

FROM: CHILLIWACK ARTS
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High Resolution photo: [AxisTheatre_Hamelin.jpg](#)
Photo Description: Actors Andrew Cohen, Alexander
Nicoll, Christopher Adams, and Anna Kuman in Hamelin:
A New Fable.
Photo Credit: Shizuka Kai

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MASKS, RATS, AND A WHOLE LOT OF FUN - WELCOME TO HAMELIN!

A new take on an old fable turns the tiny town of Hamelin into a smorgasbord of fun - with a lesson about promises to boot!

Hamelin: A New Fable takes the stage at the Chilliwack Cultural Centre on March 8 at 2:00 p.m. in a marvellous mix of masks, dance, puppets, sing-a-long musical numbers, and audience participation. This comedy-twisting, heart-tugging musical puts a brand new spin on the classic tale of the Pied Piper - and is a whole lot of fun along the way.

The scene opens in 13th century Germany in a little town called Hamelin, and it all starts with a mean old mayor.

When he breaks one promise too many, twin heroes Celeste and Ralph decide to teach him a lesson - with the help of just a few rats!

“It’s kind of like a traditional British pantomime, where the audience gets to boo the villain and cheer the hero,” says *Axis Theatre’s Artistic Director Chris McGregor*. “The audience is very interactive with the show itself, and helps push the show along

in storytelling. It's a blast."

Clocking in at under an hour long, *Hamelin: A New Fable* provides the perfect introduction to theatre for kids of all ages - from five years old to five hundred!

"It's all rooted in real problems that kids recognize - there's a bullying story in there, and the main focus of the play is on what it means to break a promise and the consequences of that," Chris says. "In a way, we interpret those deeper themes into lessons for a younger audience - just like a classic fairy tale."

This new take on the Pied Piper fable flips the original on its head - turning the kids from victims into heroes, and taking out some of the darker details of the classic Brothers Grimm version.

"In the original story, the Pied Piper locks all the children in a cave, and then that's it. The kids are gone. So we couldn't do that," Chris says with a laugh. "Grimm's tales are very, very dark."

In this version, the Pied Piper is a good guy - an out-of-work minstrel who lives in the forest and makes friends with small animals after he loses his home to the Mayor's outrageous taxes.

With their beloved home similarly threatened, Celeste and Ralph decide to teach the Mayor a lesson - With the piper's skills and a magic flute, the children round up all the liars, cheats, and promise-breakers in town and march the mean people out of Hamelin - including the Mayor's mother!

"There's this huge twist on it where the kids are trying to solve the problem, and that's an empowering lesson we try to teach to the kids in the audience as well," Chris says. "They're just these two kids, and they're up against these giant corporation-type characters and told they can never win."

But Ralph and Celeste are determined, and creative, and with a little bit of planning and teamwork, they come out on top. It's a little bit of David and Goliath - and it's a whole lot of fun along the way.

"Audiences take pretty well to the invitation to be part of the show," Chris says with a grin. "I went to one of the shows and it was like a rock concert - the kids were screaming and yelling and singing along with the show."

"It's a pantomime. It's a clown show. It's a heart-warming tale. And they just love it."

Hamelin: A New Fable takes to the stage at the Chilliwack Cultural Centre on Sunday, March 8 at 2:00 p.m. Call the Centre Box Office at 604-391-SHOW (7469) or visit chilliwackculturalcentre.ca to reserve your seats: all tickets are just \$10.

Hamelin: A New Fable is proudly and generously sponsored by Save On Foods, Gidney Signs, 89.5 The Drive, KPMG, The Chilliwack Progress, the Province of British Columbia, the Department of Canadian Heritage, the British Columbia Arts Council and the City of Chilliwack.

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Additional Information

<http://www.axistheatre.com/>

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Chilliwack Cultural Centre

Owned by the City of Chilliwack, the Cultural Centre houses two unique performance venues, an art gallery, music instruction studios, arts and crafts studios, meeting rooms, offices, and is home to the Chilliwack Academy of Music and the Chilliwack Art Gallery. Since opening in 2010, more than 220,000 tickets have been sold through the Centre Box Office, with a value exceeding three million dollars. The Centre is overseen by The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society on behalf of the City, and boasts The Chilliwack Academy of Music, The Chilliwack Visual Artists Association, The Chilliwack Players Guild, The Chilliwack Symphony Orchestra, and the Chilliwack School of Performing Arts as partners.

Chilliwack Cultural Centre highlights:

- 597 seat performance theatre
- 168 seat recital hall / rehearsal space / dance studio / meeting space
- Chilliwack Art gallery (22-foot high display area)
- 21 music instructional rooms
- Arts and crafts studios
- Storage and Archival Resource Room

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Chilliwack Symphony Orchestra and Chorus
Chilliwack Visual Artists Association

The Chilliwack Arts & Cultural Centre Society is registered under the British Columbia Society Act as a not-for-profit society (society number S-54973), and is a registered Canadian charitable organization under the Canadian Charities Directorate. (charity number 805742897 RR0001)

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