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Hey there and welcome to episode 45 of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. I'm Carly Seifert, the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and before we jump into today's episode, I just wanted to let you know that the day this episode is scheduled to air is right at the beginning of my week-long public enrollment period for my online piano lesson programs. I have a program for grown-ups called Busy Moms Do Piano, and of course, one for kiddos called Busy Kids Do Piano. These piano lesson programs are comprehensive and affordable, and I'd love for you to learn more about them, so I'll link to both website for Busy Moms Do Piano (which is busymomsdopiano.com) and Busy Kids Do Piano (busykidsdopiano.com) in this episode's show notes. If you're interested in piano lessons, this is your chance to join during this spring public enrollment period.

Okay, today we are on episode 2 of our composer series on Johannes Brahms. We learned a little bit about Brahms' life in our last episode, and today, we're going to be discussing some of his most popular works -- The Hungarian Dances.

The Hungarian Dances are a set of 21 lively dance tunes based on Hungarian folk music. In the year 1850, Brahms met a famous Hungarian violinist named Eduard Remenyi. They became friends and played in recitals together over the next few years -- with Brahms playing the accompanying pianist part. Through this experience, Brahms grew to love the Romani-style music, which was a blend of music from the Hungarians as well as the Hungarian-minorities that lived in other countries.

The Hungarian Dances were originally written for the piano -- actually, for two pianists to play at the piano, as duets were hugely popular back then. Listen to a bit of Hungarian Dance Number 5 -- perhaps the most well-known of the dances -- on the piano here:

Brahms as well as other composers, later arranged the Hungarian dances so that they could be played by a full orchestra. Listen now to the same dance you just heard on the piano, played by an orchestra.

Within his Hungarian Dances, Brahms captured the same energy as traditional Hungarian folk dances -- called csardas and verbunkos. These dances were filled with lively rhythms and had dramatically varying tempos -- meaning that some parts would be really fast and others would be really slow. I'm going to put videos of some of these folk dances in the playlist that goes with this episode, so be sure to check out the show notes for the link to this playlist so that you can watch these traditional Hungarian folk dances.

Brahms wrote these pieces to entertain his friends at parties. His friends loved the music and convinced him to publish them. His first set was so successful, that he published a second volume, and they were played all over the world.

As you can probably hear in the music, it is technically difficult for musicians to play, with lots of complicated, dazzling rhythms. These rhythms would later influence other new styles of music, such as the ragtime music of composer Scott Joplin, who we talked about in episode 23 of Busy Kids Love Music.

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Head over to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/45 and you'll find there the link to the curated playlist I mentioned earlier. This playlist is filled with performances of Brahms' Hungarian dances -- some of which you've heard a bit of in this episode -- as well as performances of traditional Hungarian dances themselves, from which Brahms drew his inspiration. Again you'll find all that at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/45

Thanks so much for joining me today to learn about Brahms' Hungarian dances! I hope you enjoyed listening to these lively melodies, and I'll look forward to connecting with you in 2 weeks for our final episode in this series about Johannes Brahms here on the Busy Kids Love Music podcast. Bye for now!