musical: “Each New Day”, Appendix B.*

*The door bursts open, and LIESL emerges, angry, followed by FRITZ.*

LIESL           *(pointing to the ROOSTER)* I’ve told you a dozen times to stop all that crowing so early in the morning! I want a long lie! You wake us up too early! We’re not ready to get up yet. I’m warning you: I’ll pluck your tail for a feather duster, if you don’t stop waking us up so early.

FRITZ           I want to sleep till 9 o’clock.

LIESL           10 o’clock would be better. Get the ladder, FRITZ! Catch him! He’s had enough warnings.

*(Picks up the broom, and tries to whack the ROOSTER, who dodges her efforts.)*

FRITZ           *(picking up the ladder)* I’ll have to fix the ladder first. I’ll do it after breakfast. Where’s, my hammer? Where are my nails? I’ll look for them later.

LIESL           Just you wait till I catch you. Your tail will become a feather duster.

*(Exit LIESL and FRITZ into the house.)*

ROOSTER       Oh dear! I think she really means it this time! She’ll take my tail for a feather duster! Ohh! My beautiful feathers! My marvellous tail! A feather duster! What a disaster! Oh no!



HENS           *(various)* It's not right!  
  
                  She's cruel!  
  
                  It's not fair!  
  
                  Why does she say those things?  
  
                  She's unjust!

ROOSTER       What am I to do? I can't stop crowing. It's my instinct to crow. And I  
                  can't stay here with these threats of violence. I'll have to leave. Run  
                  away. Fly the coop.

HENS           Oh no!  
  
                  Oh no!  
  
                  Is there no other thing to do?

ROOSTER       You heard what she said, "pluck my tail for a feather duster". I can't bear  
                  the thought.

HENS           No, no – your beautiful feathers!  
  
                  Your beautiful plumage!  
  
                  How could she do such a thing?  
  
                  How could she even think such a thing?

ROOSTER       It's the only thing to do; run away; fly off.

HENS           I suppose it is.  
  
                  What a thing to happen!  
  
                  It's a calamity!  
  
                  Oh, don't go away!  
  
                  Is that the only solution?

ROOSTER       I've no choice. I have to leave.

HENS            Let us know how you get on.

Send us a message.

Take us with you.

ROOSTER      Maybe later. I love you all. Good-bye.

HENS *(All)*    Bye! Bye! Bye!

I can't believe this is happening.

Neither can I.

This is terrible!

*(The ROOSTER flies or walks off, depending whether a hoist is available. HENS sob.)*

END OF SCENE

**ACT I****Scene 2**

*Setting: A country road with a grass verge. Trees behind. House hidden behind trees.*

*Time: Later the same day.*

*At rise: CAT lying on grass verge.*

*Enter the ROOSTER.*

ROOSTER    I wonder how far I've walked. My feathers may be beautiful, but they are certainly not much use for flying distances. Up and down, to and from my perch is about as far as I can fly. And my feet are not made for long-distance walking. But I must think positively. I was lucky to get a lift for several miles on a farmer's cart. That was a big help on my way. And there's plenty of food for me here on this grassy verge. There are lots of different kinds of plants. That's good. Oh, a CAT! Hello, CAT. What are you doing here?

CAT            Nothing. I've been thrown out of my home. What are you doing here?

ROOSTER    I've left home. Run away. I was very scared at first, because I didn't know what to do, or where to go; it was all so sudden, and a big shock. But I've had an idea. My idea is to go to Bremen. I've learned that this is the road to Bremen. Have you heard of that city?

CAT            Yes, my family used to speak about Bremen. They loved to go there.

ROOSTER    I heard visitors to our farm speak of it. It seems to be a wonderful city, with marvellous old buildings, and a Market Square where I could entertain people with my singing. I'm quite musical, you know, and the people of Bremen love music. They have choirs and orchestras and everything in Bremen – marching bands, musical groups, street musicians...

CAT            Oh, well, it sounds like a good idea of yours to go to Bremen.

ROOSTER    Thank you. And there's a giant statue, called Roland, in the Market Square. Imagine me, perched on his head, spreading my feathers out.

*(Preens)* It would look as though Roland had a feather hat on. Tee-hee!  
People would laugh. They would love me. I'd be popular.

CAT Oh, yes, I think you would. I wish I could be popular. I lived in a house with a family, but I was not popular, because I got too old to catch mice. They were too fast for me. The family stopped feeding me, and put me out to fend for myself. So here I am.

ROOSTER Poor you! People can be horrible, I know. Come with me to Bremen! Can you sing? We could be a duet, singing in the Market Square.

