

# Using The Jolly Music Big Books

Tips on how to make the most of the Jolly Music Big Books from author Cyrilla Rowsell

## Visual Aspect

We are developing the children's knowledge and understanding through a multi-sensory approach and the *Big Book* harnesses the power of the visual aspect.

I think you need to use the *Big Book* judiciously; if you have it open all the time it will lose its effectiveness. Sometimes I wait until the children know a song or rhyme for a lesson or maybe two before I show them the picture. As with a storybook, every individual develops their own idea of the song/rhyme in their heads and there is a fascination in seeing how someone else has visualised it.



Sometimes I will show the children the picture and words BEFORE teaching the song, especially if some of the words may be a little tricky (for example, the second line of 'Burney Bee' in Level 1, 'Say when will your wedding be').

The children can identify with the children in the pictures. The illustrator, Karen Lamb, has been very clever in 'ageing' the children as the books progress through the levels. They like to see pictures where they can see children playing the same game as they have (e.g. 'Cuckoo, where are you?') and are very tickled to see dogs playing the 'Doggie, Doggie' game! (Both are in Beginners' Level.)



## Humour

Children love the humour in the illustrations. Karen always puts little mini-beasts in the pictures and the children love hunting them out. My Year 6 children were highly indignant, when looking through the Beginners' *Big Book* when it was first published (they loved being reminded of repertoire they had done when younger!), that there were three songs with no caterpillar in the picture! As a result, I believe every picture in the subsequent three levels has a caterpillar in there somewhere!

## Multi-sensory learning

Where the songs and rhymes have specific actions for the children to perform, these are illustrated at the bottom of the page. As the actions become more complicated this becomes more and more helpful.



Having the words of the song or rhyme can really help the child who is primarily a visual learner, and aids memorisation. It can provide a short relaxation from the concentration required by the intense listening in parts of some lessons. Even the very youngest children, who are not yet reading, can feel empowered that they are 'reading' the words when they are performing a known piece and the teacher runs a finger under the words as the children speak or sing. Doing this helps to reinforce the left-right nature of reading.

The children are reminded whether each piece is a song or a rhyme as this is printed at the bottom of the page.

## Phrasing and Structure

One of the things we are teaching is a sense of phrase, and the fact that almost always one phrase fits on one line helps with this. The child might refer to a 'line' or a 'sentence' prior to learning the word 'phrase'. Children can thus compare the length of different pieces of repertoire: "Is 'Teddy Bear' longer or shorter than 'Cobbler, Cobbler'?" Another musical concept that is introduced early on is the question-and-answer structure. This is made very clear with the printed words as the answers are always written in italics (e.g. 'Cuckoo, where are you?').





## Improvisation

A good way to use the pictures is to treat them as a starting point for a musical question-and-answer game. Using the minor 3rd (*so-mi*) interval (as in 'Hello, everyone') you can sing some musical questions for individual children to improvise a response, for example:



'What can you see in the picture?' 'I can see a ginger cat.'

'Can you see the naughty dog?' 'I can see the naughty dog.'

This also gives the children practice at forming correct sentences. You can add more pitches as the children learn them. When the children are more experienced your questions could perhaps use a melodic motif that is being worked on (for example, the *s-l-s-m* motif from the first line of 'Bounce High' in Level 2, or the *m-r-d* motif from the first line of 'Hot Cross Buns' in Level 3).

## Reinforcement

The hearts above the words in the *Big Book* represent the beats (or 'pulse'), and can be very helpful when you're working on pulse and rhythm. After you have been asking questions such as, 'How many beats were in the first phrase?' you can have the children look at the book in order to check their answers. Once children have learned to tap the hearts ('heartbeats') drawn on the board in time with the pulse they can do the same thing on the appropriate page of the *Big Book*.

When the children come to work on the difference between pulse and rhythm, they can look at the *Big Book* to see how sometimes one word and sometimes two fit into one beat.

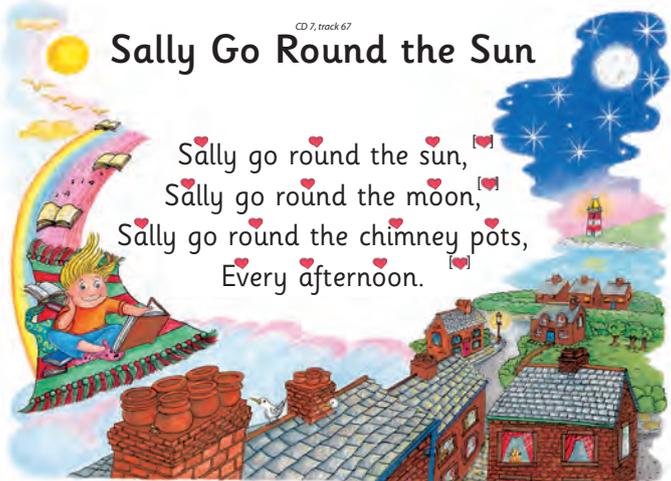
Where there are rests in the songs ('Pease Pudding Hot' in Beginners' Level, for example), these are very clearly shown by hearts drawn inside brackets. I recently used the song 'Sally Go Round the Sun' (Level 1) prior to the children being introduced to the concept of the rest, and one child said, 'Why are there some hearts in brackets?' I said, 'Can you work out why?' and straight away he said, 'Oh, it's where there's a beat with no words'!



CD 7, track 67  
**Sally Go Round the Sun**

Sally go round the sun,   
 Sally go round the moon,   
 Sally go round the chimney pots,   
 Every afternoon. 

 Song 




If you're a specialist music teacher who sees the children for only a short time each week, it's an excellent idea to give the *Big Book* to their class teacher. Repetition is the mother of learning and if the class teacher can go through the week's songs and rhymes with the aid of the *Big Book* (and the CD of the repertoire from *The Music Handbook* if needed) then the children will make quicker progress.



View videos of Jolly Music in action:  
[www.youtube.com/user/jollylearning](http://www.youtube.com/user/jollylearning)