

THE FROMM PLAYERS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY
AND ARTS THURSDAYS

PRESENT

THE MUSIC OF
ANNEA LOCKWOOD



Thursday, November 6, 2025
John Knowles Paine Concert Hall
Harvard University



HARVARD

Faculty of Arts and Sciences

DEPARTMENT OF MUSIC



THE FROMM PLAYERS AT HARVARD UNIVERSITY
AND ARTS THURSDAYS

PRESENT:

**THE MUSIC OF
ANNEA LOCKWOOD**

CURATED AND HOSTED BY PROFESSOR CLAIRE CHASE

ANNEA LOCKWOOD (b. 1939) *Becoming Air* (2018)
Nathan Wooley, trumpet

Jitterbug (2007)
Vicki Ray, piano
Wesley Sumpter, percussion

INTERMISSION

ANNEA LOCKWOOD (b. 1939) *Buoyant* (2013)
Stereo acoustic

Into the Vanishing Point (2019)
Yarn/Wire:
Laura Barger & Julia Den Boer,
pianos; Russell Greenberg &
Sae Hashimoto, percussion

Notes on the Program by Elaine Fitz Gibbon

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Harvard University Committee on the Arts (HUCA).*

Cover Photo: Claire Chase

PROGRAM NOTES

In the mid-1960s, composer Annea Lockwood began recording rivers. Born in 1939 in Christchurch, New Zealand, Lockwood moved to London in 1961 to study composition with Peter Racine Fricker at the Royal College of Music. Upon graduating in 1963, with the support of a fellowship from the *Deutscher Akademischer Austauschdienst* (DAAD), Lockwood moved to Cologne, and later Utrecht, to study electronic music with composer Gottfried Michael Koenig. But this style of electronic composition, which involved long hours in the studio developing and manipulating blocks of electronically generated sounds had something of a deadness to it, and this realization provoked an existential reckoning. As Lockwood remarked in a 2004 interview with composer and sound artist Tara Rodgers, “I had to ask myself what, for me, constitutes life in a sound? The next step was, well, I won’t know that until I focus on sounds which satisfy me and then figure out what satisfies me about them.” Turning away from sine waves and instrumental writing, it was not long thereafter that she (re)discovered her love of water.

Lockwood soon embarked on her River Archive, a project in which she hoped to document all the rivers, creeks, and springs of the world. It was, particularly, the liveness and extraordinary breadth of textures of these environments that drew her to them, as well as memories of the environmental wildness that surrounded her as a child growing up in Christchurch. She reached out to friends, like Pauline Oliveros and Carolee Schneemann, who sent her tapes of their local waters from far and wide, and Lockwood herself made tape recordings in London, where she settled after completing her time at Koenig’s studio in Utrecht. While the River Archive’s scale eventually proved impossibly broad, it would transform into her current ongoing Sound Map project, in which she documents through audio recordings, material objects, interviews, and other media, the life of specific rivers. She began with *A Sound Map of the Hudson* (1982) upon receiving a commission from the Hudson River Museum, and went on to create Sound Maps and accompanying installations of rivers from the Danube to the Housatonic. Today, she is collaborating on two major Sound Map projects: one with Nathan Wooley of the Columbia River, which flows from its source in the Rocky Mountains of British Columbia through the state of Washington to its mouth at the Pacific Ocean in Oregon, and the other of the Elwha River of the Olympic Peninsula, which she is creating together with Claire Chase. Viewed in retrospect, the River Archive contained the impulses that still today drive Lockwood’s person and work: a delight in sonic

discovery, environmental exploration, and the thrill of perceiving something new through listening; an enduring fascination with sounds that have minds of their own; and a joy in the ways in which sounds, be they tied to rivers or otherwise, create opportunities for connection and collaboration with others.

