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Welcome to another exciting episode of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm your host, Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano. In our last episode, we kicked off our fourth annual summer series, Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music, by visiting the beautiful country of Zambia and learning about their folk music. If you missed that episode, I'll link to it in the show notes at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/126](https://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/126). You'll want to be sure that you listen to it and so you can print your passport stamp to add to your passport, which is also found in the show notes.

Today, we're heading to northern Europe to visit the Scandinavian country of Finland. Finland, with its vast forests, sparkling lakes, and mystical northern lights, is not only a land of breathtaking natural beauty but also of rich musical traditions. Finnish folk music is filled with stories, melodies, and rhythms that have been passed down through generations.

One instrument that often takes center stage in Finnish folk music is the kantele. Imagine a harp-like instrument with a wooden body and strings that are plucked with the fingers. Listen closely to hear the bell-like sound of the kantele.

According to Finnish folklore, the kantele was created by a god in Finnish mythology who was known for his wisdom and magical abilities. The first kantele he made was from the jawbone of a giant fish and a few hairs from a stallion. The beautiful music of the kantele attracted all the creatures of the forest who came to marvel at the music. After he loses his kantele, the god makes another from birch strung with the hair of a maiden, which makes music as equally beautiful and magical as before.

The kantele was used to accompany singing of traditional epic poems and stories. The instrument continues to be used, studied, and developed in new and modern ways in Finland today.

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Speaking of traditional poems and stories, let's talk about the Kalevala. Music is deeply intertwined with the epic Finnish poem, Kalevala, which is a cornerstone of Finnish culture and literature. The music draws inspiration from the ancient stories and myths found within the Kalevala, bringing them to life through music. Often characterized by haunting melodies, rhythmic chants, and evocative lyrics, Kalevala music transports listeners to the mystical world of ancient Finland, where heroes, gods, and mythical creatures roam. Through Kalevala music, Finns celebrate their rich cultural heritage and connect with the timeless tales of their ancestors, keeping the spirit of the Kalevala alive for future generations to cherish and enjoy.

Pelimanni music eventually replaced the Kalevalaic tradition and holds a special place in the heart of Finnish musical tradition. Originating from the rural regions of Finland, Pelimanni music is characterized by its lively tunes and spirited rhythms, often played at weddings, festivals, and other celebratory occasions. The term "Pelimanni" refers to a folk musician or a member of a folk music ensemble, and Pelimanni music typically features a variety of traditional instruments such as the fiddle, accordion, harmonium, and clarinet. Common dances in this musical tradition include the polka, mazurka, quadrille, waltz and minuet. What words would you use to describe the polka you're listening to now?

As you might imagine, a country as heavily forested as Finland means that much Finnish folk music is inspired by the natural world. Many songs and tunes are derived from the rhythms of nature, the songs of birds and the sound of the wind rustling through the trees. You're listening to a symphony composed by nature itself!

Finnish folk music is also deeply rooted in community and celebration. Whether it's a wedding, a holiday, or a summer festival, music plays a central role in bringing people together and marking special occasions. The joyous sounds of fiddles, accordions, and voices raised in song fill the air, creating unforgettable moments of shared happiness.

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Be sure to head to this episode's show notes at [busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/126](https://busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/126) where you'll be able to not only print your Finnish passport stamp but also find a link to a curated playlist of Finnish folk music. Many of the music is set to video and images of beautiful Finnish landscapes, so you'll have the chance to see the nature that inspires so much of the folk music of Finland. That's all for today's episode of Busy Kids Love Music. Join me next time as we continue our musical journey around the world. Until then, keep listening, exploring and creating beautiful music! Bye for now!