A Bandstand in the Park - Killeen Road Show, 1973

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Complete Script and Music

Music by Keith D Rowley

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A BANDSTAND IN THE PARK

(As the curtain opens there are a boy and a girl sitting on a bench at Stage Left. Two city women enter Stage Right.)

AGNES: (very distressed) Oh, Emerald, I think I’m going to faint!

EMERALD: Gracious, Agnes dear, whatever is it?

AGNES: Why that vulgar beast – didn’t you see him? It was dreadful! Why he – he actually . . . expectorated!

EMERALD: (horrified) Oh mercy! How uncivilized! (putting arm around Agnes) Come, come now. You’ll feel better if we go to the bandstand and listen to some proper music.

AGNES: (smoothing down dress and rearranging hair) Music? Yes, that would be nice.

(Both women move to center stage.)

EMERALD: Let me see; I wonder which way to the bandstand?

AGNES: (quite recovered) I do say, let’s ask that couple over there. Surely they will know.

EMERALD: (clears throat and taps parasol impatiently on the floor) I say, could one of you children direct us to the bandstand?

JUNIOR: (rising and taking off his hat with a sweeping bow) Beggin’ yer pardon, ma’am, but there ain’t no bandstand in Maple Springs. This here’s a farmin’ town.

(nodding and flexing his bicep)

(Girl beside him stands up and touches his muscle in awe.)

AGNES: What? No bandstand? I am going to faint. (Emerald steadies her again)

MARIANNE: Pardon the suggestion, ma’am but maybe yer lacin’s are too tight. (turning to Junior) Ma always sez them city gals is forever tryin’ to pull themselves... (gets cut off)

EMERALD: (interrupting) Well, of all the nerve!

AGNES: Such vulgarity – (dramatically) and no bandstand! How uncultured!

JUNIOR: Un-what? Ma’am?

AGNES: Uncultured. Emma Carnegie says on page 132 and I quote, “...the epitome of culture is a bandstand in the park.”

SONG: THE EPITOME OF CULTURE (sung by Agnes and Emerald as the couple looks on. During the song townspeople enter, listen to the song, and the women join in. Several of the men are standing near the city women.)
(AGNES) says on page 132 and I quote,

Spoken
"...The epitome of culture is a bandstand in the park."

Sung
The epitome of culture is a bandstand in the park, Where you take your lady waiting to hear music after dark. Yes, every town must have a bandstand to be proper and refined. It's the place to be, there is no doubt, if you've a cultured mind. You can
wear your fancy dresses; you can fling your string of pearls. You can
drive a sleek black carriage and be envied by the girls. But the
key to entertainment Emma's words do surely mark, "The e-
pi-tome of culture is a band-stand. What, a band-stand? Yes, a
band-stand, a band-stand in the park."
AGNES and EMERALD:  (at end of song, unbelieving) No bandstand?

(Agnes finally faints, purposefully into the arms of one of the men. Several other men rush to help catch her. All on stage turn in their direction and freeze.)

WOMEN: George Windham, what are you doing?

GEORGE: (lets Agnes drop from his arms and quickly turns to face townspeople) Oh – well – this here lady…

(Agnes gets up and the city women furiously stomp off Stage Right.)

MARTHA: (not letting George finish) Ooooh, I wouldn’t have believed it if I hadn’t seen it with my own eyes. My own husband chasing after those - (weeping) those hussies!

JUNIOR: They’re not hussies, ma. That there’s culture!

GRANDMA: Culture, my foot. What have them city gals got that we ain’t got?

GRANDPA: Well, for one, you ain’t got no teeth, grandma. (All laugh.)

LOUISE: (stepping forward) Yeah, what do those city gals have?

(All men look Stage Right after city women and smile. Then as they turn around towards their wives the smile fades. Henry steps up to Louise.)

HENRY: Well, for one thing, Sugar… (gets a jab in the ribs by John)

JOHN: (stepping between them) Ah – we gotta get back to the fields now. Got a lot a work to do yet today.

(All men agree and start to leave.)

CLAIRE: (steps forward) Wait a minute? (goes over and cuddles up to John, as do the rest of the women to their husbands) Since ya’ll are so attracted to culture, WE have a suggestion.

(Women nod and agree; men scratch heads and look puzzled.)

JOHN: Well?

MARTHA: What we need is a bandstand.

MEN: A bandstand?

MARTHA: (hands to heart) Yes, (all women join in) a bandstand.

GRANDMA: We need a little culture too, ya know.

