Cultural Study

Dutch Children's Songs

Kodaly Level II

Music Materials

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I chose to do a study on Dutch children's songs because I grew up in a community that mostly came from Dutch heritage. Many of the people I grew up with were either from the Netherlands themselves or were children of the people who had immigrated from the Netherlands. My grandparents themselves immigrated to Canada in the 1950s. My father grew up speaking Dutch in the home and went to school with no knowledge of English, even though he was born in Canada a couple years after they immigrated. My mother's parents spoke Dutch also in the home, although they made the transition to English much quicker. Both of my parents were able to speak Dutch and they used to tease us by speaking Dutch together when they didn't want us to know about something, especially around Christmas when we were trying to figure out what we were getting as presents.

Many of the members of my church are also of Dutch background and several of them have very heavy Dutch accents and are immigrants from the Netherlands. So the Dutch language and the Dutch heritage have played a part in my formative years and I continue to have an emotional response to the Dutch language. I have many, many fond memories of hearing my grandparents speak in Dutch and sing to us in Dutch. They would sing as their entertainment, around the dinner table, at parties, and as they did their daily chores. Many of the Dutch songs are word games in themselves – the words are silly and fun to say and many are nonsense syllables that have repeated patterns or rhyming patterns.

I wanted to collect recordings of the Dutch people in my community singing the songs. I do not speak Dutch so I need to hear a Dutch speaking person sing the songs and speak the text to me. This process turned into a delightful connection with my community. I first reached out to family. My aunts, who knew the same songs that my Mom sang to me, were a wonderful wealth of knowledge. They sang the songs for me and wrote down the lyrics. They helped me piece together the song snippets that I remembered, so that I could write down the entire song in this package. Thank you to Grace Smid and Teresa Boisvert for helping me track down and solidify my some of my fondest childhood memories.

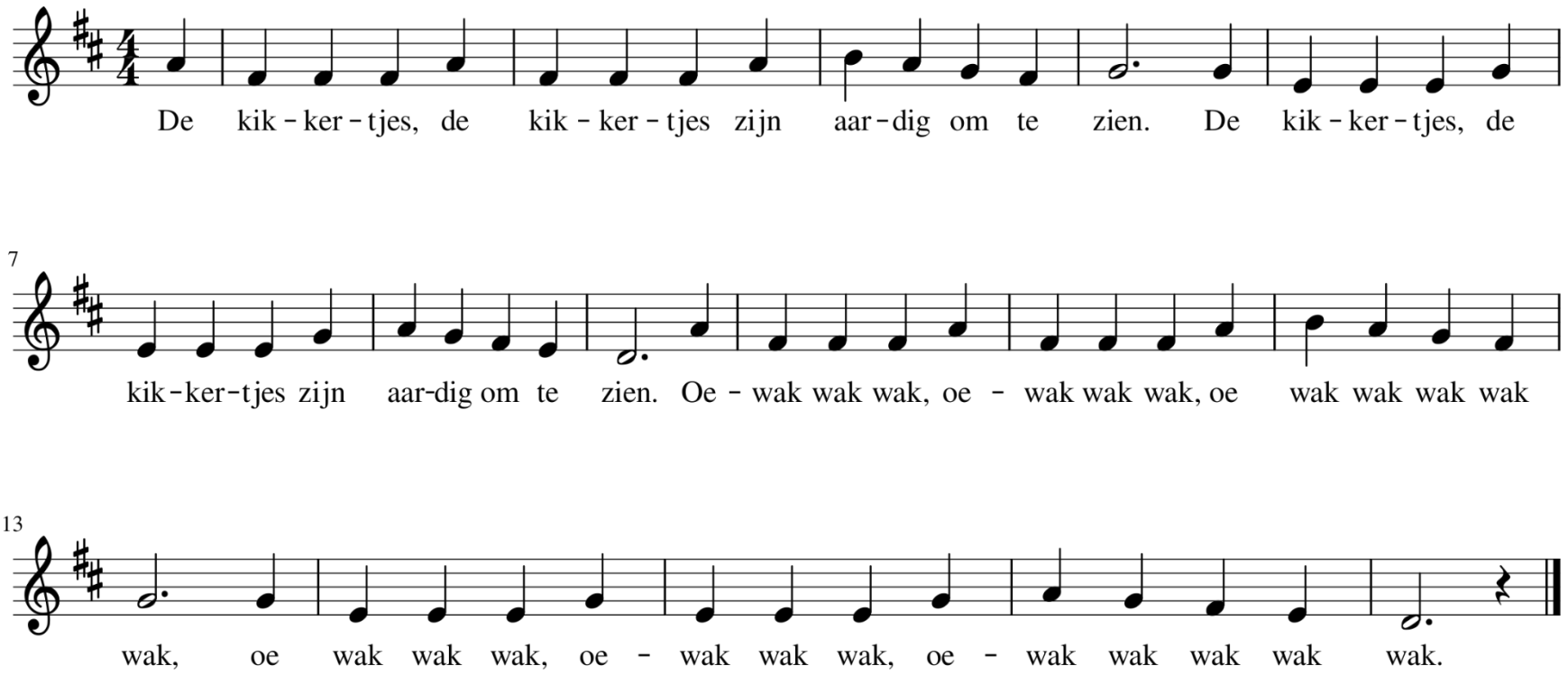
I also asked my husband's grandparents to sing some songs for me. They are both in their 80s, but they were wonderful. They sang several songs and even did the actions to the songs, much to my Opa's chagrin. Bill and Freda Smouter are a wealth of information and did a fabulous job. It is a treasure to have these recordings for the future generations.

I also asked members of my church to sings some songs for me. You will notice that some of the members are older, while some are quite a bit younger. It was really interesting to see how they tackled the songs. Several of them were from different areas in the Netherlands, so they often knew a slightly different version from the rest. They sang through it once to see where the differences were and then they sang it for the recording. I also would like to thank Lianne Schouten, Jeanette Wattel, Peter Wattel, Jacob Lenting, and Grace Lenting for singing so willingless for me.

