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Hey there, and welcome to episode 101 of the Busy Kids Love Music podcast, a podcast for music-loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm thrilled to have you joining me today for our 4th episode in the summer series, Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music, where we travel the world learning about folk music from different countries throughout the world, collecting passport stamps as we go. Before we get started on our visit for today's episode, I just want to remind you that if you're a pianist looking to improve your sight-reading skills, be sure to check out my 5 Day Summer of Sight-Reading challenge at busykidsdopiano.com/sightreading. You're only able to join this challenge during the months of June and July, so it's just open for a little while longer, so be sure to check out the info which I'll also place in this episode's show notes.

So far this summer, we've stopped at Scotland, India and Jamaica and learned about the varied and rich music from these beautiful countries. I'll link to these episodes in the show notes in case you've missed any. Today we're headed to the land Down Under to explore the lively and captivating folk music of Australia.

Australia is a land of diverse cultures and rich musical traditions. From the ancient sounds of the Aboriginal people to the foot-stomping tunes of European settlers, the folk music of Australia reflects the country's vibrant history and unique heritage.

Our first stop is the mesmerizing world of the Aboriginal people, who are the various First Nations peoples of the Australian mainland and many of its islands. Their music is deeply connected to the land and tells stories of their ancient culture. One of the most iconic instruments in Aboriginal music is the didgeridoo. It's a long wooden tube that produces a deep, resonant sound when blown into. Do you hear it in the background of this Aboriginal dance show?

Isn't the sound interesting? The didgeridoo is made from a hollowed-out tree trunk and has been used by Aboriginal people for ceremonial purposes and storytelling. The unique sound it creates is believed to mimic the sounds of nature, like animals and the wind.

Accompanying the didgeridoo, you'll often hear the rhythmic beats of clapsticks. These are two wooden sticks that are struck together, creating a percussive sound. They're used to keep the rhythm and add texture to the music.

Now, let's fast forward to the 18th century when European settlers arrived in Australia and began to colonize the continent. They brought with them their own musical traditions, which eventually merged with the Aboriginal music, creating a unique blend of styles. One popular instrument introduced by the Europeans was the fiddle. It's a string instrument that is played with a bow and produces lively, toe-tapping melodies, such as this Australian polka and dance song.

Australian folk music often features lively dances such as the 'bush dance.' In a bush dance, people come together to dance and celebrate. You'll hear cheerful music played by instruments like the fiddle and the guitar. Everyone dances in pairs and moves to the rhythm, clapping their hands, stomping their feet, and twirling around.

While we're learning about the folk music of Australia, we must discuss "Waltzing Matilda", one of Australia's most well-known and beloved songs that is often referred to as the unofficial national anthem of the country. The song was written in 1895 by Australian poet and songwriter Banjo Paterson. This song is like a musical time machine that takes us back to Australia's past. "Waltzing Matilda" tells the story of a swagman, or a traveler, who wanders through the countryside with his belongings in a bag called a matilda. The song is filled with catchy melodies and playful lyrics that paint vivid pictures in our minds. We can imagine the swagman resting by a billabong, which is a small lake, and singing along to the tune. "Waltzing Matilda" is a song that captures the adventurous spirit and love for the Australian outback.

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As time went on, Australian folk music continued to evolve, incorporating influences from various cultures that migrated to the country. Today, you can find modern Australian folk artists who combine traditional elements with contemporary styles, creating a fresh and vibrant sound.

Whether it's the ancient melodies of the Aboriginal people, the lively tunes of European settlers, or the innovative sounds of modern folk artists, the folk music of Australia is a treasure trove of stories and emotions. It's a celebration of the country's history, its people, and the beautiful landscapes that make Australia so unique. Be sure to head to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/101 where I'll have your passport stamp for Australia, now that you've "visited" and learned about the folk music with me. I'll also share a link to a curated playlist that I've put together for you on YouTube, which will have video clips of some of the music you've heard on today's episode as well as other exciting performances of Australian folk music. Again, you'll find all that at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/101

Thanks so much for joining me today to visit Australia and learn a little bit about the culture and music there. In 2 weeks, we'll be visiting our fifth and final country for this summer's edition of Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music. I look forward to connecting with you then. Bye for now!