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AP New York

Composer turns Hudson River bridge into a musical instrument

July 18, 2006, 11:56 PM EDT

POUGHKEEPSIE, N.Y. -- Handel composed Water Music.

Now, a Hudson Valley composer is recording "bridge music."

Joseph Bertolozzi hopes to turn the Mid-Hudson Bridge into a giant percussion instrument and incorporate it into the 2009 celebration of the 400th anniversary of Henry Hudson's sail up the river.

A sound engineer from Kingston and team of four from the state Bridge Authority helped Bertolozzi with the project Tuesday.

They hung microphones from 16 of the 144 pairs of suspender cables that hold up the roadway. The mikes pick up only vibrations, not traffic noise.

Wednesday, they will return to the span with recording equipment and percussion instruments and climb 135 feet down ladders to a bridge pier. Using a drumstick made from a small log, Bertolozzi plans to strike the bridge's frame and record the resulting sound. Later he will piece the recordings together to compose a song.

For the anniversary celebration, he hopes to assemble a team of 16 percussionists to "play" the bridge.

Information from: Poughkeepsie Journal, <http://www.poughkeepsiejournal.com>

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