My favourite recording session was with Dirk and Annemarie Bergsma and Ineke Vanderwerf. They are elderly Dutch people, who immigrated here in the 50s. The Bergsmas are in their late 80s and Mrs. Vanderwerf is not too much younger. They sat with the titles of some Dutch songs on an iPad on their lap and spent an hour singing through a bunch. They often knew bits and pieces of songs and would help each other through the song. Some knew the actions for games or had a personal anecdote to go along with the song. They even acted out a few of the songs, with sore knees and hips and all. As they were going through the long list, Mrs. Bergsma made a very interesting comment. She said that some of the songs that they were singing she hadn't thought about or sung for 60-70 years. She had done them as a small child of 6 or 7, and hadn't thought about them since. But she pointed out that she was able to sing them without even thinking too much. Once the verse was started, the words were right there. She marveled at the power of the human brain to remember songs from childhood many decades later. To me, this speaks not only of the power of the brain, but also of the power of music to speak to a deeper part of our brains and souls. The simple folk songs were so deeply a part of them that they could recall them and sing them with joy. They told me after our recording session that they enjoyed themselves so much. I loved my time with these people. Their love for music and their care for their heritage and their willingness to share with me was phenomenal. I feel truly blessed to have been able to record these moments and to keep these precious memories.

De Kikkertjes

Dutch children's song



De Kikkertjes (Wij Kikkertjes)

Dutch Lyrics	Translation
Verse 1: De kikkertjes, de kikkertjes, Zijn aardig om te zien De kikkertjes, de kikkertjes, Zijn aardig om te zien O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, o kwak, o kwak kwak kwak O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, o kwak, o kwak kwak kwak	The little frogs, the little frogs It's nice to see The little frogs, the little frogs It's nice to see. Oh quack, quack, quack…
Twee oogjes, twee oortjes, Een neusje en een mond Twee oogjes, twee oortjes, Een neusje en een mond O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, o kwak, o kwak kwak kwak O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, o kwak, o kwak kwak kwak	Two eyes, two ears A nose and a mouth Two eyes, two ears, A nose and a mouth. Oh quack, quack, quack….
In 't hoge gras, in 't lage gras, Daar springen zij in 't rond In 't hoge gras, in 't lage gras, Daar springen zij in 't rond O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, o kwak, o kwak kwak kwak O kwak, kwak, kwak O kwak, o kwak, o kwak kwak kwak	In the high grass, in the low grass There they jump around. In the high grass, in the low grass, There they jump around. Oh quack, quack, quack…

My Connection to this Song:

My mother used to sing this song to me when I was a child. She told us that her own family used to sing these songs with each other around the dinner table, while they worked, or just for fun. Many Dutch children's songs love the repetitive sounds, such as the "kwak, kwak, kwak" you find in this song. Many of the songs I remember as a child and that I have included in this collection are songs that have similar types of repetitive nonsense syllables that are simply fun to sing. My aunts helped me with the lyrics, as they are slightly different than the versions I found online. From my research, I found that this song continues to delight children today in the Netherlands. It is such a delightful song!

Resources:

http://www.zinget.be/producties/beestenboel/de-kikkertjes/

http://www.liedjeskist.nl/liedjes_a-z/w-liedjes/wij_kikkertjes_2.htm

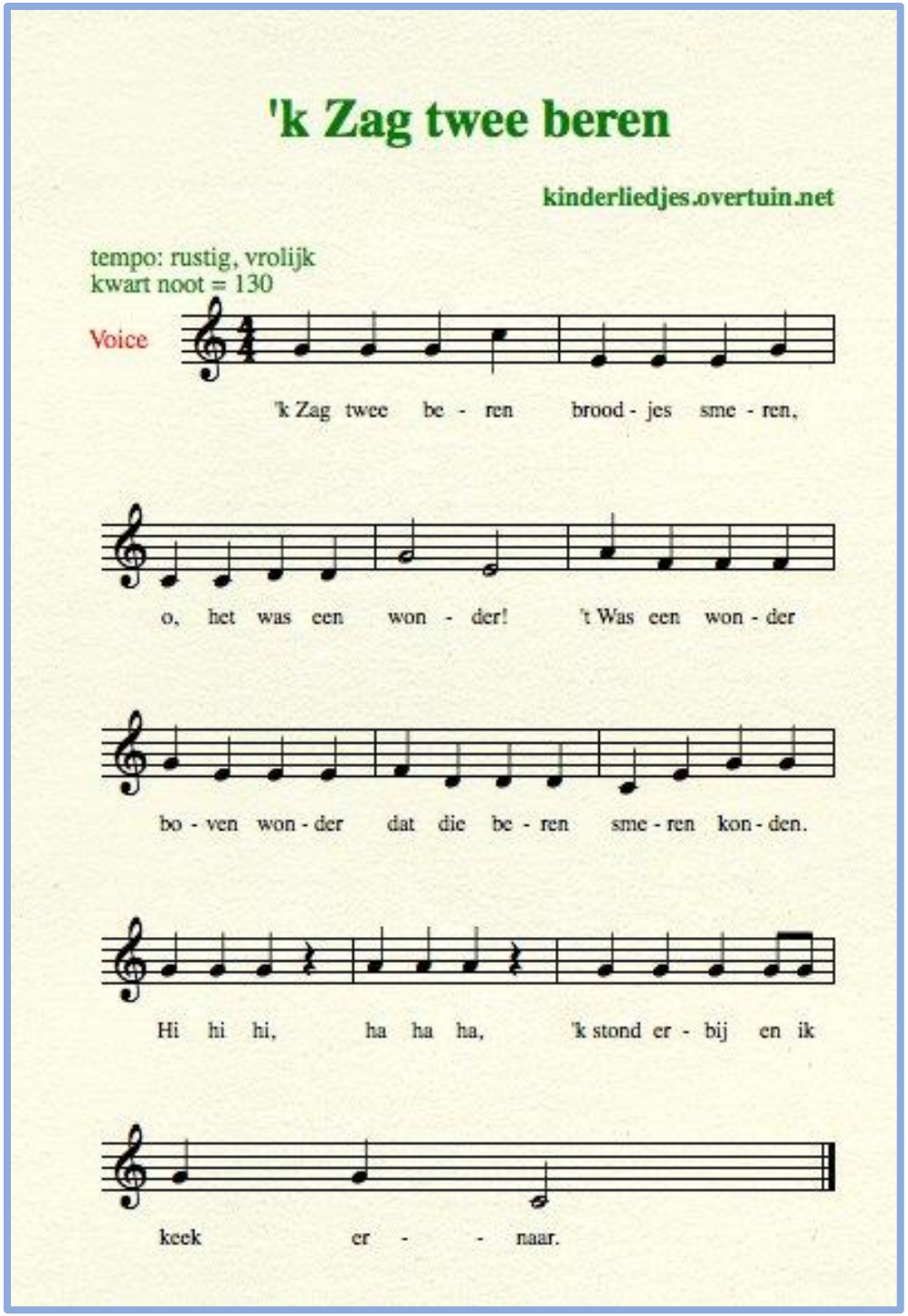
Recordings:

Young children performing this song with a simple dance.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=oq6JWQw5-ls

A versions I found on Youtube:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=otk3wg6oTd0



Dutch lyrics	Translation
‘k zag twee beren	I saw two bears
Broodjes smeren.	Spread (butter on) bread
Oh, dat was een wonder	Oh, it was a miracle
‘t was een wonder, boven wonder	A miracle above miracles
Dat die slangen, hangen konden	That those beans could spread (butter)
Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha	Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha
‘k stoned er bij en ik keek er naar.	I stood by and looked at it.
‘k zag twee slangen	I saw two snakes
De was op hangen	Who were handing up the laundry.
Oh, dat was een wonder	Oh, it was a miracle
‘t was een wonder, boven wonder	A miracle above miracles
Dat die slangen, hangen konden	That those snakes hanging laundry
Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha	Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha
‘k stoned er bij en ik keek er naar.	I stood by and looked at it.
‘k zag tween koeien	I saw two cows
Bootje roeien.	Rowing a small boat.
Oh dat was een wonder	Oh, it was a miracle
‘t was een wonder, boven wonder	A miracle above miracles
Dat die koeien roeien konden.	That those cows were rowing boats
Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha	Hi, hi, hi, ha, ha, ha
‘k stond er bij en ik keek er naar.	I stood by and looked at it.

My Connection to this Song:

This song was sung for me by my husband's grandparents, Bill and Freda Smouter. They are both in their 80s and they sang these songs in their childhood. They also sang them with their children. I also have a video of some of the members of my church singing this song for me. You can probably hear some background noise in the video. A small child was playing with a truck in the nursery. These people speak Dutch fluently and many of them have not sung these songs for years, if not decades. They had to discuss the versions that they all knew before singing, as several of them knew slightly different versions, depending on which area of the Netherlands they were from.

Resources:

Music retrieved from https://www.kinderliedjes.overtuin.net/kinderliedjes-met-muziek-z.html

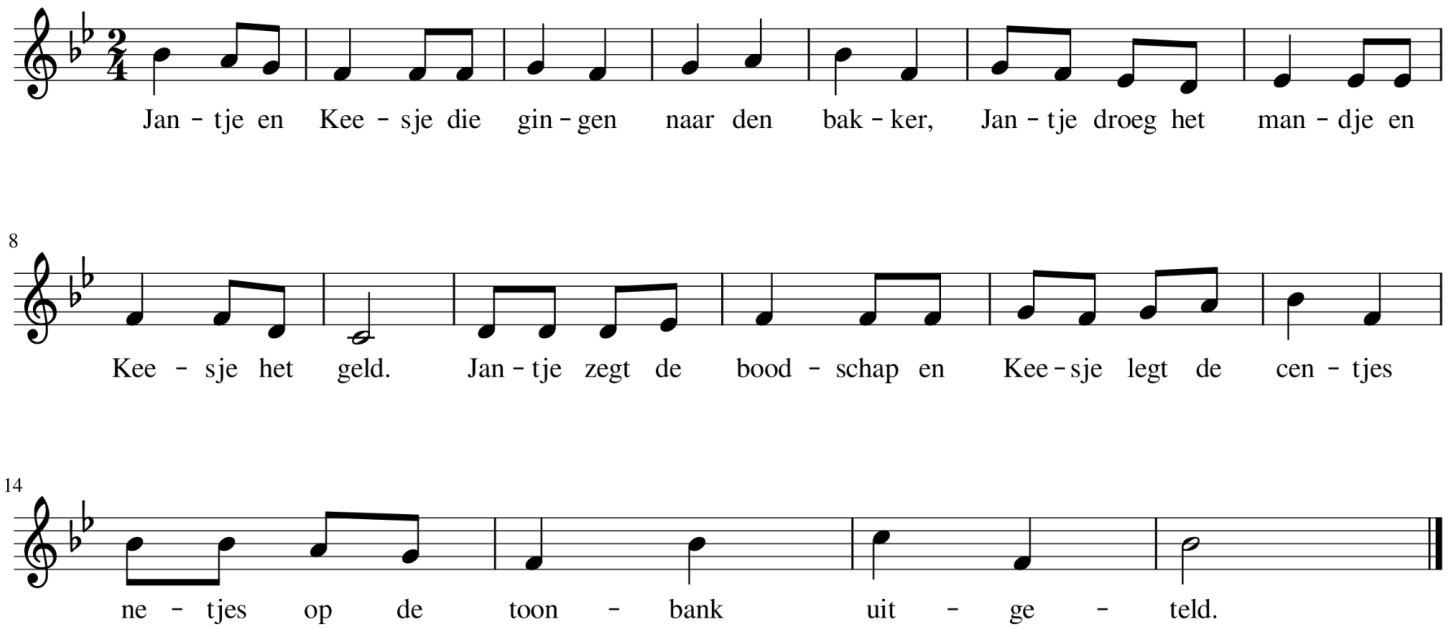
https://www.kinderliedjes.info/ik-zag-twee-beren/

http://liedjeskist.nl/liedjes_a-z/z-liedjes/k_zag_twee_beren_broodje_smeren.htm

Recordings:

https://youtu.be/9g6HH67o_IM

Jantje en Keesje



Music from “Altijd Nieuwe Liedjes Uit De Oude Doos” Ontworpen door Popje Hage te Laren-Gooiland.