GRANDPA: Ain’t no way, Grandma. I’m afraid yer gunna have to settle for cultured milk! (men laugh)

LOUISE: Oh, it would be so – civilized to have some entertainment to look forward to on a summer evenin’.
HENRY: (unbelieving) Entertainment? Ya got entertainment. Why I let you bake me pies.

JOHN: And iron my shirts.

GEORGE: Yeah, and clean my house.

HENRY: And if ya really want to, I'll even let ya come help me push my plow this Saturday.

(Men laugh and agree.)

CLAIRE: But that's not entertainment. That's work!

JUNIOR: (flexing his bicep) You bet it's work.

GEORGE: That's what life is all about. Work is the staff of life!

SONG: WORK SONG (sung by men and women)
Work Song

(GEORGE)

music cue: That's what life is all about.

\[d = 100\]

Men: 1st verse

Work is the staff of life.

Sung

Well, ya

Women: 2nd verse

get yer self up before the rooster crows. And ya

get yer self up before yer husband goes. Got ta

go to work in yer work in clothes. Well, ya

fix his meals, got ta press his clothes. Then ya

dig in yer plow and ya work all day. We got ta

bake him some bread and ya scrub his floor. And after

work, work, work. We've gotta bills to pay.

come home gotta scrub some more.
Work, work, work. Work is the staff of life.

Work, work, work. Men: Well you've
Women: You're sure

got-ta sup-port your wife.
luc-ky you've got a wife.

Well ya

1.

2. All 1st time. Men 2nd time while exiting.

Yes, we must work, work, work.

Work is the staff of life.

2nd time fade out

work. Men: Well you've
Women: You're sure
got-ta sup-port your wife.
luc-ky you've got a wife.
(All men but George and Grandpa exit as they repeat the last chorus.)

GEORGE:  (giving Martha a squeeze) Bye, Sugar, got to get back to the fields.

MARTHA:  But George! What about the bandstand?

GEORGE:  Now, Martha, put that silly idea out of your head. We don’t need a bandstand or any other such frivolity. I’ll be home for supper at sunset. Fix something special, okay?

GRANDPA:  Yeah, Grandma, and I’ll have some of that gooseberry pie for dessert.

(George and Grandpa exit.)

GRANDMA:  (mumbling) Humph! I’ll give him pie alright – pie in the eye.

(Women sigh and turn to their little groups to chat.)

MARIANNE:  (to Louise) Hey, ma, what’s a frivolity?

LOUISE:  (without even thinking) Oh, - pie.

MARIANNE:  Pie?

(All the women turn and freeze.)

MARTHA:  (looking at Louise) Yeah, pie!

LOUISE:  And starched shirts.

CLAIRE:  And aprons.

MARTHA:  And homemade bread.

GRANDMA:  (throwing arms up in the air) They’re all frivolities!

MARTHA:  (mimicking George) We don’t need a bandstand…

LOUISE:  …or any other such frivolity!

MARTHA:  Ladies! I think we’re going to get our bandstand after all. If we can hold out till the Maple Springs County Fair next month, our menfolk will be beggin’ to build our bandstand for us.

(Women giggle and agree.)

CLAIRE:  Oh mercy! It’s almost dinnertime!

MARTHA:  (to women) Now hush! Not a word of this to anyone.

(Women quickly exit with whispers and excitement. Martha, Louise and Claire enter their houses upstage. John, Henry and George enter.)

JOHN:  Boy, nuthin’ like a good day of work!  (enters his house)

GEORGE:  Yeah. I’m as hungry as an ox!  (slaps Henry on the back) See you tomorrow, neighbor.
HENRY: Right, George. *(both enter their houses)*

JOHN: *(to Claire, holding up a rag rug)* Claire, I think it's high time you took out the rugs.

CLAIRE: *(takes rug)* Yes, dear. *(exits and quickly returns without rug)*

JOHN: Well? Where are the rugs?

CLAIRE: Why, John – they're out. *(both freeze)*

MARTHA: *(to George who is seated at table)* Here's your bean soup, dear.

GEORGE: *(takes bowl)* Thank you, Martha. MMMM! Sure smells good! *(George begins to eat then stops)* Martha? Where are the beans? *(both freeze)*

LOUISE: *(seated in rocking chair with mending in her lap)* Henry, dear, you'll be happy to know I'm taking your lecture on economy to heart.

HENRY: *(looking up from Sears-Rohbuck catalog)* Oh?

LOUISE: *(excited)* Yes, I've saved a whole tin full of pennies just by not buying buttons and thread to mend your shirts. *(holds up a shirt full of holes, both freeze)*

*(Junior enters, slowly dragging his feet. Other men enter from sides.)*

JUNIOR: Jumpin' toadstools – am I starvin'. Mom hasn't baked bread for a whole month.