In the late 1960s and 1970s, Lockwood, living in London, thus began to explore performance with non-traditional instruments and installation work. In her first major composition from this period, *The Glass Concert* (1967–1970), she used glass objects of all kinds, from the wine glass to micro sheets and fragile rods, to activate a stunning array of sound worlds in her instruments. Each of the work’s twenty-three movements (which was recorded in 1973 and re-released for the work’s fiftieth anniversary in 2023) are structured according to instrument, providing a series of études labeled by type of glass or technique of sound production (such as “Micro Glass Along Pane” or “Glass Rod Vibrating”), in which Lockwood probes the instrument’s possibilities. While some tracks produce the rounded, ringing tones we typically associate with glass, others delight in coaxing sounds akin to mooing, cackling, rattling, or even conversing, such as in “Dialogue,” a gloriously absurdist conversation between bottles and jars. You can almost hear the joyous grin each spectacularly alive sound elicited in Lockwood as she created and composed with them, one that is infectious for the listener.

From the fragile realm of glass, she turned to the solidity of the piano,



Lockwood performing *Piano Garden* (1969-70, Ingates-tone, Essex). Photography by Chris Ware.

that representative of bourgeois institutional excellence. Beginning in 1967 Lockwood began a series of *Piano Transplants*, in which she repurposed pianos that were damaged beyond repair, by turns burning, drowning, or planting them in gardens. In their new environments and changes of state, the instruments elicited new tones and textures through processes of material decay or transformation, reminding the listener of the visceral materiality of sound, and the instruments used to create it, be they human or non-human. In the text scores for these pieces, and in their engagement with the weighty relics of classical music culture,

PIANO TRANSPLANTS

Anna Lockwood

PIANO BURNING

set piano upright in an open space
with lid closed

staple inflated balloons all over

spill a very little lighter fluid here
and light

play whatever pleases you for as
long as you can

PIANO DROWNING

find a shallow lake in an isolated place
lake should have a clay or other solid
form of lake-bed

slide piano into position, vertically,
just off-shore

anchor it (by rope to a stake for instance)
against storms

take photographs every month
as it slowly sinks (a few inches
per year)

the Pacific Coast just off-shore is also
a good location — in this case, use only
a concert grand piano and anchor
very strongly

PIANO GARDEN

dig a sloping trench and slip piano
in sideways so that it is half-buried

set piano down amongst young trees

plant fast growing trees and creepers
underneath and around the piano

do not protect against weather
leave pianos there forever

Lockwood's scores for *Piano Transplants*, as printed in the volume *Womens Work* (Lockwood and Knowles, 1975).

Lockwood found affinity with the conceptual world of Fluxus, including artists like Alison Knowles, with whom she collaborated in the mid-1970s on *Womens Work* (1975), a two-volume publication of text scores by twenty-five women artists/composers, to which Lockwood also contributed her *Piano Transplants* scores. In such collaborations, Lockwood found community with fellow artists likewise invested in boundary- and genre-crossing explorations. And it was through these connections that Lockwood traveled in 1973 to the United States to take up a visiting position leading the electronic music studio at Hunter College, CUNY, and it was in New York that she would remain, eventually establishing a long teaching career at Vassar College, where she today holds the position of Professor Emeritus.

The four works that are featured on this evening's program span a period of over a decade and are representative of a breadth of Lockwood's compositional approaches and interests. Yet they are all connected in their

