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Hey there and welcome to episode 49 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so happy to have you here with me today as we continue our summer podcast series -- Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music.

So far on our journey around the world, we've been to Brazil and the Democratic Republic of Congo to learn about the folk music of those countries. If you missed out on those episodes, I'll be sure to link to them in the show notes so that you can both listen to them as well as print your passport stamps to add to your Busy Kids Love Music passport. Today we're going to head north from the Congo to the continent of Europe where we're going to listen to and learn about folk music from the people of Ireland.

In traditional Irish folk music, there are about ten instruments that were used regularly. The most common instruments are the fiddle, tin whistle, flute and Uilleann pipes -- which are the characteristic national bagpipe of Ireland.

When we talk about the fiddle, we're talking about a violin -- it's the same instrument. However, it is going to be played differently, based on a wide variety of different styles that come from different regions of Ireland.

There aren't really any known composers of Irish fiddle music who actually wrote the music down, but rather, the music was passed down from one generation to the next. Students learned the music by listening and playing by ear. The style tends to be fast and snappy with elaborate and graceful melodies, like the tune you're listening to now.

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Another common instrument in Irish folk music is the tin whistle -- which you'll sometimes hear referred to as the "penny whistle" or the "Irish whistle". Remember we learned that folk music is music of the people -- and the people in Ireland were living off farms and not wanting to spend a lot of money on fancy, extravagant instruments. So this small, recorder type flute was inexpensive, durable and lightweight.

The Irish Flute -- sometimes called the Irish transverse flute -- is a wooden instrument and can be a difficult instrument to play because the finger spacing and position can be tricky to master. You'll hear slow airs played on the Irish Flute as well as upbeat polkas and jigs, and it's more closely related to the tin whistle than what we think of as the classic flute.

The uilleann pipes of Irish music are one of the most difficult instruments to play. There is a famous saying that it takes "7 years of learning, 7 years of practicing and 7 years of playing" to master playing this instrument.

You'll sometimes hear uilleann pipes called "Irish Pipes" or "Union Pipes". Be sure to watch some of the videos that I link to on the playlist I put together in this episode's show notes because it really is quite something to watch these musicians operate this complex instrument. You will understand why great uilleann pipers are revered in Irish culture when you see what goes into playing the instrument.

The oldest traditional Irish music was influenced by the wealthy Gaelic aristocracy that ruled Ireland until the 1600s, and merged with Celtic influences when the Celts arrived in Ireland around 500 BC to create something uniquely Irish.

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In 1762, Irish folk music was officially written down for the first time and collectors began to travel throughout Ireland to gather music for collection in the Irish Traditional Music Archive in Dublin, which is the largest collection of folk music in the world. Irish people emigrated due to famine and other circumstances in the 1840s and traditional Irish music was brought all over the world. There has since been a revival of this music beginning in the 1920s -- especially here in the United States -- and talented Irish fiddlers have influenced fiddle players all over the world.

Head over to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/49 where you'll be able to collect your Ireland stamp for your Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music passport. You'll also want to, as always, check out the curated playlist I've linked to for this episode, which features the incredible Irish folk tunes you've heard in this episode as well as some others that are so fun to watch as they are performed. Again, you can find all that at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/49.

Thanks so much for joining me today to learn about Irish folk music as we continue our summer journey Around the World. I hope you've enjoyed this melodic, upbeat music as much as I have and I will see you again in 2 weeks as we continue to learn more about folk music in our summer series of Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music. Bye for now!