ED: *(wearing a ragged shirt held together by pins)* OUCH! If my wife doesn't buy some thread soon I'm going to be the only human pin cushion alive. OUCH! or dead!

GRANDPA: I never thought I'd see the day when Grandma stopped servin' gooseberry pie.

JOE: You think that's bad. My wife fixed chicken and dumplings last night.

JUNIOR: *(rubbing stomach and licking lips)* What's so bad about eatin' chicken and dumplin's?

JOE: Without the chicken?

GEORGE: Don't worry, neighbors – it can't last forever. The Maple Springs County Fair is right around the corner. And you know Biddy Hayes is out to top Martha's prize winnin's cake from last year.

JUNIOR: Yeah, and Marianne's spent the last three weeks creating her secret recipe for nutrition packed pickled sassafras 'possum pie. *(men groan)*

GRANDPA: Pie did you say? *(sighs)* I'd die for a pie!

SONG: I'D DIE FOR A PIE *(Men sing the first part. Women enter with baked goods and other fair items and sing the second part. Men try to sample but women ward them off. Three booths are quickly set up upstage as song ends.)*
(GRANDPA)

music cue: Pie did you say?

I'd die for a pie!

Sung

I'd die, die, die for a pie,

Men:

Yes, I'd die, die, die for a pie,

pie,

work, work, work for a shirt that had buttons and even a seam.

I'd hug, hug, hug for a rug.

Yes, I'd hug, hug, hug for a rug.

I'd waste, waste, waste for a taste of bean soup that was served with some beans.

Husbands
don't despair, it's the Maple Springs County Fair. There'll be 

food galore, brand new shirts and much, much more. I'd 

die, die, die for a pie, Yes, I'd die, die, die for a 

pie, I'd work, work, work for a shirt at the 

Maple Springs, at the Maple Springs, 

at the Maple Springs County Fair.
MARTHA: (at booth) Step right up, gentlemen. Grandma’s fresh gooseberry pie!

(Women shout to sell their goods as men scramble to the three different booths.)

JOHN: (holding up a new shirt) Well, how much do I owe you?

LOUISE: Oh mercy, I wouldn’t dream of taking your hard-earned money, but if you’d just help me... (voice fades as she directs him).

CLAIRE: (at second booth) And to pay for your baked goods, if you men would just step over here and move this... (voice fades).

MARTHA: (at third booth, to Junior) Oh, don’t worry about the cost. Just a little bit of your time and muscles is all I ask...

(Each booth is simultaneously moved and a bandstand is assembled under the women’s direction.)

MARTHA: (standing back to admire) There now – Isn’t it beautiful!

GRANDMA: Ladies, now we got culture!

(The two city women enter from Stage Right. Men are busy eating and showing off their goods.)

AGNES: Oh there’s that cute George Windham. Oh George – Yoohoo, George, won’t you go for a stroll with me?

GEORGE: (arm around Martha) Sorry Ma’am. I’m a happily married man. (Looks at Martha, gives her a squeeze) Besides, you’re just not my type.

(City women turn and leave disgustedly.)

MARTHA: You know, George, it’s nice to have our bandstand, but I’ve learned that it’s the simple things in life that bring a more fulfilling kind of entertainment.

GEORGE: Like what, Martha?

MARTHA: Oh, like baking bread for your husband and just doing little special things.

GEORGE: Yes, we do need frivolities. (holding up a button) Like sewing on buttons, for instance?

MARTHA: (smiling and taking the button) Like sewing on buttons.

LOUISE: You know – the epitome of culture may be a bandstand in the park, but true joy and entertainment come from work and home and heart.

SONG: FINALE
music cue: You know - the epitome of culture may be a bandstand in the park,

Spoken
but true joy and entertainment come from work and home and heart. Though the e-

pi - to - me of cul - ture be a band - stand in the park, true-

joy and ent - tain - ment come from work and home and heart. Though the e-

pi - to - me of cul - ture be a band - stand in the park, true-

joy and ent - tain - ment come from work and home and heart. Yes we must
work, work, work. Work is the staff of life. Work, work, work. You're sure lucky you've got a wife. I'd die, die, die for a pie. Yes, I'd die, die, die for a pie, I'd work, work, work for a shirt that had buttons and even a
I’d hug, hug, hug for a rug. Yes, I’d hug, hug, hug for a rug. I’d waste, waste, waste for a

Women: taste at the Maple Springs, Men: Work, work, work.

All: Maple Springs, Men: Work, work, work. at the Maple Springs County Fair.

(Curtain)