Dutch:	Loose Translation:
Jantje en Keesje die gingen naar de bakker Jantje droeg het mandje en Keesje het geld Jantje zei de boodschap en Keesje had de centjes netjes op de toonbank uitgeteld Jantje en Keesje die kregen van de bakker allebei een koekje, dat lustten ze wel Jantje deed hap-hap en het koekje was verdwenen; Keesje zei beleefd: “Ik dank u wel”.	Two boys, Jantje & Keesje, went to the baker; Jantje carried the basket and Keesje the money. Jantje placed the order while Keesje had the coins Neatly arranged on the counter. Jantje and Keesje each got from the baker A cookie they really liked. Jantje did hap-hap and the cookie had disappeared; Keesje said politely: “Thank you so much”.

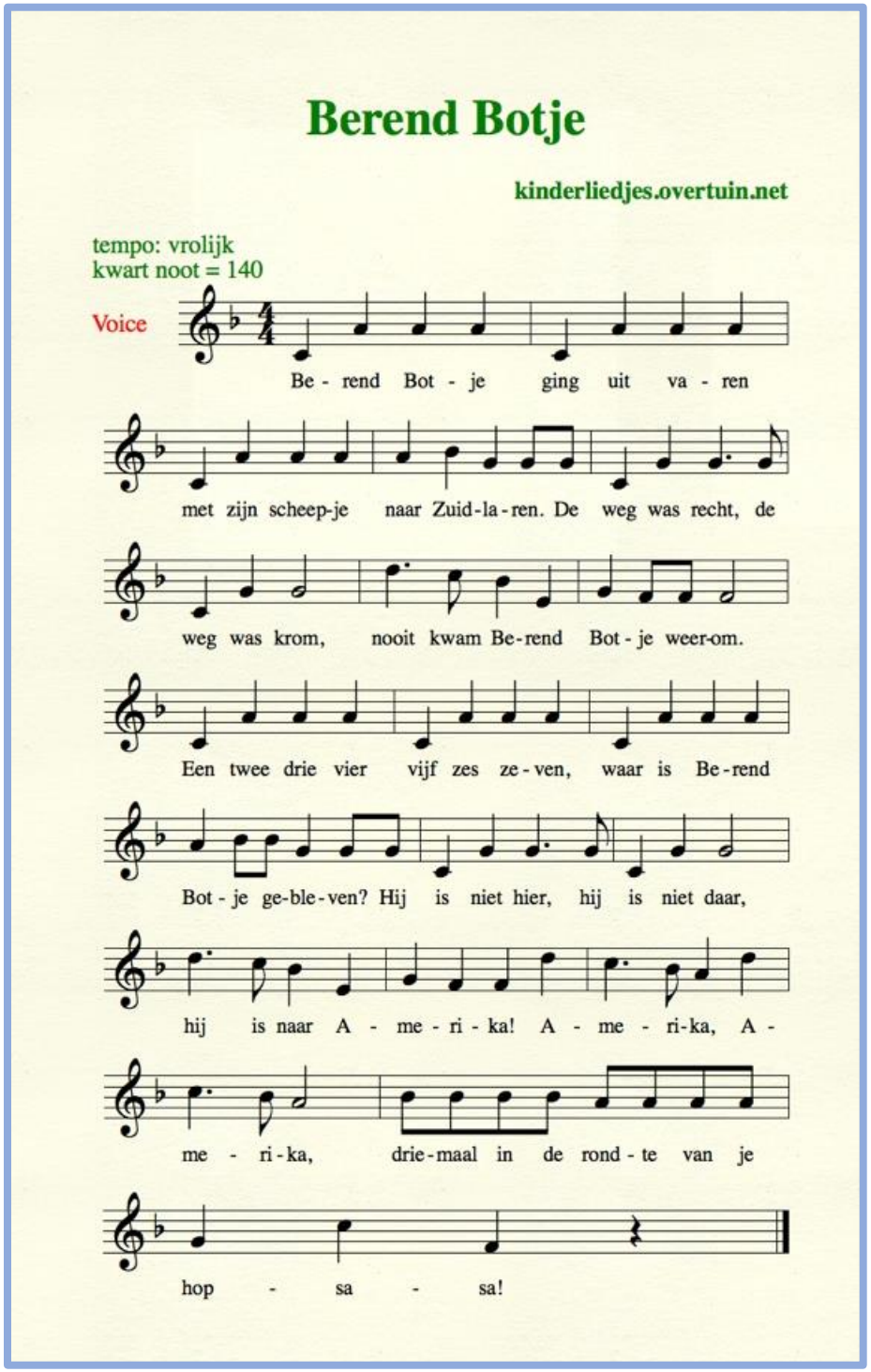
Dutch Lyrics	Loose Translation
Zakdoekje leggen Niemand zeggen Ik heb de hele nacht gewaakt Twee paar schoenen heb ik afgemaakt Een van stof en een van leer Hier leg ik mijn zakdoekje neer	Placing my hankie; Don't tell anyone. I've been awake all night I finished making two pairs of shoes; One of fabric, one of leather. Here I put my hankie down.

Game:
Children hold hands in a circle with closed eyes. One walks outside of the circle a few times before secretly placing the hankie behind one person in the circle.

My Connection to the Song:
This was sung for me by Bill and Freda Smouter.

Resources:
https://www.kinderliedjes.overtuin.net/bladmuziek-kinderliedjes-m-z/zakdoekje-leggen-kinderliedje-bladmuziek-02.jpg

Recordings:
https://youtu.be/QJzQFvH5q4g



Dutch	Translation:
Berend Botje ging uit varen Met zijn scheepje naar Zuid-Laren De weg was recht, de weg was krom Nooit kwam Berend Botje weerom.	Berend Botje went out sailing With his little boat to South Laren; The way was straight and the way was crooked. Berend Botje never returned.
Een twee drie vier vijf zes zeven Waar is Berend Botje gebleven? Hij is niet hier, hij is niet daar Hij is naar Amerika. Amerika, Amerika, driemaal in de rondte van je hop-sa-sa!	One two three four five six seven What happened to Berend Botje? He's not here, he's not there, He has gone to America. America, America. Turn around three times and go hop-sa-sa!

My Connection to this Song:

This song is one in the set of songs performed by Bill and Freda Smouter. The version they sing on the video below is shorter than the music at the left. They sing the first 16 bars and don't have the rest of the music in their version.

