

Solace

By Charles Booker, Jr.

Solace begins in the key of d minor. The choice of key was important not only to establish a sense of sadness and loss, but to insure comfortable ranges for all instruments. It is important to know I chose the first four chords to signify the four points of the Christian Cross - first in d minor and later in F Major. The piece changes to F Major to signify a celebration of John Shear's life and his heavenly home. There is an original hymn (at 7, at 12, 22, both antecedent and consequent phrases, and 46 through 61) that is used in both minor and major keys. There is a short angry section at 30 that forcefully asks the question WHY. This angry section is followed by a repeated short mournful two bar phrase (meas. 39-44) that is a "sigh of sadness and resignation". This is heard again at 83 after the celebratory section. The constant moving eighth-notes, a kind of rhythmic motif, are used both in d minor and F Major. They help unify the piece and give the music a forward motion, a constant flow of the "river" of life that eventually empties into the ocean, "our home in heaven", or "final destination."





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