CAT Thank you. Yes, I love singing. I used to give concerts at night, sometimes, along with the other cats, sitting on the garden wall. But the people of the neighbourhood did not appreciate music. Instead of being grateful for the free concerts, they used to chase us away.

ROOSTER Isn't that just typical? People can be very ungrateful.

CAT One night, I had a dream about singing. I dreamed that, away in the future, maybe hundreds of years from now, people would come to appreciate the way cats sing. I dreamed that they would give concerts imitating us, singing like this, "Mee-ee-ee-ee-aow, mee-ee-ee-ee-aow".

*(As in Rossini's Cat Duet)*

ROOSTER I'm sure that is quite possible; if people ever come to their senses. Let's see how we sound singing together. I'll start, and you can join in.

*(Cock-a-doodle-doo / miaow sequence, or Appendix C)*

CAT What do you think?

ROOSTER I think our duet has distinct possibilities.

CAT Will people like our music?

ROOSTER Some will, some won't. That's all right. People have all different tastes, but I hope some will like our music.

CAT That gives me hope, too. Thank you.

ROOSTER We should do all right in Bremen.

CAT I'm glad to hear you say that. But why did you leave home?

ROOSTER     The two FARMERS were not real farmers. Real farmers get up early, and work hard, but they wanted to lie in bed half the day, even though I tried my best to get them up early to start their work.

CAT            How lazy!

ROOSTER     Yes. They hardly ever saw the sun rise. And they threatened to take my tail for a feather duster, so I left.

CAT            Like me! You had no choice. And to think that the FARMERS did not appreciate your lovely voice!

ROOSTER     Like I said, they weren't real FARMERS. But my wives always told me I had a beautiful voice. They are pretty good singers themselves. I wish you could hear them. They make a lovely sound.

CAT            I'm sure they do. I wish I could hear them. Oh, look! Here comes a DONKEY.

*(Enter DONKEY, slowly, head down.)*

ROOSTER     Yes, and he's not looking too cheerful. Hello, DONKEY, you are looking a bit down in the dumps. What's wrong?

DONKEY       I'm tired. And you're right – I'm feeling very sad.

ROOSTER     Why? What has happened?

DONKEY       My kind, old master became frail, and had to sell the farm. My new owners promised to be good to me, but they weren't. They made me pull and carry heavier loads than my old master did, and they halved my food ration.

ROOSTER     Aww! That doesn't sound fair at all.

CAT            No! Like my family.

DONKEY       I haven't enough energy now, nor strength, to pull or carry the heavy loads, so I've run away, although "run" is hardly the word to use, since I'm so exhausted. I'm scared they'll come after me, and catch me, and beat me. I'm feeling very lonely and frightened.

CAT           Aww – he can come with us to Bremen, can't he, ROOSTER? We're going to Bremen. We're singers. If you join us, we'll be a trio. It's bound to be a good life there, where people appreciate music.

ROOSTER    Sure! Come with us to Bremen!

- DONKEY      To Bremen? Oh, thank you. I'd love to join you. Oh, I feel a hundred times better already. It's so good to have friends. It's a beautiful city. I went there often with my old master. A river runs through it, the Weser, the same river as runs through Hamelin. Bremen has a very impressive *Rathaus*, with amazing arches, huge windows, and great halls, built on top of one another.
- CAT            A great house like that for rats?
- DONKEY      Ha-ha! No, not for rats. The *Rathaus* is the Town Hall. But, speaking of rats, Hamelin, up-river, has become very popular with them lately. I hear a lot of them have gone to live there in recent months.
- ROOSTER     I wonder why. Maybe it's another prosperous town, with rich pickings, as they say. The rats may have gone to share in these rich pickings.
- CAT            Yes, maybe. ROOSTER thinks we'll be popular in Bremen.
- DONKEY      Entertainers need to be popular, but that is not the best thing to be in life. To be good, and kind, like my old master, is better than being popular.
- CAT            How true that is! You are very wise, DONKEY.
- DONKEY      Thank you. You are the first creature ever to say that to me. People usually call me stupid.
- ROOSTER     But it's true! What you said is very wise. We need to think for ourselves, and not just follow blindly what others say. What is your singing voice like, DONKEY?
- DONKEY      I'm a bass, and I can keep a good beat, like this, "Ee-aw, ee-aw, ee-aw, ee-aw".

*(Thumps his foot, as he "sings", Appendix D.)*

- ROOSTER     Just what we need to be a sensational trio! Let's hear how we sound together. I'll start, and you two can join in when you are ready.

