

# INTO ACCOUNT

SUPPORT FOR SURVIVORS + ALLIES

## **Jeanne Cotter**

Submitted 6/21/2020

Facebook Post

In response to recent social media posts by Into Account, the Archdiocese of St Paul/Minneapolis and GIA Publications concerning reports of sexual misconduct by my fellow composer, David Haas, I feel compelled to make a statement. To each person who is courageously speaking out, sharing your experiences of discomfort, confusion, threat, betrayal and/or fear; for those sharing details of sexual harassment and assault at the hands of David Haas, I want you to know I hear you. I believe you. And I stand in solidarity with you.

I first met David Haas in May of 1980. I was 16 years old. David was an adult presenting at an overnight music ministry retreat I attended at the St Paul Catholic Youth Center. There, I became a "David Haas fan", exposed to and deeply inspired by his music and spiritual message. The second time I saw David in person was October of 1980 as he presented a music ministry workshop at a parish in my hometown. After the evening talk, David invited me "out for a coke to talk about the presentation". He expressed interest in my music and showered me with affirmation. In the front seat of David's car, parked in the restaurant lot, I received my first kiss. At age 16 I had never been on a date and didn't realize the conversation over coke was to be considered a date. I had never been kissed, much less French kissed. I felt stupid and awkward and yet really special for getting such intense attention from my mentor and inspiration.

For the next 15 years David and I shared a close personal and professional relationship, including 7 years of marriage. In recent posts, the Archdiocese of St Paul/Minneapolis has stated they revoked David's letter of suitability because of two reports made about him involving sexual misconduct. The first report was made in 1987 and the other in 2018. I know nothing about the 2018 report, as it has been decades since David and I have been anything more than professional colleagues. But in 1987, the year David and I were engaged to be married, I became generally aware of serious allegations of sexual misconduct levied against him by a young college student. At that time I couldn't believe the man I was in love with, the artist who was writing such meaningful and inspired music was capable of the acts to which he was being accused. It took another 8 years of experience and professional therapeutic help for me to actually comprehend and believe the shape and form of sexual misconduct to which I had been exposed. David Haas' serial sexual infidelity in our marriage was known by some friends and colleagues as well as therapists and Sexual Addiction treatment coordinators. It led to our divorce in 1995. As part of the annulment process, letters were written by friends and colleagues giving testimony to David's infidelity. The Archdiocese of St Paul/Minneapolis granted an annulment to our marriage. I experienced first hand David's capacity for retaliation.

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Not only was our full calendar of concerts and workshops cancelled by him and rebooked as solo Haas events or events with another female artist, but David sent a letter to every catholic diocese stating, among other things, that the irreconcilable differences leading to our divorce was due to my unwillingness to have children. This was a lie.

It is for the sake of all the women who are demanding their voice be heard, for the sake of my daughter and sons, my wife, my mother, my sisters that I choose to speak out now. Though I understand David has made recent threats against me, I cannot remain silent while the courageous women who have filed reports about David with Into Account are being mistrusted and questioned on social media for their reluctance to share their personal identities. Current laws are written in favor of those accused of sexual misconduct and provide little protection for the survivors of that misconduct. This, among other things, must change. I promise to use my voice to help create the systemic changes necessary so incidents like the ones being reported to Into Account cannot happen again.

“Healing begins when voices are heard!” From the documentary film In(Visible) Portraits

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