Music IQ Songs

A new dimension in music for young people

presents

Falling Snow

an easy and fun
song for young people

includes
easy piano accompaniment
and
chord and fretboard symbols for guitar

by

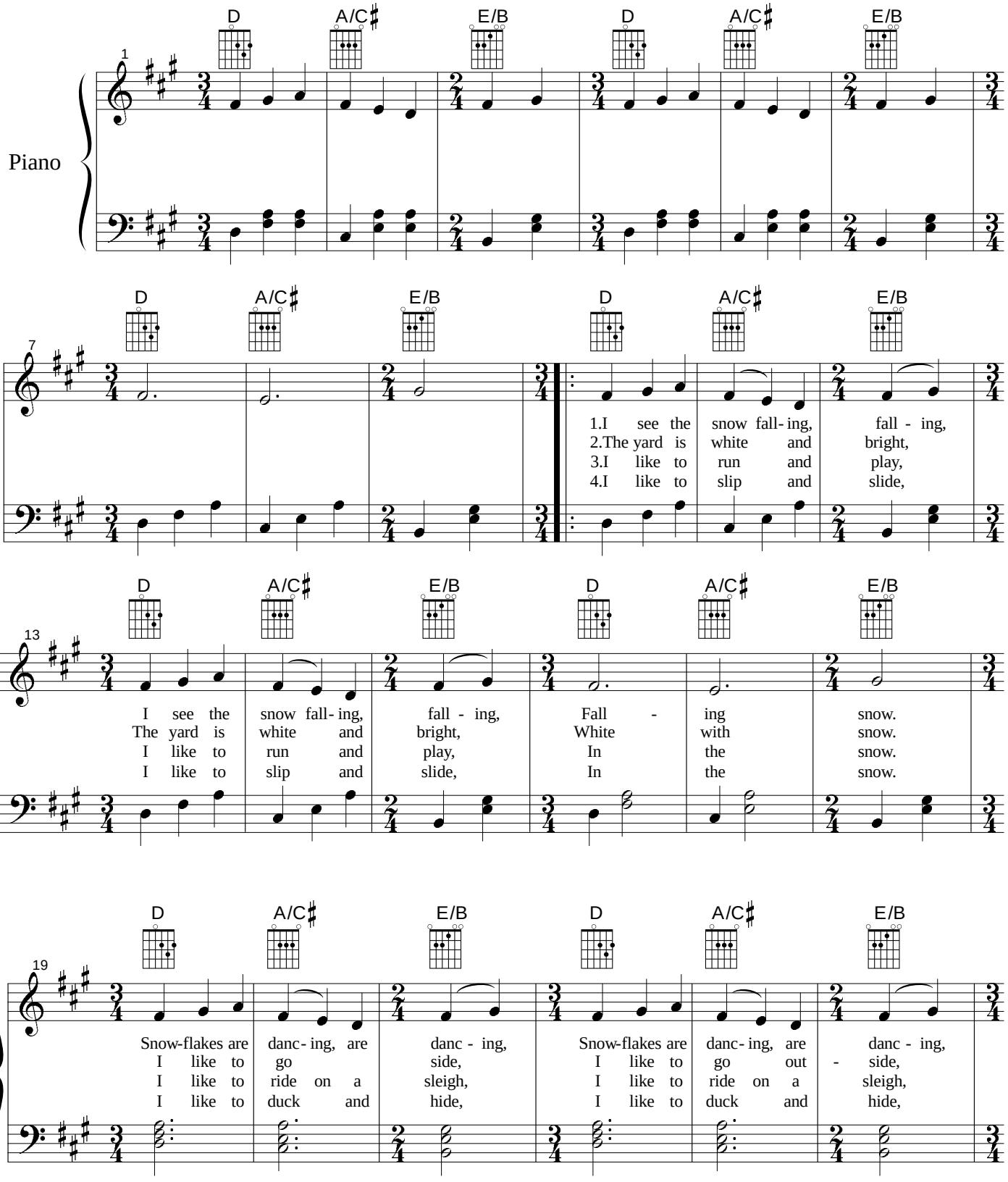
Brent Hugh

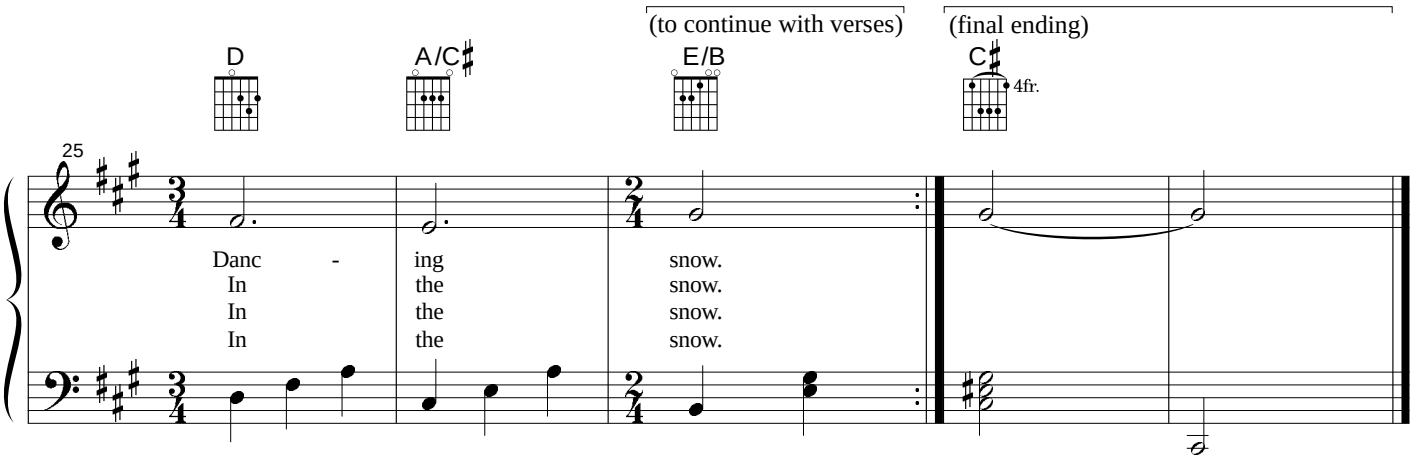
Falling Snow

Moving, 𝅗𝅥. = 76-96

a song by Brent Hugh
mixolydian mode, 3+3+2 meter

Introduction





5. I like to drive my blue truck, (2x)
In the snow.
I like to play with my duck, (2x)
In the snow.

6. I see the big yellow thing, (2x)
In the snow.
Scooping up big globs of dirt, (2x)
In the snow.

7. I like to see yellow things, (2x)
In the snow.
I like to drive yellow things, (2x)
In the snow.

The last two verses came about because we have large yellow earth mover parked across the street from our house, in the snow. Going to visit it does create some excitement around the house.

It is possible to compress the content and make two lines per verse, like this:

1.I see the snow falling, falling,
Snowflakes are dancing, are dancing,
I see snow.

2. I like to go out and play,
I like to ride on a sleigh,
In the snow.

3. I like to slip and slide,
I like to run and hide,
In the snow.

4. I like to drive my blue truck,
I like to play with my duck,
In the snow.

