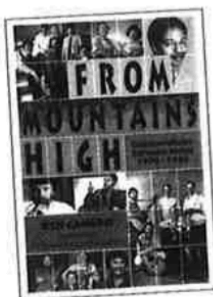


*From Mountains High:
Contemporary Catholic Music 1970–1985*

By Ken Canedo. Portland, OR: Pastoral Press (OCP), 2018. Pages, 156.
Softbound, \$20.00. ISBN: 978-1-56929-093-4.



Ken Canedo established himself as the chronicler of recent American Roman Catholic liturgical music history in 2009 when he published *Keep the Fire Burning*, recounting the revolutionary period of the 1960s when “folk music” joined itself to the more traditional idioms then in use. In this second volume he continues the story, providing in-depth details of the process by which the new styles of music integrated themselves into Catholic parish life across the USA. (Neither volume attempts to deal with the history of the development and use of this and similar music in other English-speaking parts of the Roman Catholic world, apart from some details of how the music of Carey Landry penetrated the Australian Church.)

The descriptor “Contemporary Catholic Music” needs interpreting. This book is almost exclusively about music in the “folk style,” where the major accompanimental instrument envisaged is the guitar. Having detailed the stories of such imprints as FEL Publications and the first folk-style composers in his first volume, Canedo now documents in considerable detail the history of NALR (North American Liturgy Resources), the early days of the St. Louis Jesuits, the monks of Weston Priory, John Michael Talbot, and others. He includes an overview of music for children, the stirrings of the charismatic renewal, and the story of the beginnings of new vernacular music in the American Latino Church. All of this is placed in the context of the surrounding musical culture, or at least the pop culture of the time. Alongside this are brief histories of the three major North American liturgical music publishing houses OCP, GIA, and WLP, and a more substantial look at the story of the founding of NPM (the National Association of Pastoral Musicians). There is much interesting and valuable background information about many composers who are still active today: Haas, Haugen, Joncas, Kendzia, Warren Brown, (Bob) Hurd,

Landry, Fabing; and some who have now faded from memory: Zsigray, Quinlan, and others. In the midst of all these, sitting rather uncomfortably, we find fifteen brief lines about Bernard Huijbers, who wrote in a completely different style but was also published by NALR at one point.

Much research and many personal interviews have resulted in a fascinating canvas, abounding in human stories. This collection of laudatory vignettes generally avoids some of the more difficult issues of the period, especially those connected with NALR and its founder Ray Bruno; and the account of the early days of the St. Louis Jesuits presents the official version preferred by members of the group, rather than the alternative but no less interesting reality. The narrative gives an excellent broad picture of events, but because there is no attempt to critique any aspects of the folk style or its implementation (the assumption seems to be that it was all of the same high standard), the account appears as somewhat sanitized.

Also missing is coverage of a whole swath of other liturgical music of the time, i.e., music mostly not of the folk genre but composed in other styles. The reader will find nothing here about Pastoral Arts Associates, or Robert Blanchard's groundbreaking Composers' Forum for Catholic Worship (which notably first published, among a number of repertoire items that many Americans still sing to this day, the Robert Snow *Our Father* chant and Howard Hughes's call-response Alleluia in C); nothing about Theodore Marier, Robert Twynham, Theophane Hytrek, Alexander Peloquin, Robert Kreutz, or the contribution of Leon Roberts to black Gospel music; only a passing reference to Omer Westendorf and to seminal hymn books such as *Worship* and *Worship II* from GIA; but nothing on *The Catholic Liturgy Book* from Helicon Press (1975), and nothing (apart from a fleeting reference) about the early days of the St. Thomas More Group of composers. There is also nothing at all about the beginnings of the evolution of the ministry of cantor in the US and the influence of James Hansen in this area, or about the introduction of the music of Taizé into the repertoire.

However, although it has not been publicly announced, I can reveal that

these important lacunae in his first two books and continue the entire story to more recent times. The first of these is in preparation at the time of writing, and it is to be hoped that both of them will see the light of day sooner rather than later.

In the meantime, the author's style and the book's typography make *From Mountains High* easy to read, and there are refreshingly few misprints. The one real lack is the absence of an index, which would make a historical document such as this so much more useful.

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