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Hello, Busy Kids! Welcome to the final episode of our "Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music" series. I'm Carly Seifert, the host of Busy Kids Love Music and creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I have had a blast exploring folk music from all over the world with you this summer. We've visited Zambia, Fiji, Finland and Argentina and learned about their rich and vibrant folk music. If you've missed any of those previous episodes or the chance to print a previous passport stamp from one of the episodes, I'll link to them all in the show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/129. Today, for our final stop, we're headed to the country of Greece. Grab your musical passport, and let's get started!

Greek folk music has a long and fascinating history, influenced by many different cultures over thousands of years. For a long time, Greek folk music contained one genre, known as Greek Dimotiko. Dimotiko literally means "coming from the people" and is traditional rural music, deeply rooted in the history and daily life of the Greek countryside. This music often features songs about love, nature, history, and even heroic tales. One of the key features of Dimotiko is its use of traditional Greek instruments, which have been passed down through generations.

Let's talk about some of these unique instruments:

The bouzouki is perhaps the most well-known Greek instrument. It's a stringed instrument, similar to a mandolin, with a distinctive, bright sound. The bouzouki is often used in both folk and popular Greek music.

Resembling a long-necked lute, the bouzouki typically features a pear-shaped body, a fretted neck, and is strung with either six or eight metal strings arranged in courses. Historically, the bouzouki's origins can be traced back to ancient Greek and Eastern instruments, evolving over centuries to its modern form in the early 20th century. It has truly become a symbol of Greek culture.

The lyra – also known as the lyre – is a small, three-stringed bowed instrument that is commonly used in the folk music of Crete and other Greek islands. Its sound is soulful and expressive, perfect for the emotive melodies of Greek folk songs.

This musical instrument holds a significant place in ancient Greek culture and mythology. Traditionally made from a tortoiseshell soundbox and oxhide, with strings stretched between a yoke and a crossbar, the lyra produces a melodious and resonant sound that was central to Greek music and poetry. It was often used to accompany singers and storytellers, adding a lyrical and enchanting backdrop to epic tales and lyrical verses.

The Greek santouri is another fascinating and unique musical instrument that looks a bit like a wooden box with lots of strings stretched across it. Imagine a piano without the keys, and you get the santouri! Musicians play it by striking the strings with small wooden mallets, creating beautiful, ringing sounds that can be both soft and loud. The santouri has a long history in Greek music and is often used in folk songs and traditional dances. It's a fun instrument because it allows players to create lively rhythms and melodies, making it perfect for parties and celebrations. The santouri shows how creative people can be with making music, turning simple materials into instruments that bring joy to everyone who hears them!

Now, let's move on to ****Rebetiko**** music, which is sometimes referred to as the "Greek blues."

Rebetiko emerged in the early 20th century in urban areas, particularly in port cities. It was the music of the working class and often featured themes of love, loss, and the struggles of daily life. The bouzouki is a central instrument in Rebetiko, giving it that unmistakable Greek sound.

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Rebetiko songs are known for their expressive and often melancholic melodies. They paint vivid pictures of the joys and sorrows of life, making them deeply emotional and relatable.

Greek folk music isn't just about instruments and melodies; it's also about dance! Traditional Greek dances are an integral part of their culture, and each region of Greece has its own unique dances. One of the most famous Greek dances is the **Sirtaki**, which some of you might recognize from the movie "Zorba the Greek." It starts slow and gets faster and faster – it's so much fun to dance to!

If you head to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/129 you'll find a curated playlist of Greek folk music that includes video footage of the Sirtaki, as well as other types of folk music and instruments we learned about on our journey to Greece. You can also print your passport stamp for this episode.

As we wrap up our journey through Greek folk music, let's take a moment to appreciate the beauty and diversity of music from around the world that we've had a chance to learn about this summer. From the joyful rhythms of Zambian folk music to the haunting melodies of Greek Rebetiko, music is a universal language that brings us all together.

Thank you for joining me on this musical adventure around the world. I hope you've enjoyed exploring different cultures and their unique sounds as much as I have. Remember, you can always revisit these episodes to relive our travels and learn more about the wonderful world of music.

I look forward to connecting with you again in 2 weeks when our next brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music airs. Bye for now!