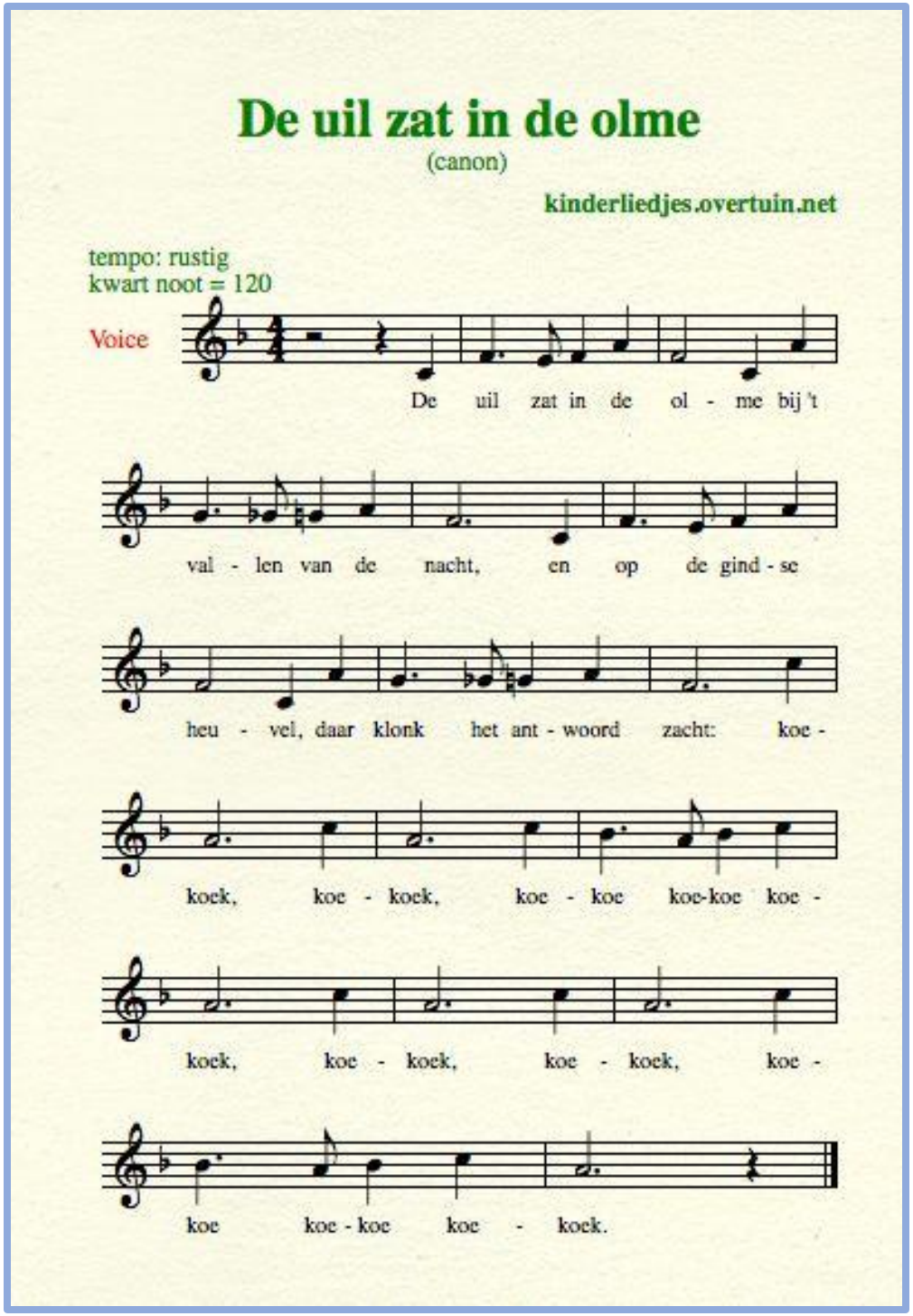
Resources:

https://www.kinderliedjes.overtuin.net/bladmuziek-kinderliedjes-a-d/altijd-kortjakje-ziek-kinderliedje-bladmuziek-02.jpg

https://www.mamalisa.com/?t=es&p=1007 Looking at Mama Lisa's website, there is a discussion about the short or longer version of the song. It seems that some areas sing the shorter version and some the longer version, as is reflected in the Smouter's performance.

Recordings:

https://youtu.be/0y9bysFiyIg



Dutch Lyrics	Translation
De uil zat in de olme bij 't vallen van de nacht, en op de gindse heuvel, daar klonk het antwoord zacht: Koekoek, koekoek, koekoek	The owl sat in the elm tree As it was falling to night, And on the far away hill there came the soft answer: Cuckoo, cuckoo, cuckoo

My Connection to this Song:

This song was sung for me last summer by my mother, when I was trying to find a canon to present in Pedagogy Level 1. She told me that she used to sing this song with her family around the table because they loved the sounds of the words. The "Koekoe" sound is very beautiful, especially when performed in the canon. I made a recording of her singing this song so I could play it for my group then, and this recording has a special significance for me as she recently passed away. This is the last recording I have of her singing.

Resources:

https://www.kinderliedjes.overtuin.net/bladmuziek-canons/uil-zat-olme-canon-kinderliedje-bladmuziek-02.jpg

