

The Memorial Church of Harvard University
Music Notes for Sunday, January 22, 2023

A graduate of Harvard College, and for many years Director of Music at King's Chapel, Boston, Daniel Pinkham—whose centenary is celebrated this year—was one of America's most distinguished composers, and one of this city's most beloved figures. The *Festival Jubilate* is typical of Pinkham's style, in which a lively tune is combined with slightly unusual harmonies and various rhythmic distortions.

Felix Mendelssohn made the most significant contribution to the nineteenth-century revival of the oratorio form with his two masterpieces *Elijah* and *Saint Paul*. The composer began work on a third large-scale oratorio, *Christus*, based on the life of Christ, but his untimely death prevented its completion. The composer's first oratorio, *Saint Paul*, was premiered in 1836 at the Lower Rhine Music Festival in Düsseldorf; the gently flowing music of "How Lovely Are the Messengers" seems to depict the pattering of feet running to spread the good news of Isaiah's prophecy.

Mendelssohn's works for organ set a new, forward-looking standard for organ composition in the nineteenth century, while simultaneously harking back to the traditions and spirit of the German Baroque—and specifically to the music of Johann Sebastian Bach. This morning's prelude comes from the composer's set of three *Preludes and Fugues*, Op. 37, and features a lilting opening movement followed by a more angular, chromatic fugue. The postlude is an independent, festive piece written at the same time as the composer's six organ sonatas, but ultimately not included in the publication.