indebtedness to collaboration, be that through acts of co-composition between Lockwood and Wooley in *Becoming Air* (2018) and with Yarn/Wire in *Into the Vanishing Point* (2019), or the collaboration between composer and elemental instrument—water, air, earth, or fire—qualities of which are particularly prominent in *Buoyant* (2013) and *Jitterbug* (2007). While the initial premiere dates of each work suggest a period of twelve years between the composition of *Jitterbug* and *Into the Vanishing Point*, the apparently firm dates of origin belie not only the time taken to create the pieces—often a year at the very least—but also their continuing development through performance. In speaking with me about the upcoming program, each of the performers on tonight’s concert emphasized an openness and generosity that defined their work with Lockwood, allowing for transformation and that gleefully explorative spirit heard in earlier works, like *The Glass Concert*. In the late 1970s, Lockwood began to integrate increasingly more substantive elements of improvisation into her work in an attempt to acknowledge the significance of a performer’s spirit and ideas in the instantiation of a piece. Her embrace of improvisation in her work led increasingly to co-composition with performers like Wooley, Chase, and Yarn/Wire. This approach defines many of the works present on today’s program and is emblematic of Lockwood’s desire to push back against entrenched institutional norms of the classical tradition that diminish the collaborative creative labor and shared authorship of composition. It is no coincidence that these four works, and the vast majority of Lockwood’s output, are works of chamber music, that most intimately collaborative of genres.

In 2017, trumpet player Nathan Wooley contacted Lockwood to commission a work for his Brooklyn-based festival For/With. Upon meeting for the first time, the two found in each other kindred spirits and forged a friendship that has resulted in extensive collaboration. Wooley has spoken of *Becoming Air*, which he premiered at For/With at ISSUE Project Room in November 2018, as a kind of mirror of their developing friendship, each new performance providing opportunity to develop and transform the work in response to changing times, environments, and material circumstances. As its title suggests, the significance of transformation to *Becoming Air* is in fact also conceptually constitutive to the work. Structured by four strokes of a tam tam, spaced relatively evenly throughout the twenty-minute performance, each new section of the work explores the ways in which a sound, when set in motion, can metamorphose in curious and exciting directions. Each section explores different aspects of sounds’ animate nature, beginning with a muted, held note

on the trumpet that emerges from the gradually abating reverberations of the tam tam stroke. After a moment of silence, fragile sounds with rich overtones escape like whispers as Wooley tenderly blows over the small end of detached mouthpieces. While *Becoming Air* is, as Lockwood and Wooley note, an exploration of sounds at their extremities, of wild sounds that resist and break free from our attempts at control, it is not necessarily the decibel level that is pushed to the breaking point. Rather, in each section, Wooley invites the listener to attend to the extraordinary sensitivities and personalities of sounds as they travel through air and interact with room, membrane, microphone, and speaker: he initiates a sound, and we are witnesses to its unruly unfolding in time and space. This is an exploration of sound as living, breathing organism.

Jitterbug, scored for two players and six-channel, spatialized “tape” (sound recordings), is similarly concerned with the organic nature of sounds. Lockwood wrote the work in response to a commission from the Merce Cunningham Dance Company and it was premiered in Miami, Florida in 2007 in a piece entitled *eyeSpace* that featured dancers in silvery metallic unitards moving about a stage decorated with the decaying façade of an art deco cinema, broken in two. Since its choreographed premiere, however, *Jitterbug* has taken on a life of its own as a concert piece, often performed in the constellation heard today, with prepared piano and percussion alongside the accompaniment of the surround-sound voice of the tape part, composed of recordings of aquatic insects that Lockwood encountered in and around a series of small lakes and backwaters in Flathead Valley, Montana, as well as others provided to Lockwood by Lang Elliott of the NatureSound Studio. These sound recordings,



A page from the score of *Jitterbug* (2007), which reproduces a photograph by Gwen Deely of a rock Lockwood found in a creek bed in the Montana Rockies.

abuzz with microscopic insects and beetles are mixed with the contrasting, sustained tones of bowed tam tams and piano, recorded by William Winant, Gustavo Aguilar, and Joseph Kubera. The work bears a title that suggests the rapid fire movements of the early twentieth-century dance style after which it's named, the glorious energy and jagged edges of the music to which jitterbug dance was developed, the jittery movements of the (non-specified) insects that lent inspiration to those naming the dance, and to which Merce Cunningham's 2007 choreography referred.