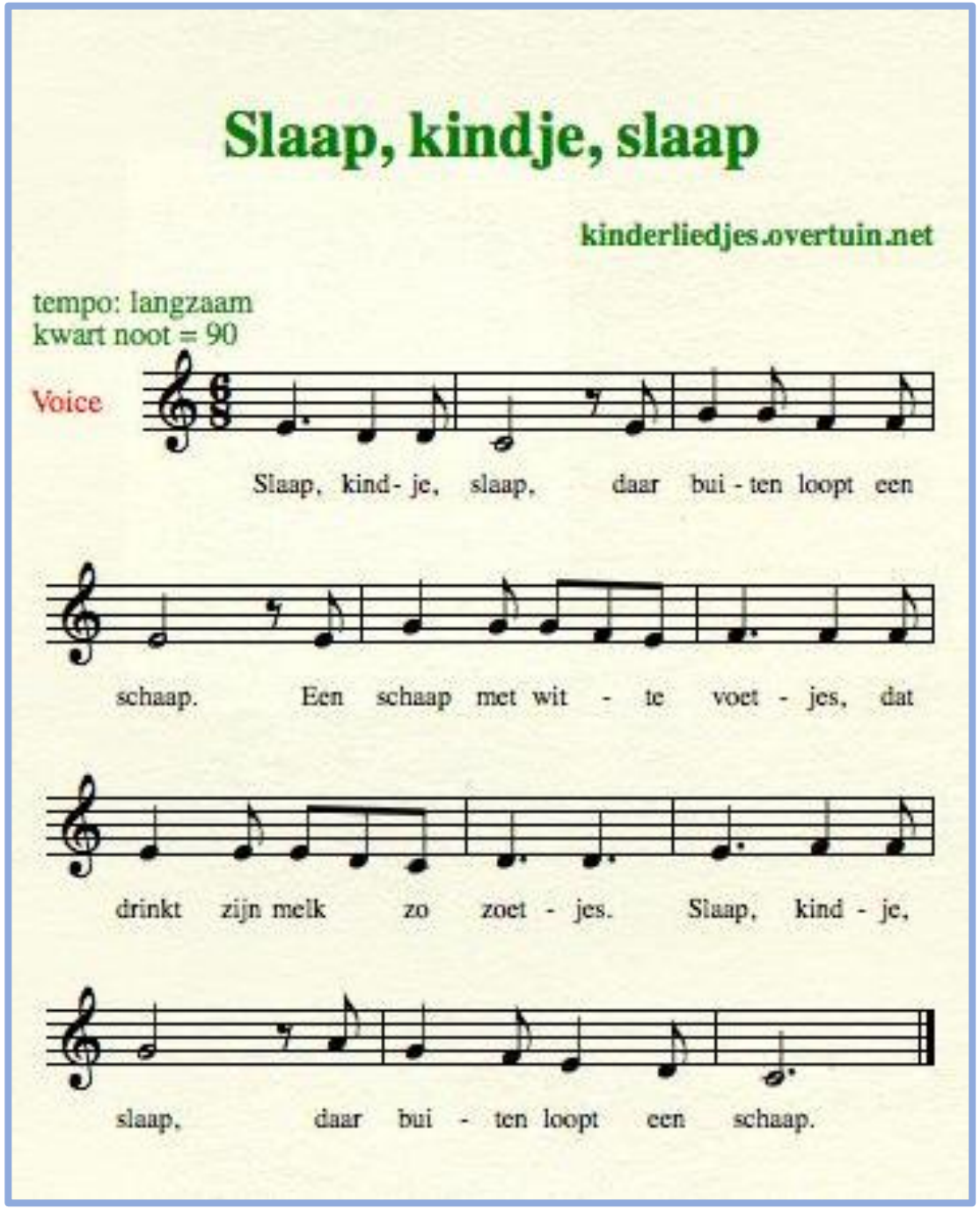
Recordings:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h5RbgOb0Eog

This version is slightly different, as the line goes down at the end to do, instead of staying at the me (fa-me-fa-re-do). This group performs the canon. You can find the alternate ending here.

My mom's version:

https://drive.google.com/open?id=1SwI1oTlMhgxYlaLkUWXSxT_99A71tX7j



Dutch	Translation
Slaap, kindje, slap, daar buiten loopt een schaap. Een schaap met witte voetjes, dat drinkt zijn melk zo zoetjes. Slaap, kindje, slap, daar buiten loopt een schaap.	Sleep, baby, sleep. Outside walks a sheep A sheet with white feet Who drinks his milk so sweet Sleep, baby, sleep. Outside walks a sheep.

My Connection to the Song:

All the groups that I approached to sing some song for this project decided to sing this song. It is a very familiar song that everyone knows and that is sung from generation to generation. The one group laughed at the meaning and wondered why a baby would be lulled to sleep with words about a sheep drinking milk. This shows that lullabies don't need to make sense in a literary way. The melody and the rocking feeling of the time signature makes it soothing.

Resources:

https://www.kinderliedjes.overtuin.net/bladmuziek-kinderliedjes-m-z/slaap-kindje-schaap-slaapliedje-bladmuziek-02.jpg

Recordings:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Ix2FhvAl73M

I thought this was an interesting recording, as she plays around with the phrases of the music as it is traditionally notated. She takes bits and pieces and weaves them together, adding in additional lyrics. It is a beautiful version, showing the traditional Dutch costume, as well.

https://youtu.be/ZiYSVwg3_JE

Sinterklaas kapoentje

kinderliedjes.overtuin.net

Dutch	Translation
Sinterklaas kapoentje	Sinterklaas (Kapoentje isn't really a word – it just rhymes with schoentje)
gooi wat in mijn schoentje,	Throw something in my shoe.
gooi wat in mijn laarsje,	Throw something in my shoe.
dank u Sinterklaasje!	Thank you, Sinterklaas!

My Connection to this Song:
This is performed by Bill and Freda Smouter. The lyrics refer to the Dutch Christmas tradition of Sinterklaas (Santa Claus) leaving a treat in the wooden shoes of the children who were good that year. My parents have a pair of wooden shoes and we would still receive special Sinterklaas treats on December 5th. My husband and I continue a few of these traditions with our son, as well.

Recordings:
https://youtu.be/2QKMKlJY9_I
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=pDzDJ1V6A0g This version has a picture of Sinterklaas on the video.

Ik ga slapen, ik ben moe

Dutch Children's Bedtime Prayer

Dutch	Translation
Ik ga slapen, ik ben moe, 'k sluit mijn beide oogjes toe, Heere houd ook deze nacht, over mij getrouw de wacht.	'll go to sleep, I'm tired I'll close both my eyes Lord, loyally keep guard over me this night
't Boze dat ik heb gedaan, zie het Heere toch niet aan. Schoon mijn zonden vele zijn, maak om Jezus wil mij rein.	The evil I did The Lord won't see Though I sinned a lot Make me clean by Jesus' will
Zorg voor arme kind'ren Heer', en herstel de zieken weer. Ja, voor alle mensen saâm, bid ik U in Jezus naam.	Take care of the poor children, Lord And heal the sick Yes, for all people together I pray to you in Jesus' name
Sta mijn ouders trouw ter zij, wees mijn vrienden ook nabij. Geef ons allen nieuwe kracht, door de rust van deze nacht.	Be loyally at my parents' side Be my friends near Give us all new power Through the rest of this night
Doe mij dankbaar en gezond, opstaan in de morgenstond. Als 'k mijn oogjes open doe, lacht Uw zon mij vriend'lijk toe.	Make me get up thankfully and healthily In the morning When I open my eyes your sun friendly laughs at me
Wilt u luisteren wat ik vraag, een nieuw hartje wil ik graag. Dat eerbiedig luisteren wil, en gehoorzaam volgen wil.	Do you want to listen to what I ask A new heart is what I want That wants to listen respectfully And follow obediently
In mijn bedje warm en zacht, sliep ik rustig deze nacht, en nu ik weer op mag staan, vraag ik Heer', wil met mij gaan.	In my bed warm and soft I slept calmly this night And now I can get up again I ask you lord, come with me again
Geef dat ik op deze dag, heel veel aan U denken mag. Leer mij leven zo 't behoort, leid mij door Uw Geest en Woord.	Give, so I on this day I may think about you a lot Teach me to live like supposed Lead me through your spirit and word
Amen	Amen

