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Hey there and welcome to episode 57 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 thrilled to have you joining me today.

Today we're going to be learning a bit about the life and music of Brazilian composer, conductor, cellist and classical guitarist -- Heitor Villa-Lobos.

Villa-Lobos has become the best known South American composer of all time. He was born in 1887 in Rio de Janeiro, Brazil, to a father who was a librarian, astronomer and musician -- and Villa Lobos' first teacher. He hosted regular musical evenings at their home, which gave Villa-Lobos a chance to observe many different musical instruments. He soon picked up the guitar, cello and clarinet.

After his father's death, Villa-Lobos supported his family by playing music in cinemas and theatres in Rio. He liked to hang around local street musicians and could play many musical instruments at a very early age as a result. In his young adult years, he traveled around Brazil and neighboring African Caribbean nations studying their indigenous music and composing some of his own as well. After three years of travel, he came back to Rio and began studying the works of European composers such as Wagner and Bach.

In 1913, he married a pianist and began his career as a serious musician. He had not yet at this point in his life learned to play the piano, so his wife gave him piano lessons just as some of his works were beginning to be published and performed at concerts in Rio de Janeiro. His music was different from other composers of the time, as it combined his Afro-Brazilian influences with European style. Can you hear the merging of these two styles in this piece?

This piece is a symphonic poem and ballet for the orchestra called Uirapuru which is a name used for various members of a bird family found in Brazil.

In the 1920s, Villa-Lobos headed to Europe for a concert tour and set up a home base in Paris, France during his years there. He came back to Brazil for a performance in 1930, and began to present plans for music education to the school system there, resulting in his appointment as director of music education. He established a conservatory for choral singing as well as co-founded the Brazilian Academy of Music in 1945. He then began to travel widely in the United States and Europe, composing music for films, receiving honors and conducting orchestras. He died in 1959 at the age of 72.

Villa-Lobos' best known work is *Bachianas brasileiras*, which is a set of nine pieces for various instrumental and vocal groups. In this collection, Villa-Lobos applies some of Bach's musical ideas and techniques to Brazilian themes.

Villa-Lobos was a prolific composer and wrote about 2000 works in many different forms including ballets, operas, choral works, solo guitar pieces and symphonies. If you head over to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/57, I've curated a playlist of a variety of his works for you so that you can enjoy a sampling of some of his pieces. Again, you can find a link to that playlist at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/57 and please take a chance to enjoy it until our next episode of Busy Kids Love Music airs.

Thanks so much for joining me today to learn more about Heitor Villa-Lobos. I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks for more musical discoveries. Bye for now!