These references meld together conceptually through *Jitterbug*'s name, bringing dance, music, and the insect world into literal and metaphorical contact with each other. Additionally, the work's score adds the enormous proportions of geological time, and the preservation of bodies through sediment to this list: *Jitterbug*'s graphic score consists of a stunning series of photographs, captured by Gwen Deely, of five rocks that Lockwood found in a creek bed in the Montana Rockies. The musicians read the rocks, moving from right to left and bottom to top, using their instruments to improvise upon the intricate patterns found within the strata contained within each rock. Throughout the piece, a conversation is thus enacted between pianist and percussionist; between improvising instrumentalists and the recorded sounds of beetles, bugs, thick-throated birds, and the richly textured aquatic landscape; and between unimaginable time scales and the vibrating bodies on stage and in the audience.

The second half of the evening's program opens with *Buoyant* (2013), an approximately six-and-a-half-minute meditation in stereo on the physical principle that lends the work its name. A triumphant plop and splash announce the beginning of the piece and acoustically situates us on the (more or less) gentle undulations of a body of water: cues from pitch and tempo suggest a lake. But this is no documentary snapshot of a summer vacation, capturing an idyllic moment on the water: it is instead a thrillingly playful study in composition with found gestures and textures. The splashing drop that opens *Buoyant* returns at structurally significant moments in the work, drawing us into and accompanying us out of the water with the piece's closing gesture. Between these buoyant bookends, Lockwood floats us toward a dock, allowing us to revel in its creaking, groaning flatulence as it is pushed and pulled by its watery host. In a next section, likewise preceded by the structural "plop," we suddenly appear to zoom out, lending our ears new perspective as we hear the gentle lapping of the lake's waves and the surrounding environment, complete with a chorus of birds and even the crowing of a rooster. Soon we're pulled inwards to the close mic'ing of a metallic surface for a final meditation on buoyant sound, during which we hear the gently percussive rumbling and the haunting resonance of a hollow drum. From the rhythmic pulses of the metallic body, we return to the surface of the water, buoying at its surface with a similarly rhythmic splashing—but only briefly, as if guiding us back to where we began and prompting us to ask ourselves if and how we are now listening differently.

The evening concludes with the most recent work on the program, *Into the Vanishing Point* (2019), a work co-composed between Lockwood and the New York-based piano-percussion ensemble Yarn/Wire. *Into the Vanishing Point* was commissioned by Yarn/Wire and premiered, alongside a performance of Wooley and Lockwood's *Becoming Air*, in November 2019 at Columbia University's Miller Theater as part of their composer portrait series, which celebrated Lockwood's eightieth birthday. Like *Becoming Air*, *Into the Vanishing Point* was the product of an approximately year-long intensive collaborative process of conversations, rehearsals, and listening. As percussionist Russell Greenberg noted in conversation with me about the work, the process began with Lockwood asking the group simply, "What are some sounds that you like?" From there, Lockwood and the quartet reveled in exploring, collecting, and building sounds. But during one visit relatively early on in the process, Lockwood arrived armed not with sounds, but with an article recently published in the *New York Times Magazine* on the increasing decimation of the world's insect populations (Brooke Jarvis' "The Insect Apocalypse is Here," November 27, 2018). It was this article, and the group's response to it, that eventually determined the shape of *Into the Vanishing Point*, which communicates a sense of collective mourning and terror over the human driven destruction and loss of the natural world. Over the course of the approximately twenty-five minute piece, the quartet of instrumentalists use preparations, non-traditional instruments including rocks, tinfoil, and string, as well as traditional performance techniques to swarm, rumble, clatter, twinkle, whistle, sing, and screech. Thanks to close mic'ing and the careful sound engineering by Caley Monahan-Ward, intricate, shimmering textures emerge as dialogues between performers and instruments ebb and wane in density and urgency. A palpable intimacy draws the ear in, inviting the listener to feel the emotional weight of this conversation as the sounds of this monument to the natural world hover, and eventually dissipate, around us.

