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Welcome back to the Busy Kids Love Music podcast! I'm your host, Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm thrilled to kick off our fourth annual summer series: Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music! This is where we pack our musical bags and embark on a journey to explore folk music from different countries, collecting passport stamps along the way. You can download your passport in the show notes at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/125](https://www.busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/125) and also print your first passport stamp as we head to the southern part of Africa for our first stop on our worldwide exploration.

Before we dive in, I want to remind you about what folk music IS, since we'll be spending a lot of time this summer listening to and learning about folk music from all over the world. Folk music tells stories about people, places, and traditions. It's music that has been passed down from grandparents to parents and then to us that helps us learn about different cultures, history, and the things that make each place unique.

Our first stop this summer is the vibrant country of Zambia, located just south of the heart of Africa. Now, why Zambia, you might ask? Well, my family and I had the incredible opportunity to visit Zambia back in April. While there we ate delicious food, saw Victoria Falls – or as the locals call it, Mosi oa Tunya – and had the most incredible encounters with wildlife. And of course, let me tell you, we were absolutely enchanted by the diverse musical experiences we were able to view and partake in while there. From the rhythmic beats of the percussion during a Boma dinner to the soul-stirring a capella hymns at a local Christian church on Sunday morning, Zambia's musical culture left an indelible mark on us.

We attended a Boma dinner during one of our first evenings in Zambia. This dinner is a cultural tradition in parts of Africa where the tribesmen protect and provide for their community by hosting a huge bonfire feast under the stars. During the feast, we were treated to music and dance from many local tribes, including the

Ngoni people. This is a tribe made up of great warriors that live in Malawi, Zambia, Mozambique and Tanzania. As the warriors prepared for war, songs and dances were an important part of their preparation. One group of songs was sung before the battles, and another group upon the return. I was able to see a few of these performed in full war dress with shields and spears – and my own husband and son were actually able to participate in learning some of the dance. Much of the words are sung sounds in the Zulu language, and accompaniment included stamping of the feet and knocking on shields. Listen now to an excerpt that I recorded from the dance we witnessed:

The bells that you hear accompanying the singing and chanting were tied to the shoes of the Ngoni people and the stamping of the feet as they danced was an important part in bringing those bells to life.

Another traditional instrument that I very much enjoyed listening to during our dinner was a silimba – similar to a xylophone. This wooden instrument has keys mounted over gourds and is played with mallets. Listen to some of the dinner music played by a silimba ensemble as we ate:

In addition to drums and other percussive instruments like the silimba, another popular instrument in the region is something often called a “thumb piano” which has different names depending on which tribe is playing it – some Zambian languages call it a kalimba or a mbira.

This thumb piano originates from Zambia’s neighbor, Zimbabwe, and is made up of metal tines attached to a wooden board, which are plucked with the thumbs to produce beautiful melodies.

Zambian folk music has a big influence on the music Zambians listen to today. Imagine it like mixing a special recipe with all kinds of flavors! People in Zambia love using the fun beats, catchy tunes, and cool instruments from traditional folk music to create modern songs that everyone enjoys.

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Churches across Zambia incorporate indigenous musical elements, such as drumming patterns and call-and-response singing, into their worship services, creating a dynamic and spiritually uplifting experience. The music you're hearing now is from a worship service I attended in Lusaka, the capital city of Zambia. This fusion of musical styles and languages not only reflects Zambia's diverse cultural heritage but also serves as a powerful means of connecting people to their roots and fostering a sense of community and belonging. Ultimately, Zambian folk music continues to be a driving force in shaping the country's musical landscape, inspiring creativity, and enriching the lives of people both who live there – and those who are lucky enough to visit!

Today you listened to a lot of my own recordings of Zambian folk music, but I've put together a curated playlist on YouTube of other examples of Zambian folk music. You'll find the link to that playlist in the show notes at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/125](https://www.busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/125). And you'll want to head to the show notes to print your passport and your passport stamp, now that you've visited the beautiful country of Zambia with me.

Thanks for joining me for our first stop on this summer's Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music. I look forward to connecting with you again in 2 weeks when we make our next stop on our world wide musical tour. Bye for now!