This song can easily be adapted to different weather and seasons. It can be a fun weather song that you sing every day about that day's weather. Examples:

I see the snow falling, falling (2x)
Falling snow.

I see the sun shining, shining, (2x)
Shining sun.

I hear the wind blowing, blowing, (2x)
Blowing wind.

I feel the warm wind a-blowing (2x)
Blowing wind. (also "cold wind", "hot wind", "cool wind", etc.)

See the rain falling, falling, (2x)
Falling rain.

I slip on freezing rain falling, (2x)
Freezing rain.

I see the clouds floating, floating (2x)
Floating clouds.

I see the colored leaves turning, (2x)
Colored leaves.

I see the leaves falling, falling (2x)
Falling leaves.

I see the green grass just sprouting (2x)
Sprouting green.

I feel the cold weather coming, (2x)
Feel the cold.

I see the lightning exploding,
I hear the thunder kabooming,
It's a storm.

This is a good tune for singing about nature--it could make a nice camp song:

Pine trees have hard pointy needles, (2x)
Pine needles.

Fir trees have soft squishy needles, (2x)
Fir needles.

Aspens have white bark and round leaves, (2x)
Aspen leaves.

Oak trees have jaggedy leaves, (2x)
Jagged leaves.

Moss on the north side of trees, (2x)
Mossy trees.

Buffalo grass comes apart, (2x)
Near the stream.