I would like to express my great thanks to Claire Chase for kindly inviting me to contribute these notes, and to Annea Lockwood, Nathan Wooley, Russell Greenberg, and Vicki Ray for generously sharing their time and reflections with me in advance of this evening's program.

ANNEA LOCKWOOD

Aotearoa New Zealand-born American composer **Annea Lockwood** (b. 1939) brings vibrant energy, ceaseless curiosity, and a profound sense of openness to her music. Lockwood's lifelong fascination with the visceral effects of sound in our environments and through our bodies—the way sounds unfold and their myriad “life spans”—serves as the focal point for works ranging from concert music to performance art to multimedia installations.

In recent years Lockwood and her music have received widespread attention, including a Columbia University Miller Theatre Composer Portrait concert, a feature article in *The New York Times*, a SEAMUS Lifetime Achievement Award, a documentary film by director Sam Green, election to the American Academy of Arts and Letters, and a 2024 Fromm Foundation Commission. Her recent collaborative works *Into the Vanishing Point* with the ensemble Yarn/Wire and *Becoming Air* with avant-garde trumpeter Nathan Wooley were released on Black Truffle Records to great acclaim. Her work has been presented internationally at institutions and festivals such as Lucerne Festival, Tectonics Athens Festival, Signale Graz, Counterflows International Festival of Music and Art, Huddersfield Contemporary Music Festival, and many others.

Lockwood has received commissions from numerous ensembles and solo performers, including Bang On A Can, baritone Thomas Buckner, pianists Sarah Cahill, Lois Svard, and Jennifer Hymer, the Holon Scratch Orchestra, Essential Music, Yarn/Wire, and Issue Project Room.

Her music is recorded on the Lovely, XI, Mutable, Pogus, EM Records (Japan), Rattle Records, Recital, Harmonia Mundi, CRI, Superior Viaduct, Black Truffle, New World, Gruenrekorder, and Moving Furniture Records. Hearing Studies, co-authored with Ruth Anderson, was published by Open Space in 2021.

NATHAN WOOLEY

Hailed by *The New York Times* as making “the most progressive campfire music ever,” **Nate Wooley** is a trumpeter, composer, and writer whose work has reshaped contemporary American experimental music. Born in Clatskanie, Oregon, he began performing in his father’s big band at twelve and has since premiered works with the New York Philharmonic and composers including Christian Wolff, Wadada Leo Smith, and Sarah Hennies. Known for expanding the trumpet’s expressive range, Wooley has collaborated with Anthony Braxton, John Zorn, Annea Lockwood, and Éliane Radigue. His compositions merge improvisation, folk, text, and immersive sound, notably in his *Syllables* series, *Seven Storey Mountain*, and the collaborative ecosystem *Mutual Aid Music*. Recent work explores ecological interdependence and industrial soundscapes. Also a noted essayist for *The New York Review of Books*, *The Nation*, and *E-Flux Journal*, Wooley founded *Sound American*, a celebrated journal amplifying experimental and underrepresented musical voices.

VICKI RAY

Described as “phenomenal and fearless,” **Vicki Ray** is a pianist, improviser, and composer known for her bold interpretations and advocacy of new music. A founding member of Piano Spheres and head of keyboard studies at CalArts, where she holds the Hal Blaine Chair in Musical Performance, Ray has premiered countless works by leading contemporary composers and performed at major international festivals. A frequent collaborator with the Los Angeles Philharmonic’s Green Umbrella series, her recordings span Boulez to Reich and Cage to Wadada Leo Smith, including premiere recordings of Reich’s *You Are (Variations)* and *Daniel Variations*, and Cage’s *Européras 3 and 4*. Her album *The Ten Thousand Things* earned a 2013 Grammy nomination, while *River of 1000 Streams* was named one of *The New Yorker’s* top 20 recordings of 2017. Recent projects include *Sonnets* with Nick Photinos and *YAR* with Scot Ray; she also performs with the LA-based Partch ensemble.

