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Wayne Horvitz: Some Places Are Forever Afternoon (2015)

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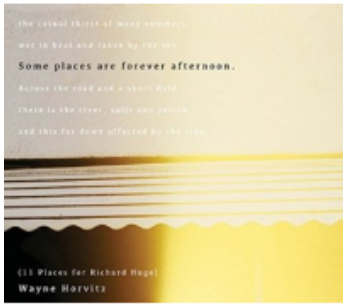

Wayne Horvitz

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Songlines Recordings

Poet and essayist Richard Hugo, a celebrated son of Seattle, was best known in his short life for his straight-forward but moving portrayals of the stark realities of the Pacific Northwest, both people and places. His works have previously been documented in print and on film and now by pianist/composer Wayne Horvitz who pays tribute to the writer on *Some Places Are Forever Afternoon (11 Places For Richard Hugo)*.

In the wordless interpretation of Hugo's works, Horvitz brings together an idiosyncratic collection of collaborators from his Gravitas Quartet, Royal Room Collective Music Ensemble (in the case of drummer Eric Eagle) and the acoustic variation of Zony Mash, Sweeter Than the Day. The resulting septet functionally and artistically allows Horvitz to cover the territories and characters portrayed in Hugo's chronicling of the 1960's cultural revolution.

As a collective work *Some Places Are Forever Afternoon (11 Places For Richard Hugo)* is a fine example of modern composition, unrestrained by conventional norms. Horvitz expertly demonstrates his malleability on "Those Who Remain Are the Worst" with the wistful melancholy of Peggy Lee's cello contrasting the country rock-ish guitar of Timothy

Young and the growl of Ron Miles trumpet—all working together beautifully. Similarly adventurous is "All Weather Is Yours No Matter How Vulgar?" where Horvitz' swinging, hard-bop piano seamlessly falls into a chamber jazz environment.

There are occasional moments when the music is as unadulterated as Hugo's most plain-spoken poetry such as the economical and idyllic "The Beautiful Wives; For Jim and Lois Welch." But more often than not Horvitz employs far more complexity in his writing and arranging. His bluesy Hammond B-3 and Young's country twang melding with the stately trumpet and Sara Schoenbeck's bassoon on "In Some Other Home" reads like a contextual impossibility on paper and yet gels perfectly on record. "The Car That Brought You Here Still Runs"—the longest piece at more than ten minutes—begins in a classical vein, moves to the avant-garde before coming back in the general direction of the opening statement. Miles lights up the piece with an outstanding solo near the conclusion and it's one of the highlights of the album.

The kind of compositional choices Horvitz allows himself comes with the responsibility of guiding naturally unfolding music to a place where the narrative is neither predictable nor lost in its own freedom. Horvitz does a masterful job of transcribing the poet's sad resignations, dark discord and occasional glimmers of light into a beautiful collection of music. The *Some Places Are Forever Afternoon (11 Places For Richard Hugo)* CD includes a twenty-eight page insert of poems and regional photographs; a nice bonus considering this is one of the best releases of the year, as is.

Track Listing: Money Or A Story; Those Who Remain Are The Worst; You Drink Until You Are Mayor; Nothing Dies As Slowly As A Scene; All Weather Is Yours No Matter How Vulgar?; The Beautiful Wives; For Jim And Lois Welch; In Some Other Home; The Car That Brought You Here Still Runs; Last Place There; You Must Have Stayed Hours; Some Places Are Forever Afternoon.

Personnel: Wayne Horvitz: piano Hammond B-3, electronics; Ron Miles: cornet; Sara Schoenbeck: bassoon; Peggy Lee: cello; Tim Young: guitar; Keith Lowe: bass; Eric Eagle: drums.