My Connection to this Song:

This is a bedtime prayer that I sang as a child and that I taught to my son when he was little. I sang it in English with the following words:

Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lord my soul to keep.
Lord be with me through the night.
And keep me til the morning light.

Now I lay me down to sleep.
I pray the Lord me safe to keep.
When in the morning Lord I wake,
Be with me then for Jesus' sake. Amen

This is a very common bedtime prayer for Dutch children. Almost all the children from Dutch heritage I grew up with had the same bedtime prayer, or at least a very similar version. There are many verses to choose from.

Resources:

Translation from https://lyricstranslate.com/en/ik-ga-slapen-ik-ben-moe-ill-go-sleep-im-tired.html

Recordings:

https://youtu.be/ma3237EzJ_o

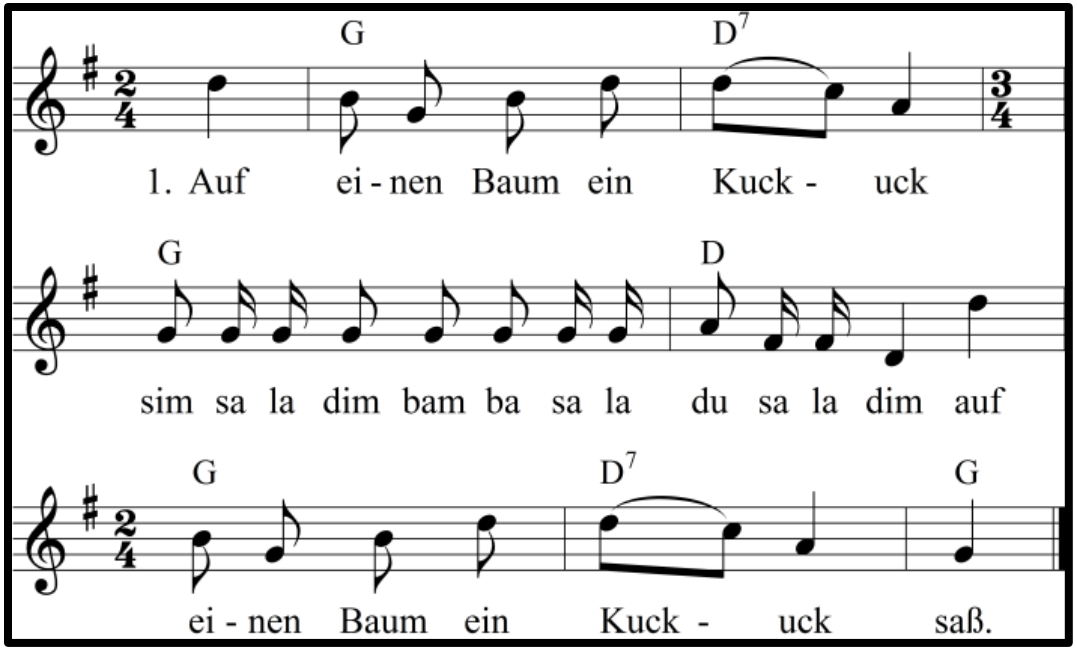
Op eene boom zat Jomieko

Dutch folk song

My Connection to this Song:

This is my favourite Dutch children's song! It is such a hilarious song to sing, especially when sung quickly and with lots of drama. The story is quite sad since the Jomieko bird gets shot dead in the end, but the Dutch have many songs like this. They often had very difficult lives and they loved to make silly songs about quite serious topics. One of the older ladies laughed about this when they were singing songs for me. There was another song that they sang in which an animal dies and it is presented in a very silly way. The singer is not supposed to get very sad about it, but to accept the death as part of life, which is was in the time the song was written. The older Dutch people that I know are still very much like this – in very difficult times they put a brave face on and press forward into life with hope and perseverance. This is part of what I love about my Dutch community.

As a young child, my mother would sing this with us and we would have so much fun with the last line. She said that they sang this song at any birthday celebration in her family when she was growing up. At the end of the song, the singers should repeat the "Simsaladim" part very slowly and dramatically, and then the last word "Bah" is supposed to be said really loudly in the craziest voice possible. It is such a hilarious ending and children absolutely love that part!



In my research, I found that this song was originally in German. The melody is slightly different than the one I learned as a child.

The music was found here.