*("Oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo, miaow, ee-aw" Continue as long as desired. Appendix E)*

- ROOSTER    Very promising indeed! Bremen, here we come! You have a treat in store! Oh, here comes a DOG! Hello DOG! That's quite a limp you've got, although you've managed to catch up with us, slowly but surely.
- DOG        Hello! I've got a thorn stuck in my paw, and it's sore to walk on. Can you get it out for me
- ROOSTER    Let me see. Can you help, CAT? *(They try. Succeed.)* There!
- CAT        It's out. Give your paw a few licks to clean the wound. Can you walk now?
- DOG        *(Trying out his walking,)* Thank you so much. I can put weight on it now.
- ROOSTER    Are you on your way to Bremen?
- DOG        I don't know where I'm going. I'm lost. I had a master. He was rich. But he was always afraid of being robbed. He kept me chained up outside the house, in all weathers. It was very hot in summer, and very cold in winter. All I was supposed to do was bark at strangers who came by. But a stranger befriended me, and set me free. So here I am.
- ROOSTER    Yes, here you are, right enough. And here we are. Now you have friends. We are going to Bremen, to be entertainers in the Market Square. Are you musical?
- DOG        Oh, yes! I'm very musical. I have a real urge to join in, when people sing, especially with the high notes. I sing to the moon, too, like this;
- (Puts his head back, and howls, "Yao", Appendix F)*
- ROOSTER    Good! Let's try our voices together. Join in when you are ready.
- ("Oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo, oo-oo,, miaow, ee-aw, yao", several times. Appendix G)*
- ROOSTER    Terrific! Come to Bremen with us! I think our voices blend very well. We'll be a quartet.
- DOG        Thank you. I will. How exciting! It's wonderful to have friends.
- ROOSTER    But, it's beginning to get dark. We'd better find somewhere to spend the night.



DOG            There's something over there, among the trees. I see a faint light. It may be a house.

ROOSTER      It is a house. Let's go and see if we can get a bed for the night. Maybe we can sing for our supper.

*(The house is pushed forward, as the FOUR take steps on the spot, to feign walking towards it. Darkness falls as they approach it.)*

CAT            I wonder who lives there.

DOG            They may not be friendly.

DONKEY        We'd better take a look in the window.

CAT            How can we? The window is high, and there's no sill for ROOSTER to perch on, if he flies up there.

DONKEY        I have an idea. You climb on my back, DOG. CAT, you climb on DOG's back, and ROOSTER, you fly up on top, and look in the window. Shshsh!

*(They climb. ROOSTER "flies" up, looks in the window, and flaps down, trembling.)*

ROOSTER      Bad news! There's a GANG of THIEVES in there, with bags of loot – and food, lov-er-ly foo-ood. But they don't look friendly.

DONKEY        They won't want anybody knowing where their hideout is.

DOG            How can we get them out of there? We have to think.

*(All think.)*

ROOSTER      I know. We've all got good, strong voices. Let's put them to use. When I say, "Now", shout your loudest, and bang on the door and wall.

*(Pause)*

ROOSTER      Get ready! Now!

*(Barking, crowing, braying, miaowing, banging. The GANG runs out yelling in fear.)*

THIEVES      *(Various)* What was that?

A raid! Run!

They've found us.

The jailer. The judge.

We've been discovered.

Into the forest, men.

END OF SCENE

## **ACT I**

### **Scene 3**

*Setting: A clearing in the forest.*

*Time: Immediately after the previous scene.*

*At rise: The GANG of THIEVES is in confusion. Some are gathering sticks to start a fire.  
Some sit, then stand up again, undecided what to do.*

LEADER      What was that terrible noise?

MEMBERS    *(Various)* The Law.

Wild animals. It's our hideout.

A raid. Our loot's there.

What do we do now? Our food's there.

Try to think.

Calm down.

LEADER Who'll go and see whether it's safe to go back? We need to get our den back.

MEMBERS Not me. I'm still shaking.

Not me.

Not me, either.

You go, SEPPI.

SEPPI Why me?

RIKKI I'll go. (*Standing up*) My knees are still knocking together, but I'll do it. I'll creep round the house very quietly, and see whether I can hear anything. And I might try the door.

LEADER Good man, RIKKI. After that, we'll make a plan.

END OF SCENE

## ACT I

### Scene 4

*Setting: Inside the forest house.*

*Time: Later the same evening.*

*At rise: The FOUR FRIENDS are resting, replete, after eating the GANG'S food. The CAT has found the comfiest spot.*

DOG            It's quite cosy in here, really.

CAT            Yes, it's very relaxing. I'm ready for a sleep after all that food.

DONKEY        What time shall we set off for Bremen?

ROOSTER      Early. The ROBBERS might come back in the night. In fact, they're sure to come back: their loot is here.

CAT            What shall we do if they come back in the night?

