

PINKHAM @ 80

- 5:30 Champagne and hors d'oeuvres
- 6:25 Encourage people to sit down for musicale
- 6:30 Musicale
- 7:30 Dinner
- 8:45-ish Toasts (set-up in three different rooms!)

SPEAKERS: Chris Pinkham
 Bob Light
 Barbara Wallace
 Richard Conrad
 Judy Green
 David Carney
 Dan

MC

Let's begin with the obvious and well known: Daniel Pinkham is one of America's most prolific, versatile, and distinguished composers. In addition to those enchanting operas, he has written symphonies and other works for large ensembles; oratorios and cantatas, concertos and a cornucopia of works for solo instruments, chamber music, 20 documentary television film scores, an amazing wealth of distinctive choral music, volumes of wonderfully expressive songs — and let's not forget the electronic era!

The oldest of three boys, Dan came into the world on June 5, 1923, in Lynn, Massachusetts. As we heard from time to time in the choir loft at King's Chapel:

*Lynn, Lynn, city of sin:
You never come out the way you went in.*

The Pinkham name was nationally and locally famous thanks to Dan's great-grandmother, Lydia, who started the first widely successful American business run by a woman in 1875. Her best-selling product was "Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound."

Her tonic enjoyed its greatest success in the 1920s, the era of Prohibition, perhaps because 20% of the famed elixir was alcohol. Even though she had been in the temperance movement, Lydia explained that it acted as a "solvent and preservative." Evidently, it solved many a problem and preserved quite a few of her fellow citizens. Dan has been performing similar wonders in music for most of his life.

Our first interlocutor is Dan's brother, Chris, who...

CHRIS PINKHAM – Brother

"I'm *much* younger than Dan and wasn't around when the incident actually took place, but this story instantly became family history. When he was six, Dan tried to sell Mother some music he had copied from his piano exercise book. She gently pointed out that saleable music needed to be original. That's when the composer Pinkham was really born." **TOAST**

MC

Thanks to Lydia's industry, Dan was able to continue a family tradition by attending Phillips Academy in Andover. No less an authority on life than Ned Rorem once wrote, "Arguably, no artist grows up: If he sheds the perceptions of childhood, he ceases being an artist." We can only ponder, then, what the artist budding in Dan must have thought when his father advised that the most meaningful parts of an Andover education were exposure to Old Testament narratives and wrestling.

Most of you know the outlines of Daniel Pinkham's professional life. If you want details, they are available in numerous books and about 2,500 websites, so we'll mention only a few highlights. Our guest speakers tonight will be – we trust – reasonably decorous in their more personal recollections.

[DIVIDE AMONG SPEAKERS]

Studying with Walter Piston at Harvard, he began to divine "what works and what won't" in performance.

He met Nadia Boulanger in 1941 and studied with her in Paris and across the river at Longy. In that regard, you must ask Dan to tell you sometime the tale of the tenor solo in the Boston Symphony Orchestra's premier performance of the Fauré Requiem.

Among the musicians who influenced his development, as both a composer and a highly successful keyboard artist, were Arthur Honegger, Samuel Barber, Wanda Landowska, Putnam Aldrich, and E. Power Biggs. It was Biggs who gave the first professional performance of a Pinkham work in 1944, the Sonata No. 1 for organ and strings, conducted by Fiedler.

The teaching component of his career began with his appointment at age 23 to the Boston Conservatory of Music, where he earned a doctorate. He lectured at Simmons College; at Dartington Hall in Devon, England; at Boston University; Harvard; and finally the New England Conservatory of Music, where he has taught since 1959, and where he created and led the Department of Early Music Performance.

Dan's tenure as Music Director at King's Chapel began in the fall of 1958, and continued until June 2002. With a Ford Foundation grant, he commissioned

new works in addition to enriching the repertoire with a plenitude of his own creations. He also championed music of the baroque before it became fashionable. That choir loft became something of a musical laboratory as well as a showcase for the best-informed performance practices of the day.

A longtime Fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences, his composing continues vigorous and unabated, as we've heard this evening. Most of the writing down of music happens in the home he shares with organist and chef Andy Holman in Cambridge. Their home has been the setting for scores of delectable house concerts as well as innumerable dinners that provide the perfect setting for the art of the raconteur.

In the recent past, Dan has reluctantly begun to heed his doctor's advice from years ago to "slow down" the pace of criss-crossing the country for countless premieres, honors including at least five doctorates, and appearances at increasingly frequent "Pinkham Festivals."

All of these accolades are well-deserved, but Daniel Pinkham has never needed honors and awards to know the value of his life's work. He is the complete musician, secure in the knowledge that his contributions to music are manifold and that his compositions have won a unique place in the permanent repertoire.

Composer, performer, conductor, teacher. Richard Dyer of the Boston Globe wrote the following appreciation following the gala concert produced for Dan's 75th birthday, which seems so very recent. It refers specifically to a set of motets Jim Christie inveigled from Dan, who thought he was writing them for a Ned Rorem birthday celebration, but it is an eloquent encapsulation of virtues.

"...literary discrimination in the choice of texts, imagination, and utter professionalism in handling them musically, attractive melody, clear textures, grateful vocal lines, a sweet sincerity, and a true depth of feeling. Pinkham's musical roots entwine English Renaissance and 20th-century French roots with something genuine and American. His music comes from a well-stocked mind, but it is full of surprises because of the way he makes connections among unexpected things; his irrepressibly vital personality expresses itself in humor and unpretentious seriousness."

DAN CLOSES

Well, I am reminded of the story of why Episcopal girls don't go to orgies. Just think of all the thank-you notes they'd have to write!