

Notes from the Music Department...

Bagatelle, Opus 119, No. 1 by Ludwig van Beethoven

A bagatelle is a "short, unpretentious instrumental composition." Bagatelles are usually for the piano, are light and mellow and have an improvisational flavor. The bagatelle can and does go wherever the composer desires it to. The eleven bagatelles that comprise Opus 119 were written in the early 1800's.

One of the few positives about 2020 is that we get to celebrate the 250th anniversary of Beethoven's birthday!

Brother James' Air, first published in 1915 just after the start of World War 1, was written by James Leith McBeth Bain, a Scottish hymn writer, religious minister and author who became known to his peers as Brother James. His beautifully melodic hymn tune originally was used as the setting of Psalm 23, "The Lord is My Shepherd." Today you will hear Bain's music paired with the words of William E. Oliver, adapted by Waldemar Hille. Where did we find this? Page 331 in our gray Singing the Living Tradition hymnal!

Life is the Greatest Gift of All

Life is the greatest gift of all the riches on this earth;
Life and its creatures, great and small, of high and lowly birth:
So treasure it and measure it with deeds of shining worth.

Mind is the brightest gift of all, its thought no barrier mars;
It seeks creation's hidden plan, its quest surmounts all bars;
It reins the wind, it chains the storm, it weighs the outmost stars.

We are of life, its shining gift, the measure of all things;
Up from the dust our temples lift, our vision soars on wings;
For seed and root, for flower and fruit, our grateful spirit sings.