

*"Inventions on the Summer Solstice* for violin, clarinet, and piano was written at the request of Elsa Ludewig-Verdehr for performance by the Verdehr Trio.

Summer solstice is that time of year at which the sun has reached its northernmost declination. As such, it has been one of the great primordial dividing points of the year. The ancient Egyptians played by it. The Norse built bonfires on the mountainsides to ward off evil spirits attendant to it. Shakespeare wove midsummer behavior throughout several of his plays. And, though the origin of Stonehenge is still a mystery, we do know that its giant megaliths form an exact calendar that measures the solstice sunrises, solar and lunar eclipses, and much more. It is all of these human manifestations of this ancient and mystical time that these inventions celebrate. The inventions are as follows:

1. *Pharaoh's Nile Rises at Solstice*: Symbolic of the life-giving quality of the rising Nile, the piano is the giver of the musical material in this invention. Its series of slowly expanding symmetrical sonorities provide the pitch material for the violin and clarinet.
2. *St. John's Eve: Watchfires Roar Along the Fjords*: From prehistory to the present, summer solstice is celebrated by great nocturnal bonfires on the mountainsides of Norway. Celebrants cavort close to the flames (the clarinet) whose light protects them from evil spirits and 'unlaid ghosts' reputed to be abroad that night. A folk fiddler is heard at the perimeter.
3. *Midsummer Sunrise at Stonehenge*: This great stone computer/calendar indicates the point at which the solstice sun will rise. In this invention a solar F-sharp systematically emerges and journeys from unison to an octave. The pitch material of this journey is symmetrically organized, as is the rhythmic subdivision of the measures in the piano part.
4. *This is Very Midsummer Madness* (Shakespeare): A quote from Mozart's *Symphony No. 40 in G minor* is subjected to midsummer madness.
5. *The Murmurous Haunt of Flies on Summer's Eve* (Keats): Unique and perhaps somewhat insect-like sounds are produced by the pianist striking and scraping the strings with wire brushes, the violinist playing artificial harmonics, and the clarinetist playing only upon the upper half of the instrument.
6. *The Inexorable Procession of the Sun to Summer Solstice*: Once again, as in the third invention, the pitch F-sharp journeys from a unison to an octave, double octave and beyond. The details of the journey are, however, completely recomposed."

—Charles Hoag

The world premiere of *Inventions on the Summer Solstice* was on October 21, 1979 in the Music Auditorium, Michigan State University College of Music, East Lansing, Michigan.

Charles Hoag, (born 1931, Chicago, Illinois) was raised in Davenport, Iowa. He earned a Bachelor of Music degree at the University of Iowa, a Master of Music degree from Redlands University in California, and a Ph.D. in music composition at the University of Iowa.

Hoag is Emeritus Professor of Music, Theory and Composition at the University of Kansas and has played double bass throughout his career. He was principal bassist with the Seventh Army Symphony Orchestra and had his music played by that orchestra in France, Germany and Greece.

After leaving the service, he played two seasons in the New Orleans Philharmonic. From 1978-1993, he was conductor of the Lawrence Symphony Orchestra.

Hoag is a member of the College Music Society, ASCAP, the Society of Composers, Inc., and the International Society of Bassists. He has received a Composer Consortium Grant (1983) and grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Humanities. He had residencies with the Millay Colony for the Arts, Austerlitz, New York (1989) and the MacDowell Colony (1990).

Awards for Hoag's compositions include the Charles Wakefield Cadman Scholarship to Redlands (1955), Aspen Award (1966), University of Kansas Composers Award (1971), Kansas Composer of the Year, and awards from ASCAP, the National Endowment for the Arts, and NEA. In 2011, he received the University of Texas at Austin Mary & Winton Green Commission to write a violin concerto for Brian Lewis. His music has been published by G. Schirmer, Theodore Presser, Neil A. Kjos, and others.