

Music IQ Songs

A new dimension in music for young people

presents

Rings Go On my finger

**an easy and fun
song for young people**

**includes
easy piano accompaniment
and
chord and fretboard symbols for guitar**

**by
Brent Hugh**

Rings Go On My Finger

Moving, $\text{♩} = 76-96$

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

Introduction

Piano

1
Emin Dmin C Dmin Emin

7
Emin F Emin F

1. Rings go on my finger,
2. Watch - es go on arms,
3. Hats go on my head,
4. Socks go on my feet,

Rings go on my finger,
Watch - es go on arms,
Hats go on my head,
Socks go on my feet,

13
Emin Dmin C Dmin Emin

Rings go on my finger,
Watch - es go on arms,
Hats go on my head,
Socks go on my feet,

Bells go on the ring - er.
tract - ors go on farms.
hon - ey goes on bread.
cars go on the street.

Chorus

19
Emin Fm Emin F

Ev - 'ry - thing has a place, now, Ev - 'ry - thing has a place,

25

Emin Dmin C Dmin Emin

Ev - 'ry - thing has a place, From your toes up to your face.

5. Glasses go on eyes, (3x)
Swatters go on flies.
(or, Cherries go on pies.)

6. Gloves go on my hands, (3x)
Newspapers in rubber bands.

7. Pants go on my legs, (3x)
And cartons go on eggs.

8. Shirts go on my tummy, (3x)
Ice cream goes down yummy.

9. Pants go to the waist, (3x)
And pepper to the taste.

10. Belts go under my belly, (3x)
And bread goes under the jelly.

11. Arms come out of shoulders,
(3x)
Rocks come out of boulders.

12. Coats go on my back, (3x)
And ducks go on the quack.

13. Wraps go on my neck, (3x)
And cards go in a deck.

14. Combs go in my hair, (3x)
And clouds go in the air.
(or, for those with impossible hair:
And hair goes everywhere.)

15. Brushes go on curls, (3x)
And oysters go on pearls.

16. Earrings go on ears, (3x)
And bullies go on sneers.

17. Bracelets on my wrist, (3x)
And gorillas in the mist.

As in all the Music IQ Songs, the verses given are examples only and singers are encouraged to alter verses or compose.

This is an especially fun song to make your own verses to. You can pick your own topic and make up verses to go with that topic. The idea is that the first line stays on-topic while the second line is a nonsense phrase just to round out the rhyme. You can also make a chorus to fit your particular subject. For instance, if I picked the topic "animal groups" I might come up with this:

1. Birds go in flocks, (3x)
Minerals go in rocks.

2. Buffalo go in herds, (3x)
And earthworms go in birds.

etc.

(chorus)
Animals have their place, now,
Animals have their place,
Animals have their place,
So does the human race.

On the subject "what things go on" you might sing something like this:

1. Big trucks go on wheels, (3x)
Whiskers go on seals.

2. Horses go on hooves, (3x)
Shingles go on roofs.

3. Fishes go on flippers, (3x)
Grandmas go in slippers.

(chorus)
Everything goes on something,
Hooves or wings or toes,
Everything goes on something,
That's how the world goes.

If you like to have more words in each verse, you can sing it this fast-moving way:

1. Rings go on my finger,
Phones go on the ringer,
Watches on my arm,
And tractors on the farm.

2. Hats go on my head,
And honey on the bread,
Glasses on my eyes,
And cherries in the pies,
3. Socks go on my feet,
And cars go on the street,
Gloves go on my hands,
Newspapers in rubber bands.

4. Pants go on my legs,
And cartons on the eggs,
Shirts go on my back,
And ducks go on the quack.

5. Combs go in my hair,
And clouds up in the air,
Brushes on my curls,
And oysters on the pearls.

6. Earrings on my earlobes,
Judges in their robes,
Bracelets on my wrist,
And gorillas in the mist.
(etc.)

(chorus)
Everything has its place, now,
From my toes up to my face,
I don't know how things got there,
I don't really care.

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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.

It is tempting to try to turn the melody into minor by singing f# instead of f (on the words "so" and "us" in the chorus). Try to resist this temptation. It might be helpful to have a melodic instrument play along (or play the CD as you sing) to help keep the melody on track.

Teachers or parents who having difficulty mastering the rhythm or melody of the song should listen to the recorded version of the song several times daily for a period of days or a few weeks. The music, internalized in this way, will become much easier to grasp and to teach.

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

The Accompaniment

For variety's sake, the piano accompaniment in the chorus is different from the pattern in the verse. If the left-hand pattern in the chorus is too difficult, you can simply play the waltz-like pattern from the verse throughout.

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. If a longer break is needed, the accompanist can simply repeat the entire chorus before each verse.

The Free Music Philosophy

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Internet Sites

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- 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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