

A note on the Music of the Composer, David Haas

(The original text appears in BBNeighbourhoods), ISSUE #213 22 June 2021)

As many would be aware, certain allegations have been aired publicly about the composer, David Haas. During the past twelve months, the issue of whether or not liturgical music composed by David Haas should be used here in Australia has been discussed by both the Bishops Commission for Liturgy and its advisory body, the National Liturgical Music Council. Despite Haas issuing a public apology for his actions in July 2020, both of the major American liturgical music publishers who hold the copyrights for his music have withdrawn access to his music and removed his music from their catalogues.

Therefore, in addition to the sensitivities of those deeply affected by crimes of abuse, another important legal issue is the potential for breach of copyright. Use of copyrighted music for which the copyright cannot be reported, and royalties cannot be paid, would be illegal and place parishes at risk of legal action. This point has been confirmed by One License, a Chicago-based agency that issues copyright licenses for liturgical music by GIA and OCP, and widely used by parishes in Australia. Furthermore, if David Haas has regained personal copyright to his music, which is not at present clear, use of such music would necessitate the payment of royalties by parishes directly to the composer. The choice not to use his music in Catholic liturgies is a simple way to avoid these legal and moral dilemmas.

Therefore, we would fully agree with that it is not appropriate that David Haas' music be used in the Diocese of Broken Bay at this stage.

Very Rev Dr David Ranson PP VG
Vicar General
CATHOLIC DIOCESE OF BROKEN BAY