

*The SweetMelancholy(lostyourdolly)SlowDrag(that's all in one word, folks!) Rag! (1989)*

Charles Hoag

"Most people, depending upon their generation, got to know ragtime through the piano music of Scott Joplin or the early New Orleans bands, or failing that, through the film *The Sting*. My initiation to ragtime was quite different, perhaps unique. I first heard it played on the ukulele by an undisputed master of that dubious instrument—my father. In Dubuque, Iowa, in the first few decades of this century, Dad went from playing marbles to playing ukulele—I suppose around the time he would have been discovering women and during that pop-music nadir of the twenties known as the Hawaiian craze. He was still ragging it up on the uke when I came along some years later. For me, the term 'ragtime' will always evoke the raggedy rhythm of Dad's right hand as opposed to the steady tap of his foot in an old favorite such as *When Uncle Joe Plays a Rag on the Old Banjo*.

Now, as to the sweetmelancholylostyourdolly-nature of this piece, you caught, I presume, that it is slightly tongue-in-cheek. It is not autobiographical. As of this writing, I have not lost my dolly. When the Verdehr Trio asked me to write a piece, perhaps with nineteenth-century flavor, I chose to reach back to the beloved music of that century through the uniquely American perspective of the rag. Accordingly, this rag is in F-sharp minor, the sweetest, most melancholy and forlorn of keys in the hands of Chopin, Rachmaninoff, Mahler, and other such practitioners of the gentle art of nineteenth-century *Weltschmerz*. As I wrote it, I thought lovingly but not entirely reverently of them. Hence, *The SweetMelancholy(lostyourdolly)SlowDrag(that's all in one word, folks!) Rag.*"

—Charles Hoag

The world premiere of *The SweetMelancholy(lostyourdolly)SlowDrag(that's all in one word, folks!) Rag!* was on June 26, 1990 in the Verdehr Trio Summer Chamber Music Concert Series at the Wharton Center, Michigan State University, 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.