DONKEY        Make a din again, like we did before. Shout and run about, as though there were dozens of us. And take a pan and lid, to make more noise.

ROOSTER      It's a good thing we all know how to sleep with one eye open. And keep your ears open, too, while you're resting. Don't go to sleep. Blow out the candle, DONKEY.

*(He blows it out.        Silence.)*

*Moonlight enters through the high window. They all doze off. Muffled footsteps are heard from outside.)*

ROOSTER      *(Stage whisper.)* Wake up, EVERYBODY. There's somebody at the door. Get ready.

*(The latch is lifted, and RIKKI enters, looks around, then starts to cross the room.)*

ROOSTER      Now!

*(Crowing, barking, braying, miaowing and banging. Then all is quite again, as RIKKI finds the door, and flees.)*

END OF SCENE

**ACT I****Scene 5**

*Setting: The clearing in the forest.*

*Time: Immediately after the previous scene.*

*At rise: The GANG is sitting round a campfire.*

*Enter RIKKI, in a panic.*

RIKKI           Witches! The house is full of them. A whole coven of witches.

*(He wanders about, shaking.)*

SCEPTIC       What? It can't be. There are no such things as witches. They're only in stories. They're not real.

RIKKI           Yes, they are real. They were chasing me around in the house, some even on their broomsticks. And there were wild animals with them, making the most horrible noises.

RIKKI

GANG MEMBERS

Ehh...

What noises?

Yes, wolves.

Like wolves?

Yes bears

Like bears?

Yes, lions

Like lions?

Yes, tigers.

Like tigers?

Yes, bulls.

Like bulls?

RIKKI           One charged me! And cats! All the witches had cats with them, with huge claws that nearly tore me to pieces. And monsters bellowing at me.

MEMBERS       Monsters? I'm scared of monsters.

So am I.

SCEPTIC     *(Jumping up)* I'm telling you, there are no such things as witches or monsters. They're just in stories, not in real life. They're not real.

RIKKI           Yes, they are real. I heard them. I saw them.

MEMBERS     I'm scared of witches.

I'm scared of their laughs and spells.

SCEPTIC     But I've told you, they're not real. They don't exist. There are no such things.

MEMBERS     Something's real.

The noise they make is real.

That's right, something's real.

We must get away from here.

They've obviously taken over the house.

What about our loot, our precious loot?

RIKKI           You can go and get it. I'm not going back in there.

LEADER        Come on, RIKKI. Where's your spunk gone? You were so brave before.

RIKKI           That was before the witches all chased me with their wild animals.

SCEPTIC     But I keep telling you ... witches don't exist. And monsters don't exist. They're just in stories.

MEMBERS     I'm not going back in there, either.

Who'll go back for the loot?

*(Silence)*

LEADER        Right! If we attack together, we can beat whoever, or whatever, is in there. It's called a "concerted effort". We make a plan, and we attack in a concerted effort, and win back our loot.



MEMBERS But I'm scared of witches.

Me, too.

And me.

SCEPTIC But I've told you, they don't ex--- Oh, never mind. I give up.

LEADER Right! We'll leave the loot. We can steal more, anyway.

MEMBERS Let's find a quieter place.

Far from here.

*(The OTHERS agree.)*

END OF SCENE



**ACT I****Scene 6**

*Setting: Back at the farmyard.*

*Time: Next morning, sunrise.*

*At rise: The HENS are watching the sunrise, then start pecking about for stray seeds.*

*Enter, from the house, the two FARMERS.*

LIESL           Where's RUDI ROOSTER? I couldn't get back to sleep, waiting for him to crow.

FRITZ           Yes, where is he? It's all quiet around here. Strange.

HENS           He's run away.

Flown the coop.

Left us all.

Gone.

LIESL           What do you mean, "gone"? Gone where? Why?

FRITZ           Yes, why?

HEN            You were going to take his tail for a feather duster.

LIESL           What?

HEN            That's what you said.

LIESL           Take his tail for a feather duster?

HEN            You did say that.

LIESL           Well, I may have said it, but I didn't really mean it, did I FRITZ?

FRITZ           Eh... She was just joking.

HENS           You were going to repair the ladder.

To catch him.

He was afraid.

FRITZ        You *were* always threatening him for crowing, and you chased him with the broom.

LIESL        Aww, I wouldn't have hurt him, really.

FRITZ        She wouldn't have hurt him, really.

HEN         You were going to fix the ladder, to get him down from his perch.

LIESL        Huh! He needn't have worried: FRITZ never fixes anything. He never gets round to it, do you, FRITZI?

FRITZ        Well...

HEN         Anyway, you both frightened him off.