WESLEY SUMPTER

Wesley Sumpter is a percussionist and drummer from Atlanta. He holds a Bachelor's degree in Percussion Performance from the University of Georgia under the love and guidance of former Pittsburgh Symphony timpanist Timothy Adams, Jr., and former Tucson Symphony timpanist Kimberly Toscano. Sumpter is pursuing his Master's degree at the University of Southern California under the LA Phil's James Babor and Joseph Pereira. He has performed as percussionist and timpanist with the Louisiana Philharmonic, Santa Barbara Symphony, Atlanta Symphony, and Los Angeles Philharmonic.

YARN/WIRE

Yarn/Wire is a New York based percussion and piano quartet (**Sae Hashimoto** and **Russell Greenberg**, percussion; **Laura Barger** and **Julia Den Boer**, pianos) dedicated to the promotion of creative, experimental new music. The ensemble is admired globally for the energy and care it brings to performances of today's most adventurous music, and *New York Classical Review* states that "Yarn/Wire may well be the most important new music ensemble on the classical scene today." Founded in 2005, the ensemble seeks to expand the representation of composers so that it might begin to better reflect our communities and their creative potential.

CLAIRE CHASE

Claire Chase, described by *The New York Times* recently as “the North Star of her instrument’s ever-expanding universe,” is a musician, interdisciplinary artist, and educator. Passionately dedicated to the creation of new ecosystems for the music of our time, Chase has given the world premieres of hundreds of new works by a new generation of artists, and in 2013 launched the 24-year commissioning project *Density 2036*. Now in its 12th year, *Density* reimagines the solo flute literature over a quarter-century through commissions, performances, recordings, education, and an accessible archive at densityarts.org. Chase co-founded the International Contemporary Ensemble in 2001, was named a MacArthur Fellow in 2012, and in 2017 was awarded the Avery Fisher Prize from Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. A dedicated teacher, she is currently Professor of the Practice of Music at Harvard University’s Department of Music, and a Creative Associate at The Juilliard School. Chase served as the Richard and Barbara Debs Creative Chair at Carnegie Hall for the 2022-23 season, as Music Director for the 2025 Ojai Music Festival. She has performed as a soloist recently with the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, San Francisco Symphony, BBC Scottish Symphony, and London Philharmonia. Her discography spans eleven critically acclaimed solo albums and over two dozen collaborative recording projects across genres.

UPCOMING EVENTS

THURSDAY, NOVEMBER 13 AT 12:15PM IN FACULTY ROOM, UNIVERSITY HALL
Dean's Noontime Concert Series: Parker Quartet

Blodgett Artists-in-Residence Parker Quartet perform a program including John Adams' *Fellow Traveler* and Schubert's Quartet in D minor, D. 810 "Death and the Maiden."

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 5 AT 8:00PM IN PAINE CONCERT HALL
Blodgett Chamber Music Series presents Parker Quartet

Blodgett Artists-in-Residence Parker Quartet perform a program including Schubert's String Quartet No. 14 in D minor, D. 810 "Death and the Maiden," and Schumann's Piano Quintet, with special guest Gloria Chien, piano.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 12 AT 7:30PM IN PAINE CONCERT HALL

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 13 AT 7:30PM IN PAINE CONCERT HALL

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 14 AT 7:30PM IN PAINE CONCERT HALL

The Harvard Studio for Electroacoustic Composition presents HYDRA

Join us for this pivotal moment in sonic history as Professor Hans Tutschku curates his final HYDRA concerts as HUSEAC Director. Friday and Saturday's performances will feature works composed by students of Music 167 & Music 264. Sunday evening will be a special farewell portrait concert featuring multichannel works by Hans Tutschku.

Events are open to the public; some require ticket reservations.
Please visit www.music.fas.harvard.edu for more information.

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