

Bow Wow Wow

♩~ 112

Form: A(a a⁺3) B(b c)

Known as "Caesar's Song" in *Mother Goose's Melody*, 1760

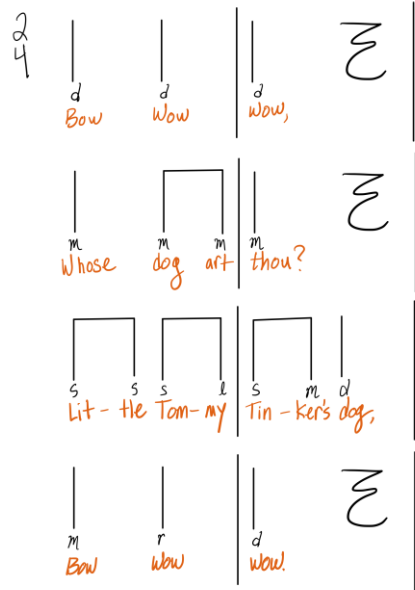
Melody and game from Irene Moses, 1915

Song Type: Singing Game

Form Type: Barform

Toneset: **drm sl**

Scale Type: Pentatonic



Standing circle, facing partners:

Bow wow wow (*shaming finger towards partner 3x*)

Whose dog art thou? (*shrugging motion*)

Little Tommy Tinker's/Tucker's Dog (*take hands and change places*)

Bow wow wow (*pump hands 3x, then drop hands and do a half-turn jump*)

**These are my moves, and they vary slightly from the source.*

Source for text:

Newbery, J. (1760). *Mother Goose's melody*. London: John Newbery.

Source for melody:

Moseley, M. (1934). *Rhythmic action plays and dances: For children's theatre and playground* (p. 109). A. S. Barnes & Company. <https://archive.org/details/rhythmicaction00mose>

What stands out to me pedagogically:

Rhythm: Motives with quarter rest

Melody: *d-m-s*. Any pentatonic song such as this one that both outlines the *d-m-s* triad and contains the *mrd* stepwise motive is good for aurally differentiating between steps and skips.

Contextual Information

This text, with the name Tommy *Tinker*, is original to the earliest Mother Goose publication, which was called “Mother Goose’s Melody.” (For a concise history of Mother Goose, see this Encyclopedia Britannica article ([link](#))). The melody, however, is printed in a book by Irene Moses (1915). This singing game is well documented in the Holy Names Collection ([link](#)) and remains a perennial favorite among children.

Iona and Peter Opie discussed the satirical history of the lyrics, and I’ve pasted their discussion below.

Dog

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Bow, wow, wow,
Whose dog art thou?
Little Tom Tinker’s dog,
Bow, wow, wow.

In *Mother Goose’s Melody* this is titled ‘Caesar’s Song’ and carries the facetious note, ‘Tom Tinker’s Dog is a very good Dog, and an honestest Dog than his Master.’ The version JOH knew in 1844 goes,

How d’ ’e dogs, how? whose dog art thou?
Little Tom Tinker’s dog! what’s that to thou?
Hiss! bow, a wow, wow!

And the one Northall knew goes,

Fools must be meddling;
As you can plainly see—
I’m Mr.—dog,
Whose dog bist thee?

It seems evident that Pope had this rhyme in mind when he wrote the epigram ‘engraved on the collar of a dog which I gave to his Royal Highness’:

I am his Highness’s dog at Kew;
Pray, tell me, sir, whose dog are you?

MG’s Melody, c. 1765 / *Vocal Harmony*, c. 1806 / *Nurse Lovechild’s DFN*, c. 1830 / JOH, 1844 / Northall, 1892 / Gomme, 1898, part of a rhyme for a ‘Dingle doosey’ game, ‘Bow-ow-ow, fat dog art thou, Tam Tinker’s dog, bow-ow-ow.’

Opie, I. & Opie, P. (1997). *The Oxford dictionary of nursery rhymes* (2nd Ed., p. 117) Oxford University Press.

Note: JOH was James Orchard Halliwell

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Here's the Irene Moses (1934) source with notation and the singing game directions:

RHYTHMIC ACTION PLAYS AND DANCES

A BOOK OF ORIGINAL GAMES AND DANCES, ARRANGED PROGRESSIVELY, TO MOTHER GOOSE AND OTHER ACTION SONGS WITH A TEACHING INTRODUCTORY; FOR THE KINDERGARTEN, PRIMARY SCHOOL, PLAYGROUND AND GYMNASIUM

IRENE E. PHILLIPS MOSES, B. L.
(University of California)
GRADUATE OF THE NEW YORK NORMAL SCHOOL OF PHYSICAL EDUCATION

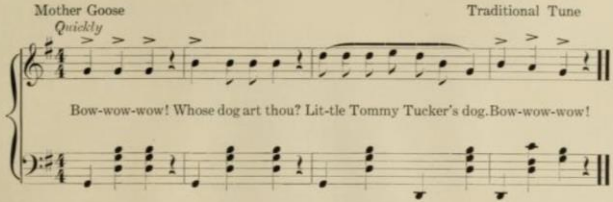


MILTON BRADLEY COMPANY
SPRINGFIELD, MASS.
1915

RHYTHMIC ACTION PLAYS AND DANCES 109


BOW-WOW-WOW

Mother Goose *Quickly* Traditional Tune



Formation.—Single circle, partners facing.