LIESL        Oh, dear! My beautiful RUDI ROOSTER, with his elegant plumage! I frightened him. I am so sorry. I didn't realize. I should never have said those things.

FRITZ        That's right. She should never have said those things. I'm sorry, too.

LIESL        And we wouldn't have done them.

FRITZ        No, she wouldn't have done them. Her bark is worse than her bite, as they say. You know how she talks. It was all talk. Talk, talk, talk!

LIESL        That's enough, FRITZ! Oh, well... Early breakfast today.

FRITZ        Here are your seeds, CHOOKIES.

*(LIESL and FRITZ scatter seeds)*

LIESL        We'll have our breakfast now, too, FRITZI. Come!

*(Exit LIESL and FRITZ into the house.)*

HENS            They might have time to do some repairs today, since they are up so early.

                  At long last.

                  Yes! It's about time.

                  Do you think they'll ever get round to repairing the shutters and the ladder?

                  Hmmm! We'll see. Time will tell.

                  If they start to get up early, and work hard, like real farmers, things could change, but I wonder.

                  The trouble is, they procrastinate.

                  Procrastinate? What does that mean?

                  They keep putting things off till tomorrow.

                  And tomorrow never comes for them.

                  It's not good to procrastinate.

END OF SCENE, for the PLAY

*For the Musical: song, "Don't Procrastinate", Appendix G.*

**END OF ACT I**

---



**ACT II****Scene 1**

*Setting: Outside the forest house.*

*Time: Six months later; daytime.*

*At rise: The FOUR FRIENDS are relaxing; the ROOSTER, perched on a branch, the DONKEY grazing, the DOG sniffing around, and the CAT lazing.*

DONKEY      What about Bremen? We never got there. And we've been here six months now. I've told you about the Market Square, the *Rathaus*, the River Weser, the statues.

DOG            It must be a sight to see. Tell us more about Bremen.

DONKEY      There's Saint Peter's Church, with two towers reaching high into the sky, about as far as you could fly, ROOSTER.

ROOSTER     Really? I must see it. It must be amazing.

CAT            I like it here in the forest. We could go next year.

DOG            Yes, next year might be good. It would give us more time to practice our repertoire.

CAT            Or the year after. That would give us even more time to practice.

DONKEY      That sounds like we're procrastinating on a grand scale, like your pretend FARMERS, ROOSTER; keeping putting thing off.

ROOSTER     You're right! No more procrastinating! EVERYBODY get ready for a final rehearsal now! And we'll go to Bremen tomorrow.

*(The ANIMALS begin to tune up their voices, and go on to make their sounds together; or as in Quartet, Appendix F.)*

DONKEY      Oh, look! We've got visitors.

*(Enter two well-dressed, imposing men, the DEPUTY MAYOR of BREMEN, and a TOWN COUNCILLOR.)*

DEPUTY MAYOR    Good-day to you all! We are from the Town Council of Bremen. I am Deputy Mayor Schwartz, and this is my colleague, Councillor Brandt.

*(They make a slight bow, and click heels.)*

THE FOUR FRIENDS        Good-day. Welcome. We are as you see.

DEPUTY MAYOR    We have had reports from travellers of your living here. We had thought this house was uninhabited.

COUNCILLOR        How long have you been living here?

ROOSTER        We have been living here for half a year. We took over this house from a BAND of ROBBERS, who had used it as their hideout. They left their loot behind. We would like you to take it, and return it to the people it was stolen from. Bring out the bags, my FRIENDS.

*(The ANIMALS go into the house, and return with bulging canvas sacks.)*

DEPUTY MAYOR    How amazing! Thank you for handing over the stolen goods to us. We will certainly return the items to their rightful owners.

COOUNCILLOR        We have a list of the people who have been robbed. They will be very happy to receive back their stolen property.

DONKEY        We are singers. We are hoping to perform in Bremen soon.

DEPUTY MAYOR    You will be welcome in Bremen. Come and let us hear your music.

ROOSTER        Thank you. We will have a final rehearsal today, and come to Bremen tomorrow.

DEPUTY MAYOR    Splendid! Tomorrow is Market Day. Everyone will be there. We can hand back the stolen property then, too. We will set up a stage in front of the Town Hall for us, for you, to perform on.

ROOSTER        Thank you. That will be wonderful.

COUNCILLOR        We love to have happy occasions to celebrate on Market Days.

ROOSTER        That sounds like a very good idea, doesn't it, MY FRIENDS?

DONKEY        It does, indeed.

CAT           A very good idea.

DOG           Yes, a very good idea.

DEPUTY MAYOR   We will take our leave now, and we look forward to seeing you in  
Bremen tomorrow.

