

The Memorial Church of Harvard University
Music Notes for Sunday, September 17, 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 musical figures. *A Sound from Heaven* was commissioned by Mark Edward Nelson—who for many years worked for the Fisk organ company and was the main technician for this church's organ—and is an evocative setting of verses from the Book of Revelation.

R. Nathaniel Dett was a Canadian-American composer, organist, and educator, who studied at Harvard from 1920-21 with composer Arthur Foote. During his lifetime he was a leading Black composer known for incorporating African-American folksongs and spirituals into his choral and piano compositions, as he does in this morning's anthem, for which he won the university's Francis Boott award.

The prelude is Pinkham's *The Four Winds*: published in 1998 to celebrate the composer's 75th birthday, it sets four contrasting biblical passages concerning the four winds (North, East, South, West), showcasing the organ's many different coloristic possibilities. The postlude is composer in residence Carson Cooman's *Grand choeur dialogué* from his *Ceremonial Suite*. Written in a form popularized by French romantic composers, the work features antiphony between a recurring theme that sounds on the full organ and interludes on slightly quieter sounds.