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Hey there and welcome to episode 75 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 you're joining me today for a brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music. This episode is brought to you by my Peter and the Wolf Music Camp, which is a free, online 3-day camp where we'll explore Prokofiev's iconic symphony. Once you join, I'll e-mail you links over three days that will connect you with a variety of play-based, musical activities. The links never expire, so you can work through the camp whenever it is most convenient for your family. You can join my free music camp at [busykidsdopiano.com/peter](https://busykidsdopiano.com/peter) and I'll pop that link into the show notes as well.

We are continuing our summer series – our second edition of Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music. Each week we travel to a new country to learn about their folk music, and you will collect a stamp for your passport when you visit each country, or rather, listen to the episode about that country's folk music. So far we've visited the South American country of Peru and the African country of Morocco. And I'll list links to those episodes in this episode's show notes in case you haven't had a chance to listen to them and collect your passport stamps from those countries. Today, we're headed to Europe, where we'll be learning about folk music from the lovely country of Italy.

If you look on a map at the geographic location of Italy, you'll notice that the country is at the south of Europe and the center of the Mediterranean sea. That location meant it was influenced by many different groups throughout history – Celtic, Slavic, Arabic, Spanish and Byzantine, to name a few. All of these groups had different musical styles, meaning that Italy has a very rich and diverse folk music history.

Celtic and Slavic influences were strong in the northern region of Italy, and folk music here is especially connected to choir, opera

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Greek, African and Arabic neighbors, so you'll hear those cultural styles in the folk music of southern Italy.

Performers of Italian folk music often use old-fashioned instruments like simple flutes and a bagpipe-like instrument called the piva, which is what you're listening to now.

In the valleys of northwestern Italy, music performed by peasant poets – or troubadours – during the Middle Ages – is some of the oldest preserved samples of vernacular music. Here you can hear more of the Celtic influences in this musical style as well as some of those old fashioned instruments – like flutes with just six or seven holes. The singers would perform sung poetry of great poets such as Dante or Homer with some modern lyrics that would address political and social issues.

Now remember that when we talk about folk music, we're talking about music that originates in a place's traditional popular style. So even though you may not think of opera music as folk music, it does, in fact, meet the definition of folk music! Opera is a major Italian music tradition that was highly popular in the 1800s. It evolved from rowdy performances of singing and dancing with stage effects that were meant to entertain Roman crowds in between acts of a play. These interludes were called intermezzi. You'll notice that even today, many of the best-known opera singers in the world are from Italy.

If you are a piano student inside my Busy Kids Do Piano program, chances are that you are familiar with the most famous Italian dance, the tarantella. Solo performers dance energetically to a quick, upbeat song in this dance, supposedly to "sweat out" the poison of the deadly tarantula – and this dance could last for hours! Other folk dances throughout Italy include popular Tuscan dances that ritually act out the hunting of the hare. Blades are displayed in weapon dances that simulate the action of combat. Some dances are group activities and others are performed by couples.

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As with all our episodes from the Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music series, I would encourage you to check out this episode's curated playlist on YouTube, which will have performances of some of the music you've heard on today's episode as well as other dances and folk music from Italy. You can find that playlist linked at [buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/75](https://www.buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/75). You'll also find your passport stamp for Italy, now that you've "visited" Italy with me and learned all about its rich heritage of folk music. Again all of that is at [buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/75](https://www.buskidsdopiano.com/podcast/75).

Thanks for joining me today for our third stop in Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music. I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks for the next stop on our world tour. Until then — ciao!