ROOSTER    Thank you for your kind invitation. Can we help you with the bags?

*(The ANIMALS help load the bags into the DEPUTY MAYOR'S carriage, off-stage.)*

ROOSTER    Till tomorrow. Thank you, again.

*(Good-byes, thank you's, heel-clicking. VISITORS leave.)*

ROOSTER    Can you believe it, my FRIENDS? We are actually invited to perform in Bremen tomorrow. Let's get on with that final rehearsal now. Here we go.

*(Cock-a-doodle-doo, etc, as previously... A cart arrives at the edge of the stage, and the FLOCK of HENS alight.)*

ROOSTER    It's my family from the farm. Hooray! You got my message, then?

HENS        Yes. Thank you for your invitation. It took a long time to reach us via the forest birds, but it arrived eventually.

ROOSTER    I'm glad it arrived, at last. It was a complicated route to reach you, but, never mind, you are here now. Welcome! It's wonderful to see you all again. What a happy day! My dear FAMILY, meet the FRIENDS I made on the way here: starting with CAT, whom I met first, after his family put him out, when he became too old to catch mice.

*(CAT bows.)*

ROOSTER    Next, I met DONKEY, whose kind, old master had to go away, and whose new owners treated him badly.

*(DONKEY bows.)*

ROOSTER    Then I met DOG, who had been kept as a guard dog, chained up, and left outside in all weathers.

*(DOG bows.)*

ROOSTER    And these beautiful ladies are my FAMILY. May I present LOTTE...

*(Here, each HEN, as she is named, comes forward and curtsies to the ANIMALS, who, together, bow formally to each one. Names could be ADELHEIDE, AGNETA, ALEDA, ARABELLA, BERTHE, BRUNHILDE, ELISE, EMILIA, FRIEDERIKA, GERDA, GRETCHEN, GRISELDE, HANNA, ROLANDE, ROSAMUND, SIEGFRIEDE, TRUDE, HEDWIG, HILDEGARDE, HENRIETTA, HELGA, KLARA, ROMHILDE, KLARA, ISOLDE, ODELINDA, ZELINDA.)*





HENS            We are delighted to meet you all.  
                      So this is where you live.  
                      Look at the house.  
                      I love the trees.  
                      No fences. Lovely.

DOG             Are you going to stay with us permanently?

HENS            No. We're just on a flying visit, you might say.  
                      We plan to stay one night, maybe two.  
                      We couldn't live here permanently.  
                      What will you eat in the winter, when the berries and seeds are gone, and  
                      it's cold and snowy?

DONKEY        I've been wondering about that. We haven't spent a winter here yet. We'll  
                      need to store a lot of food to see us through the winter.

ROOSTER       How are things at the farm?

HENS            Oh, things have changed since you left.  
                      It's good there now.  
                      The FARMERS have turned over a new leaf.  
                      They were very sorry for being lazy, and threatening you, and frightening  
                      you away.  
                      They brought us here in the cart.  
                      They'll be over to speak to you in a minute, after they've seen to the horse.  
                      You'll be surprised to learn that, now, they actually get up early.  
                      They get the work done, and seem to enjoy it.  
                      They know our names.  
                      They miss you, RUDI, and want you to come back with us to the farm.

ROOSTER    Really?

- HENS            You could ALL come and live on the farm.
- Every farm needs a CAT, a DOG, and a DONKEY.
- The FARMERS need us. Just think! They feed us, and, in return, we give them our spare eggs.
- We ANIMALS also fertilize the soil, so that the crops grow better, the cereals and the vegetables.
- Will you come back with us to the farm?
- ROOSTER        I think you've convinced us. Of course we will.
- DONKEY          Don't forget we're going to Bremen.
- ROOSTER        Of course, Bremen. We have a rendez-vous in Bremen, an invitation, even.
- (The FARMERS arrive, and make a fuss of the ROOSTER. He introduces them to the CAT, the DOG, and the DONKEY.)*
- LIESL            We are so sorry for giving you a hard time, little RUDI. We were very lazy back then. We are ashamed when we remember what we were like. I'm sorry I chased you with the broom. I didn't plan to hurt you: I deliberately missed you with the swipes. But I realize, now, how much I frightened you, and I am very sorry.
- FRITZ            Yes, we are sorry for the way we treated you. We really miss you, RUDI, and we've changed our ways. We get up early now. We see the beautiful sunrises. And we miss your crowing.
- LIESL            FRITZ has mended the shutters and the shed.
- FRITZ            We have lots of hay in the meadow. You would enjoy it, DONKEY. We could do with a CAT, a DOG, and a DONKEY on the farm, too. Will you come back with us, RUDI, and your FRIENDS with you?
- ROOSTER        I will. Will you come, too, my FRIENDS?
- CAT              Thank you, we'd love to.
- DOG              It sounds like a great offer.
- DONKEY          Sounds good to me, too.