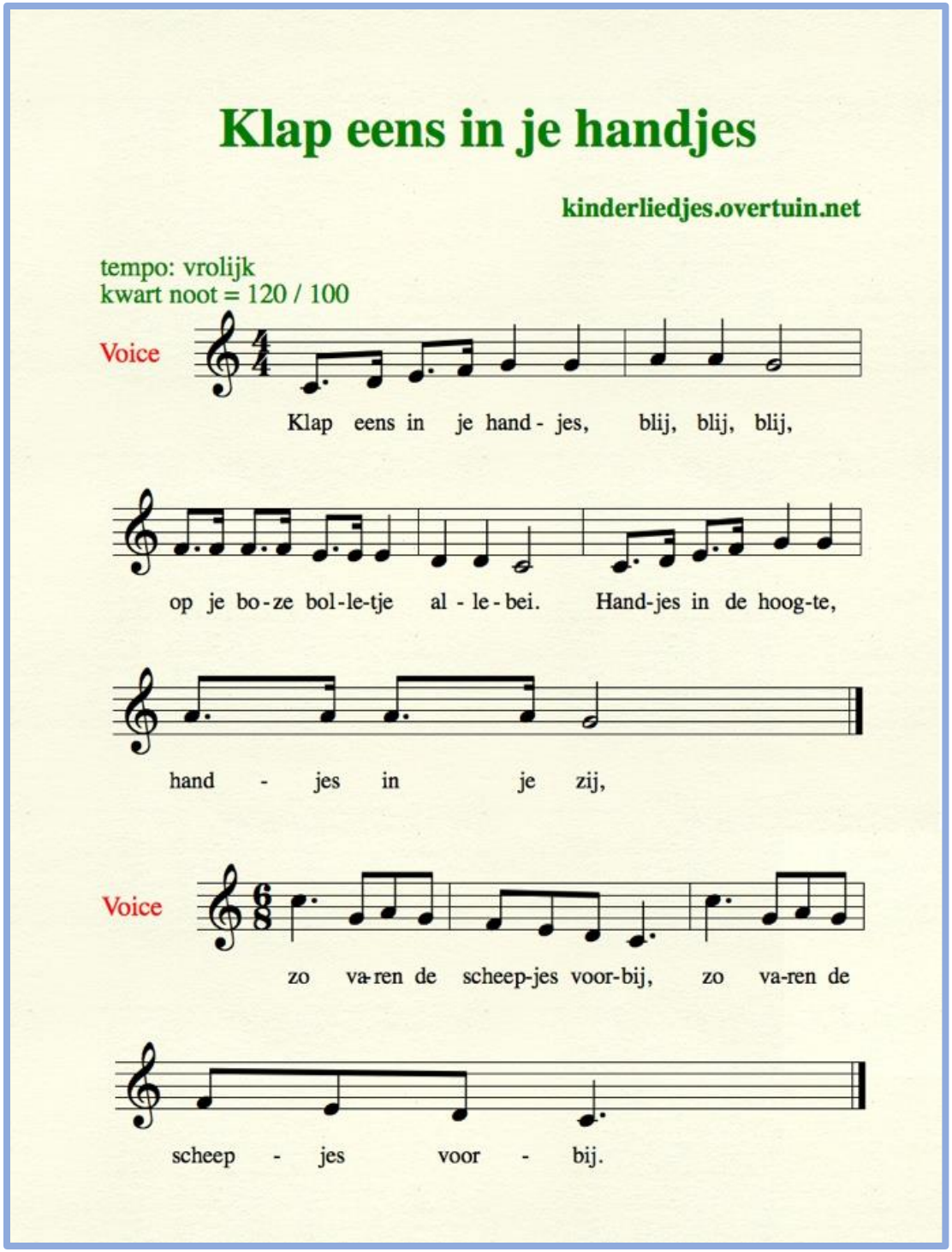
This is another alternate version in Dutch:

http://www.liedjeskist.nl/liedjes_a-z/o-liedjes/op_enen_boom_een_koekoek_zat.htm

Dutch:	Translation:
Op eene boom zat Jomieko! Sim saladim bom-ba, salado, saladim bom-ba, Op eene boom zat Jomieko zat. Toen kwam een jonge jagersman, Sim saladim bom-ba, salado, saladim bom-ba, Toen kwam een jonge jagersman aan. Die schoot die arme Jomieko, Sim saladim bom-ba, salado, saladim bom-ba, Die schoot die arme Jomieko dood! SIM SALADIM BOM-BA, SALADO, SALADIM BOM-*BAAAAAAAAA*!	On a tree branch sat Jomieko (bird), Sim saladim bom-ba, salado, saladim bom-ba, On a tree branch sat Jomieko sat, Along came a young hunter/farmer, Sim saladim bom-ba, salado, saladim bom-ba, Along came a young hunter/farmer to, He shot the poor Jomieko, Sim saladim bom-ba, salado, saladim bom-ba, He shot the poor Jomieko dead! SIM SALADIM BOM-BA, SALADO, SALADIM BOM-*BAAAAAAAAA*!

Op de Boze Bolletje

Dutch Lyrics	Translation	Actions: Sit with a toddler on your lap facing you
Clap een in de handjes van blei, blei, blei	Clap your little hands, happy, happy, happy,	clap child's hands together in front of them
Op de boze bolletjes van dei, dei, dei,	On your grumpy head, both of them	clap their hands on the side of their head
Handjes om hoog	Hands in the air	put both of their hands in the air
Handjes om lag,	Hands on your hips	put both hands on their side
Handjes in de zei,	Hands in the sea	put both hands down low
Zo faaren de schepjes voorbij (x2)	That's the way the little ships sail	sway back and forth



My Connection to the Song:

My mother used to sing this song with us when we were small children, and she also sang it with her grandchildren. I have many memories of her singing this song repeatedly with her young toddler grandchildren. They always looked forward to the end part, since she would let them fall backwards (while holding them). They would ask her to do it over and over again and she always obliged with great delight.

Resources:

The version that I am familiar with is slightly different to the one on the left. The one on the left is the version that Bill and Freda Smouter sing on the recording.

The music on the left can be found here.

Recordings:

https://youtu.be/wzKd6ld_EQU

Dutch:	Translation:
Drie kleine kleuterjes	Three little toddlers
Die zaten op en hek,	Who sat on a fence
Bovenop een hek.	On top of a fence
Drie kleine kleutertjes	Three little toddlers
Die zaten op een hek,	Who sat on a fence
Op een mooie zomerse dag	On a beautiful summer day
In september.	In September.
Waarover spraken zij,	What did they talk about
Die drie daar op dat hek	Those three over there on that fence
Boven op dat hek?	On that fence?
Op een mooie zomerse dag	On a beautiful summer day
In september.	In September.
‘t Was over krekeltjes	It was about crickets
En korenbloemen blauw	And blue cornflowers
Korenbloemen blauw	Blue cornflowers.
Op een mooie zomerse dag	On a beautiful summer day
In september.	In September.

My Connection to the Song:

This song was performed by some of the members of my church. They were so excited to sing these songs and laughed their way through each recording. They all knew the same version and they also knew each verse. I find it interesting that this song was known by several different generations in exactly the same way.

Recordings:

https://youtu.be/GwkSygjIxRE

A version from the Dutch version of Sesame Street:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zp5anawdSnQ

A general children’s version:

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=visip2Uve-g