I feel the nettles stinging, (2x)
On my arm.

Lamb's ear has soft silky fur, (2x)
Rub it on.
(Lamb's ear helps cure stinging nettle--at least in folklore.)

I see the brook trout go swimming, (2x)
In the stream.

I see the full moon shining,(2x)
Shining moon.
(or new moon, quarter moon, etc.)

I see the Big Dipper pointing,
Right where the North Star is shining,
North star shines.

I see a big double-u,
Those stars are Cassiopeia,
In the north.
(Cassiopeia is a W-shaped constellation near the North Star.)

Vega is the brightest star,
In the summer sky,
Brightest star.
(The star Vega, in constellation Lyra, is the brightest star in the Northern Hemisphere's summer sky.)

Naturally these are just samples--you'll need to make up verses about the plants, trees, and wildlife in your area.

The Theory

These camp songs came about as a result of my doctoral research at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music into music preferences of different age listeners. This research had some very surprising and interesting conclusions about how to help young people become more natural and spontaneous musicians. Briefly, the research showed that:

• Music preferences become more set with age; for the general population of school children, music preferences seem to become quite set by the age of 15 or so. However, students younger than this age are amazingly open to many different kinds of music. In general, the younger the student, the more open the student is to new kinds of music.

• This hardening of musical taste with age is (surprisingly!) an important part of the learning process. Without this development of definite musical preferences, refined taste and discrimination cannot develop.

• In some groups (i.e., trained musicians) the hardening of musical preference happens at a much slower rate. Musicians may be quite open to new musical styles, even into their twenties and thirties.

• There are surprising benefits to developing an interest in a broad range of musical styles. (1) Musical prejudice is strongly associated with social prejudice; breaking down musical prejudices is a powerful way to start breaking down cultural prejudices such as racism and sexism. (2) The musically cultured person in the U.S. (and, apparently, most Western/European countries) is no longer a classical music snob, but a musical omnivore who appreciates quality in any kind of music from bluegrass to bebop to Baroque opera.

• Although hardening of musical taste with age is inevitable, it is advantageous to slow down the hardening of preference as much as possible. This is the way that the broadest, deepest, most profound, and most detailed knowledge develops (in music and in other areas of knowledge, as well).

• The reason for this is rather simple: knowledge is a "play of differences". The person with a broad musical taste has a wide field of differences in which to place any new piece of knowledge; new knowledge is seen in comparison and contrast with many, many previous areas of knowledge. Because of this broad range of similar but contrasting knowledge, the new knowledge is understood both in greater depth and in greater detail.

For instance, a school of first grade were divided into three groups.

Group 1: Trained to sing in major keys

Group 2: Trained to sing in major & minor

Group 3: Trained to sing in major, minor, modal scales.

After a year of this training, students in Group 3 sang songs in major keys better than students in both Groups 1 and 2--despite the fact that Group 3 had spent less total time singing songs in major keys. Group 3 understood major keys better because they had several similar but slightly different things (minor scales, modal scales) as a basis for comparison and understanding.

A similar study involved students learning songs using different rhythms.

Group 1: Sang in 2/4, 4/4

Group 2: Sang in 2/4, 4/4, 3/4, 6/8

Group 3: Sang in 2/4, 4/4, 3/4, 6/8, 5/8, 7/8, changing meters

Again, Group 3 outperformed both Groups 1 and 2, even in singing songs in 2/4 and 4/4. Group 1 was the worst of the three groups at singing songs in 2/4 and 4/4, despite the fact that they had been "specializing" in singing these songs for an entire year.

• Research shows that children learn music exactly as they learn language. That is to say, learning starts with listening--for many hours and years. Learning then progresses during a long stage of listening, imitating, and experimenting, during which skills are progressively refined. In language development, this begins with "baby talk", progresses to simple sentences, more complex sentences, and ends with fluent speech. In musical development, the imitating and experimenting stage of learning is best approached through singing--lots of singing, in many different scales, modes, and meters.

• Unfortunately, our popular and mass media musical culture favors a quite narrow range of music. Over 80% of music on radio, television, and the movies is in major keys and in 2/4 or 4/4 meter. Over 90% of music in elementary school music books surveyed was in major and 2/4 or 4/4. Over 90% of song topics on radio involve romantic love and/or sex (not only is this topic of little interest to young children, but even worse, the fixation on this one area of life--admittedly a very interesting one to older age groups--locks out expression of the dozens of human feelings and emotions that young children should have the opportunity to feel through music).