LIESL        We've brought food for a picnic. Let's have our picnic, and then we'll listen to your songs.

*(The FARMERS and ANIMALS start to arrange the picnic, while the HENS peck at the soil. No one notices that the GANG of THIEVES has surreptitiously appeared behind some trees, watching the proceedings. They stay for a short time, then disappear into the forest.)*

END OF SCENE for the PLAY

*For the Musical:*

ROOSTER    I've told CAT about your singing, and he would love to hear you. In fact, we ALL would.

HENS        Oh, that's good. We're in a mood for singing.

*(The HENS gather for the song, "Each New Day", singing the Refrain and Verse 3, with choreographed movement, Appendix B.)*

END OF SCENE

**ACT II****Scene 2**

*Setting: The clearing in the forest.*

*Time: Immediately after the previous scene.*

*At rise: The GANG MEMBERS are each bringing twigs and branches to start a campfire, then they sit around it.*

LEADER      So, what was all the singing and dancing about, do you think?

MEMBERS    Yes, what was the party for, I wonder?

Somebody's birthday, maybe.

At our old den. The cheek of it.

Where were the wild animals? I saw only tame ones.

Me, too, only domesticated ones.

Farm animals.

And no witches.

SCEPTIC    Of course! I told you there were no such things as witches, spells and magic.

RIKKI        I was so sure I saw witches and cats.

SCEPTIC    In the dark? You imagined it. You were scared.

RIKKI        I can't believe I got it so wrong.

SCEPTIC    Our imaginations can easily play tricks on us, when we are nervous and frightened.

LEADER       We must take the house back. Our loot may still be in it.

MEMBERS    After all these months? We'll be lucky.

We can easily fight them, or scare them out.

LEADER       Yes. EVERYONE find a thick stick for a weapon.

MEMBER     No! I'm against violence. We've never used violence before.

LEADER     So, how do we get the house back?

MEMBER     We could scare them, like they scared us.

LEADER     Right! We'll do that. The surprise tactic, with lots of noise.

END OF SCENE

**ACT II****SCENE 3**

*Setting: Outside the forest house.*

*Time: Same day at dusk.*

*At rise: LIESL and FRITZ are busy pitching the small tent they have brought. The ANIMALS are chatting in small groups. Snippets of conversation are heard.*

HENS           It was quite a long journey.

It took about half a day.

The scenery was lovely.

The world is so big outside the farm.

We were born there.

It's all we have known.

ROOSTER    I don't think the farmer knew I was taking a lift on his cart. It was a big help, as it gave me a rest. Like you, I got a good view of the countryside. It was lovely. The leaves were budding on the trees. Crops were sprouting in the fields, and spring flowers were peeping out along the way. What a beautiful world it is. I had no idea of it all till then. But, it'll soon be dark. EVERYONE get an early night. We're setting off early for Bremen in the morning, right after breakfast.

*(The HENS find perches on branches. The ROOSTER finds a higher one, The FARMERS have some kind of torch with them. The moonlight is the only light when they switch it off to go into their tent.)*

ALL           Good-night. Good-night. Good-night. Sweet dreams. Sweet dreams.

*(Silence.*

*The GANG of THIEVES creeps round the house.*

*Silence.*

*Suddenly...)*



ROOSTER    Cock-a-doodle-doo!

*(He flaps down amongst the GANG. The HENS follow in a panic. CAT, DOG and DONKEY arrive, making a great din, and encircle the GANG.)*

GANG MEMBERS    *(Flailing their arms.)* What's happening?

It's an ambush!

What's going on?

*(LIESL and FRITZ emerge from their tent, and switch on their torch. The moon comes out from behind a cloud, giving more light.)*

ROOSTER    Aha! The THIEVES have returned. What do you want?

LEADER    We want our loot.

ROOSTER    It's gone. We handed it over to the Bremen Town Council. It's being returned to the people you stole it from.

LEADER    We also want the house back.

ROOSTER    You can have the house back – on certain conditions.

LEADER    What conditions?

ROOSTER    First, you turn yourselves in to the authorities. You go before the judge, and face your punishment. It might be jail. You stop being ROBBERS, and lead honest lives.

LEADER    We don't know how to lead honest lives. Stealing is all we know. Nobody would give us a job.

ROOSTER    You could turn the house into an inn, where travellers could rest, and have a meal. It's not far from the road.

MEMBER    We could! Some of us are pretty good cooks.

