

Gazebo Portraits

By Charles Booker, Jr.

The title of this piece should conjure a Saturday afternoon concert in the park listening to mostly light dance music, overtures, potpourris, solos and patriotic music. Wind bands have never wavered in their commitment to audience accessibility while maintaining a high level of artistry. "Gazebo Portraits" composed in the fall of 2003 for the Hot Springs Community Band, recreates the mood, the sounds, and the excitement of these outdoor concerts from years gone by and salutes the continuation of these concerts by community bands throughout the United States and Canada today. Movement I (Promenade) imagines the beginning of a Sunday concert as everyone gathers, taking their seats in chairs or on blankets spread on the grass. Movement II (Ballad) recalls the lovely ballads many bands would play, featuring their best soloists. Movement III (Waltz) celebrates the dance music that bands would entertain audiences with.





Charles L. Booker, Jr., is Associate Professor and Director of Bands at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith. He is a composer, and a former U.S. Army Bandmaster receiving his degrees from the University of the State of New York, and the University of Texas at San Antonio. He later completed his teacher certification in secondary music from Texas State University. His compositions are published by Alfred, Kendor, Southern Music Company and Booker Music Publications, and have been performed internationally by many schools, universities and professional bands to include The Army Band ("Pershing's Own"), the U.S. Army Field Band, the U.S. Military Academy Band (West Point), the U.S. Air Force Band of Mid-America and the U.S. Air Force Academy Band. His music was featured at the Midwest Band and Orchestra Clinic in Chicago, Illinois in 2002. He studied composition with Hank Levy (composer / arranger for Stan Kenton), Dr. Steve Strunk and Dr. James Balentine and conducting with Dr. Robert Garofalo and Dr. Robert Rustowicz. Mr. Booker's career in the U.S. Army included service in the Fifth Army Band in San Antonio, Texas, as a staff arranger for the Army Field Band, performer and conductor of Army Bands in Louisiana, Germany, New York City, and director of the Jazz Ambassadors in Washington, D.C. As a trumpeter with the Fifth Army Band, Mr. Booker performed at the funerals of Presidents Truman and Johnson. In 1981, as the conductor of the 3rd Armored Division Band in Germany, Mr. Booker conducted the welcoming ceremonies at Rhein Main Air Force Base for the returning American hostages from Iran. In New York City, he conducted the Army Band of New York City at ceremonies for head of states and at the centennial activities of the Statue of Liberty. While as an associate conductor of the Army Field Band, Mr. Booker performed in 48 states, Canada, Mexico, Europe, India, Japan, and in the inauguration parades of Presidents George H. W. Bush and William J. Clinton. In 1998 Mr. Booker was appointed Director of Jazz Studies at Westark College and in 1999 he was appointed Director of Bands at the University of Arkansas - Fort Smith. Since then he has served UA Fort Smith as "Lead Faculty" and from 2004 to 2006 Chair of the Music Department. Mr. Booker is a past president of the Arkansas chapter of CBDNA, past president of the Arkansas Chapter of the IAJE, a member of the National Band Association, Texas Bandmasters Association and is currently on the board of the Arkansas Bandmasters Association. Mr. Booker is also a member of the Arkansas Chapter of Phi Beta Mu, band fraternity Kappa Kappa Psi, and honorary music fraternity Pi Kappa Lambda. He is the founder and conductor of the River Valley Community Band of Fort Smith, Arkansas. Mr. Booker is married to his wife of 37 years Claudette M. [DeRocher] of San Antonio, Texas. They have three children: Major Erik Booker, U.S. Army; Adam Booker, graduate music student (double bass) at Texas State University majoring in composition; and Colleen Booker, PhD. candidate and English instructor at the University of Wisconsin at Milwaukee. Mr. Booker and Claudette have five grandsons, Alex, Brennan, Colton, Devin, and Ronald. Mr. Booker's music can be heard at his website www.charlesbooker.com