The Practical Application

What are the practical results of these ideas for parents and teachers?

• Young people need to be exposed to a wide variety of music, first by listening and then by singing. They should listen to and sing music in a wide variety of scales, modes, meters, rhythms, and tempos. They should listen to and sing music expressing a wide variety of feelings and emotions and from a wide variety of musical styles.

• Children should start listening to this variety of music at a very young age; the older the child the more set the preferences.

• Parents and teachers--who determine the listening agenda for young children--are older and, so, almost always set in their musical opinions. Adults should realize that much music their children should be listening to is going to sound strange, bizarre, off-beat, weird, or just not interesting to the adult. (Although adults who keep an open mind can develop new music preferences, too, and doing so is good for the adult for the same reason it is good for the child.)

• World musics, jazz, classical music, musicals, religious music, folk music, popular music from different eras (1940s, 50s, 60s, 70s, 80s, 90s) are all quite easily available and can help to round out your child's listening. If you start when your child is young, you will find them surprisingly open to a variety of musical styles.

• You may find that it is easy to work a variety of music into your daily routine if you make music a functional part of your activities. For instance, whenever you're cleaning up the front room, put on that "Classical Music of India" CD. When you're doing dishes, listen to a Big Band CD and while taking a bath, a Beethoven Symphony. Have certain songs you sing while you're getting ready for bed, combing hair, or getting dressed. "Music to help with an activity" is the way most every culture throughout the ages has used music, and you will find that using music in this way helps your child (and you!) keep on task, regulate emotions, and enjoy routine or boring activities.

• Music in different modes and meters suitable for singing by children is quite difficult to find. Most children's songs are in major keys and 2/4 or 4/4 meters. There is nothing wrong with these songs, but it would be ideal to have children sing and hear a wider spectrum of tonalities and rhythms.

My study on changeability of music preference involved 682 adults and public school students. Edwin Gordon has spearheaded innovative research (some of which is mentioned above) on the language model of music learning and the benefits of teaching young students to sing in a variety of scales, modes, rhythms, and meters. See www.unm.edu/~audiate/home.html. My conclusions, summarized above, rely on the work of many, many researchers--far too many to be cited on this brief page. A complete list of studies cited can be found at oz.sunflower.org/~bhugh/musiciq.spm.

The Songs

With these ideas in mind, I began making a series of songs for my four-year-old son Jonathan. They are designed to be in a variety of scales, modes, rhythms, and meters--the ones found less often in the usual children's songs. They were made to fit specific interests of Jonathan, and in fact he helped choose the topics and words for many of them.

At the same time, the songs are designed to be flexible and adaptable, so that teachers, parents, and children in other situations can use the tunes and adapt the words to their interests. In particular, I have tried to give enough options to make the songs useful at home, at school, and at camps.
In addition, I have tried to give options to make the songs simple enough to be singable by younger children, yet fun and engaging for older children as well.

Teaching this song

You might try chanting the words as well as singing them. Clapping or patsching (clapping hands against legs) can also be fun.

Recordings of this and other Music IQ Songs can be found at mp3.com/MusicIQ.

Be sure to have children make up their own verses to the song (help them if necessary, but even small children can suggest topics for verses). Singing your own words is a lot more fun than singing pre-printed words. Making your own words is a big step in making the music your own.

The Accompaniment

For variety's sake, the piano accompaniment changes several times. If these changes are difficult for you, simply pick a simple left-hand pattern and continue it throughout the piece.

If singers or conductor need a moment between verses (perhaps to think of the next verse or to line out the next verse to the singers), the accompanist can play the introduction before each verse.

The Free Music Philosophy

If you wish to support the composer of this music, the best and easiest way to do so is to visit one of the internet sites listed below and listen to some music or purchase a CD.

Internet Sites

- **mp3.com/MusicIQ** - free downloadable Music IQ recordings, CDs, free Music IQ sheet music, and information.
- **mp3.com/brent_d_hugh** - classical piano recordings by Brent Hugh
- **mp3.com/VictorianChristmas** - Victorian-era Christmas Carols
- **oz.sunflower.org/~bhugh/pathetic.spm** - various sheet music, recordings, and other music-related items--many free for the download--by Brent Hugh

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