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Hey there and welcome to a brand new episode of Busy Kids Love Music, a podcast for music loving families. My name is Carly Seifert, I'm the creator of Busy Kids Do Piano, and I'm thrilled to have you joining me today.

At the time that this podcast is scheduled to air it will be Thanksgiving here in the United States, which is a national holiday celebrated by many Americans. If you're from a country such as Canada or Saint Lucia or Liberia or Japan or Germany, to name a few, you probably have a similar festival holiday in your country. While each country's specific holiday origins and traditions are different, this is typically a holiday that is recognized as a time to be, well, thankful.

Composers throughout history often used their music as expressions of thankfulness, and today we're going to learn about 3 pieces of classical music that focus on gratitude.

Is this tune familiar to you? It's called "Simple Gifts", and it is a tune written by the Shakers. The Shakers were a Christian sect that was founded in England and then organized in the United States in the 1780s. At first, they were known as "Shaking Quakers" because of their enthusiastic behavior during worship, but later that was shortened to simply, "Shakers."

"Simple Gifts" was composed in 1848 and it is believed that the lyrics and music were written by Elder Joseph Brackett. While the song was well-known in Shaker communities, it wasn't really known outside of it until American composer Aaron Copland used the melody in his score for *Appalachian Spring*.

This tune pops up often in music of today. The band R.E.M. used it in their 1987 tour to open one of their songs. Cellist Yo-Yo Ma recorded a duet with singer Alison Krause on one of his albums. John Williams composed a variation for cello, violin, clarinet and

piano that was performed at President Barack Obama's Inauguration in 2009. Additional verses have since been added to the original one-verse hymn, and it certainly seems that the tune will endure for decades to come!

Now a while back I did a whole episode on Beethoven's nine symphonies, but today we're going to talk a little bit more about a song called "Shepherd's Song of Thanksgiving" that comes from Symphony No. 6, which is also known as the Pastoral Symphony.

Beethoven loved nature and this symphony is seen as his hymn to nature. He enjoyed long walks through the country outside of Vienna, but Beethoven wanted the music to describe feelings about nature – not necessarily pictures or paintings of nature. The descriptive notes that Beethoven added to this piece after it was written said, "Shepherd's Song – Cheerful and Thankful Feelings after the Storm." What are some words you would use to describe how this music feels to you?

The word joyful is one that I think of when I hear this piece. Perhaps that is because, like the shepherds Beethoven was writing about, I often feel joyful and thankful after a storm, when I can be outside in the sunshine again. Do you hear the feeling of gratitude in this music?

The next piece is one that I learned about when I was learning to play the organ because it has many famous improvisations and arrangements written for the organ: Nun Danket Alle Gott – or perhaps you know it as "Now Thank We All Our God".

The original music is sometimes attributed to a German composer of hymn tunes, Johann Cruger, and believed to have been written about 1647. The words – or lyrics – were written by Martin Rinkart, a Lutheran pastor.

Famous Baroque composer Johann Sebastian Bach arranged the piece into a church cantata in 1730. A church cantata is a piece that was intended to be performed during a worship service that was usually in a

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4-part setting. Do you hear how the parts of the hymn sort of tumble over each other in Bach's version?

I love Bach's arrangement of this piece, but can I let you hear a little bit of my favorite arrangement of the hymn to play on the organ?

This arrangement was written in 1910 by another German composer named Sigfrig Karg-Elert. He sort of hides the familiar tune or melody of "Now Thank We All Our God" in the midst of a storming, enthusiastic and even emotional notes and runs that are played by the hands and feet on the organ. Isn't it an exciting arrangement?

If you head over to this episode's show notes at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/84, I have there this episode's curated playlist that I've put together for you to check out on YouTube. It's a wonderful way to hear the full arrangements of some of the excerpts from this podcast as well as additional interpretations of the music we've discussed – interpretations from the past and the present. In many cases, you'll also get to see the pieces performed. Again you can find the link to that playlist at busykidsdopiano.com/podcast/84.

Thanks so much for joining me today for Busy Kids Love Music, and I look forward to connecting with you again in two weeks when our next brand new episode airs. Bye for now!