ROOSTER    You could repair broken carts and wheels.

MEMBERS    That's right. Some of us are good with wood.

We could make wooden things to sell.

That would be a better life than the one we live now, always hiding,  
always afraid of being discovered.

What about shoeing horses? I love horses.

Me, too.

ROOSTER    There you are, then. There are quite a few things you can do when you get  
out of jail, if you put your mind to it. Is it agreed? Do you accept the  
conditions?

LEADER     It's agreed. We accept your conditions.

ROOSTER    So, what we'll do is this; we'll all go to Bremen in the morning, you to  
face the judge, while we admire the beautiful city, and sing in the Market  
Square. Morning can't come soon enough. I can't wait to get there. Good!  
Get some sleep now. We're all going to Bremen in the morning, straight  
after breakfast.

END OF SCENE

**ACT II****Scene 4**

*Setting: The farmyard.*

*Time: Two days later; afternoon.*

*At rise: Off-stage, singing is heard. It is the FLOCK, in exuberant mood, singing on the journey home. They are La-la-la-ing a German folk song, "Horch was kommt von draussen rein", Appendix H. The cart arrives at the edge of the stage. The FARMERS lift off a plank of wood, allowing the ANIMALS to alight. The HENS join hands, and dance round the farmyard to their own music. The DONKEY enters from behind the cart.*

ROOSTER     Oh, it's great to be home. Bremen was wonderful, but still, it's great to be home. I feel as though I've been away six years, not six months.

DONKEY     It's lovely here.

CAT         It feels like home already.

DOG         It does.

HENS         Bremen was amazing.

The Market Square.

The people.

The stage, where the Mayor spoke, and you sang.

The Rathaus.

The turrets.

The huge windows.

The arches.

The towers.

The statues.

The people loved your singing.

Did you ever expect to be on a stage, and introduced by the Mayor?

ROOSTER     Never! But that was because two of his Officials had visited us, just before you came. Travellers had told them of our singing, which they had heard from the road, and they came to investigate.

CAT             We told them how we had chased away the THIEVES, and gave them the loot to return to the people who had been robbed. That was why they invited us to Bremen.

DONKEY        What we did not expect was that there would be such a big celebration, on a stage, with half the Town Council there, dressed in their robes, and so many people crowded into the Square, to watch the items being handed back to the victims of the robberies.

DOG             And the variety of the market stalls! What was the sausage called, that some traders were cooking, that tasted so delicious?

ROOSTER       The Knipp. It smelled very good, too.

CAT             And the cheers when you told them we had brought along the BANDITS, ready to face the judge.

LIESL           The crowd was amazed and happy. No wonder! They did not need to live in fear of them any more.

FRITZ           You were heroes, even before you sang a note. You could not do a thing wrong after that. The applause was deafening.

LIESL           And the way they sang along, and clapped their hands in time.

FRITZ           And whistled, and yodelled, and called for encores.

DOG             We were all astonished.

HENS            The crowd loved your singing.

The “New Music”, they called it!

We could happily have stayed longer.

LIESL           We had a lovely time, but we needed to get back to the farm. We have a lot to do here. But now that we have produce to sell, we’ll be going regularly to Bremen.



FRITZ        We loved the visit, and the people loved you. Before we left, the Mayor gave us a special message for you. *(He waves a parchment document.)* You FOUR are to be honoured with the Freedom of the City, at a Grand Ceremony next month. You will be up on stage again. It will be a great occasion, with the whole Council dressed in their Robes of Office. The Mayor's is especially fine, made of velvet and silk, and trimmed with white lace, with the great Gold Chain, as you saw. Their Attendants will be there, Guildsmen, and other important people of the City.

LIESL        There will be speeches, again, and orchestras playing, and cheering crowds, no doubt.

ROOSTER     Will we be singing again?

FRITZ        I'm sure you will. The crowd is bound to demand to hear your "New Music" again. It will be another day of cheering and singing along. Maybe there will be dancing, too, in the Market Square!

LIESL        You will be free to do whatever you like, when you have the Freedom of the City.

ROOSTER     This is beyond our wildest dreams. I can't wait to get back to Bremen, but I love the feeling of coming home here afterwards. It's the best of both worlds.

LIESL        That is so lovely to hear.

HENS         Are we all going again to Bremen?

FRITZ        Certainly we are. The people love you all.

*(The HENS dance and sing again.)*

ROOSTER     That's wonderful. Three cheers for Bremen! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray! Hip, hip, hooray!

### END OF PLAY

*For the Musical: song, "Bremen", Appendix I.*

*Optional repeat of other songs.*

**END OF MUSICAL**