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Hey there and welcome to Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music-loving families. I'm your host, Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm so excited to have you here with me today. This episode is brought to you by my Summer of Sight-Reading Challenge, a 5 day challenge that includes 2 sight-reading exercises each day that are designed to help you become a better sight-reader. You can learn more about the challenge including how to participate at busykidsdopiano.com/sightreading and I'll place a link to that in this episode's show notes as well.

In our last episode, we kicked off Around the World with Busy Kids Love Music, our annual summer series where we explore folk music from different countries around the world and collect passport stamps as we go. You can download your passport at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/99 if you haven't done that yet. We started our world tour in Scotland, where we learned about the Great Highland Bagpipe and the importance of Scottish folk music for current Scottish songwriters and musicians. Today, we're going to head east of Scotland to the continent of Asia, where we'll be visiting the magnificent country of India, to learn about the folk music there.

Earliest records of Indian music are found in the Vedic literature as early as 1500 BCE. Ancient Indians believed music originated in the heavens, and it was often used for religious purposes. India is a large country rich in cultural diversity, which has led to many forms and styles of folk music sung in many languages and dialects. Almost every region in India has its own folk music that reflects the way of life of the people there. The style of music you are listening to now is from Rajasthan in northern India and is called Maand. Many of the songs sing the praises of heroes and lovers and were sung in royal courts. Nomadic performers and appointed court singers then began to roam about the region in caravans and performed this style of music in royal courts throughout. Maand folk music of Rajasthan is still performed by professional singers, who are mostly descended from royal or nomadic families, at fairs,

festivals and special occasions. The instruments that accompany Maand folk music are unique to this region of the world, and though simple, are quite unusual and often handcrafted by the musicians themselves. One such instrument is a morsing, or morchang. It consists of a metal ring in the shape of a horseshoe with two parallel forks which form the frame. A metal tongue, also called the trigger, is between the two forks and can be struck and made to vibrate.

Now let's listen to a bit of dance-oriented folk music called Bhangra. Now, Bhangra is sort of an umbrella term for the folk dance forms and musical styles that came from Northeast Pakistan and Northern India – the Punjab region. The dances would move energetically in a circle, often with raised arms, to the syncopated beat of the drum. Originally this dance was performed in rural areas at harvest festivals or to welcome spring, but as Indian folks migrated to other countries around the world, the popularity of Bhangra went with them. You'll find the music of bhangra artists is often remixed with Western music genres such as hip-hop, reggae or electronic dance music and that contemporary bhangra is a staple of musical numbers in Bollywood movies – Bollywood is a term that refers to India's enormous film industry. Bhangra continues to be used in major celebrations in Punjab – parties, weddings and all sorts of festivals. Traditionally, it was danced by men, but now both men and women participate in this dance form, and many people participate in bhangra as a source of exercise.

If you're a Westerner like me, you might be familiar with at least one of the many super cool traditional Indian instruments, the sitar. The sitar is a stringed instrument that was invented in medieval India and has been played by pop groups like the Beatles and rolling stones. A famous sitar player named Ravi Shankar (who tutored the Btles' member George Harrison in how to play it) became popular in the late 1950s and early 1960s and influenced many musicians in India and throughout the world with his performances of Indian classical music.

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You probably noticed strong and driving rhythm in some of the Indian folk songs we've been hearing in the background of this episode. So as you might guess, the percussion instruments are important to Indian folk music! The tabla is a pair of small hand drums from India that is sort of similar in shape to African bongos. It was an important instrument in the bhakti worship traditions of Hinduism. The smaller of the two drums is used to create treble sounds while the larger drum produces bass sounds.

If you head over to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/99, you'll find a curated list of videos on YouTube that will not only showcase the folk music of India, but allow you to also see the traditional dances and some of the unique instruments used in Indian music. You'll also be able to print your passport stamp for India, now that you've had a chance to visit India with me in today's episode! Again, you can find all that at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/99

Thanks so much for joining me today to learn about the beautiful and rich folk music of India. I'm excited to connect with you again in two weeks for our 100th episode of Busy Kids Love Music as we continue our tour around the world. Bye for now!