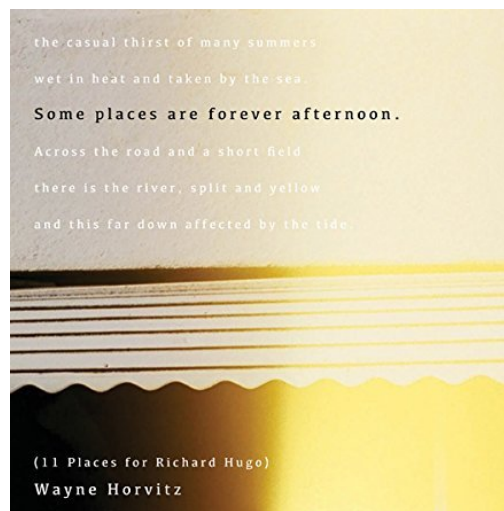


# The New York Times

## Review: Wayne Horvitz Waxes Poetic on ‘Some Places Are Forever Afternoon’

By NATE CHINEN JULY 8, 2015



**WAYNE HORVITZ**  
*“Some Places Are Forever Afternoon”*  
(Songlines)

The track with the strongest subtext on Wayne Horvitz’s “Some Places Are Forever Afternoon” — an album by no means lacking for subtext — bears the title “Nothing Dies As Slowly As a Scene.” It has a bittersweet melody ringing distinctly of the American West, with a contrapuntal melody for bassoon and cornet, and a steady-bubbling undertow of piano, bass and electric guitar.

To anyone familiar with Mr. Horvitz, the pianist and composer who also booked musicians at the original Knitting Factory in Manhattan, and now helps program the Royal Room in Seattle, the title might

refer to the social energies behind any musical scene and the nostalgia that often trundles along in its wake. Maybe that is the intention, but the title also comes from a Richard Hugo poem, “Death of the Kapowsin Tavern,” that ruefully considers something plainer and sadder: the charred wreckage of an old bar.

Mr. Horvitz conceived of “Some Places Are Forever Afternoon” after delving into the poetry of Hugo, another artist with ties to the Pacific Northwest. (Born and raised in Seattle, he died there in 1982.) The album’s subtitle, “11 Places for Richard Hugo,” hints at a methodology: Mr. Horvitz followed in Hugo’s footsteps, visiting places that inspired him, from Seattle to Missoula, where he taught for years at the University of Montana.

Each album track is named after a phrase from a corresponding poem, which in turn often refers to a physical place. “You Drink Until You Are Mayor,” a dissonant chamber piece, evokes the bleary alienation of Hugo’s “Dixon,” while the roadhouse shuffle on “All Weather Is Yours No Matter How Vulgar?” signals the punctured pretensions in the poem “Fairfield.”

Hugo was a plain-spoken writer who compressed great emotional weight into language at once casual and exacting. Mr. Horvitz comes to the table with a similar feeling for the American vernacular, drawing from Muddy Waters, Charles Ives and one of his peers, the jazz guitarist Bill Frisell. (Tim Young, who plays guitar on the album, often waxes Frisell-ian, and Ron Miles, its cornetist, is a regular in Mr. Frisell’s groups. Among the other featured players are Peggy Lee on cello and Sara Schoenbeck on bassoon.)

Mr. Horvitz was wise not to incorporate a vocalist on the album, instead creating compact soundtracks for the scenes that Hugo so evocatively sketched. The earthy nobility of this music could easily stand on its own, with no poetic corollary. But that sells something short — the way, for instance, that the sad, sweet air of the title track complements a poem called “West Marginal Way,” with its image of a tugboat straining upriver, “and the saw mill/bombing air with optimistic sparks.”