Bow-wow-wow! Stamp three times (right, left, right).
Whose Strike right hand sharply against left.



dog art thou? With a jerk point right forefinger upward, raising it about nose high.

Little Tommy Tucker's dog. Partners clasp hands and quickly circle in place.

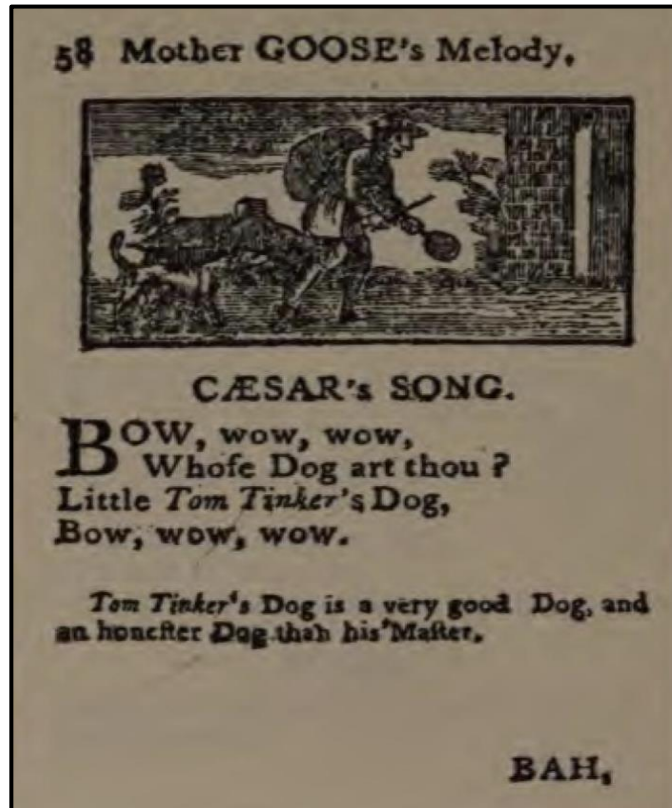
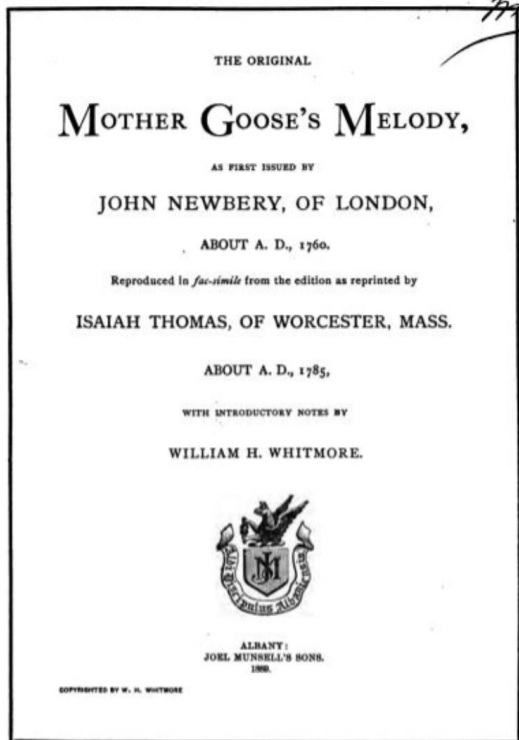
Bow-wow-wow! Stamp three times turning away from partner and facing neighbor.

Repeat same with neighbor, turning back to partner on final bow-wow-wow. The dance may continue as long as desired, alternately dancing with partner and neighbor.

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Newbery, J. (1889). *The original Mother Goose's Melody, as first issued by John Newbery, of London, about A.D. 1760.* (W. H. Whitmore, Intro. notes). Albany, NY: Joel Munsell's Sons.
<https://archive.org/details/originalmothergo00newb>



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Merrill, R. (1843). *Mother Goose's Melody* [Chapbook]. Concord, NH: R. Merrill. Retrieved from https://archive.org/details/McGillLibrary-PN970_M477_M68_1843-2002

