

PostClassic

Kyle Gann on Music After the Fact...

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Return of the Wild Composer

I'm late with this, having regressed through space and time (lifetime-wise) for a small home-town vacation in Dallas. But every Sunday, wherever I am, I click on the *Times* music section with a pessimistic sigh expressing the unlikelihood of their ever mentioning any music that might actually interest me. And this week I was encouraged by [Daniel J. Wakin's and John Schwartz's article about composer Joseph Bertolozzi](#), who is writing a piece to be performed, percussively, on the Mid-Hudson Bridge in Poughkeepsie. This looks like the kind of crazy, creative, innovatively public new-music project that composers used to pursue in the halcyon days of the New Music America festival: electronic sounds on the subways, music in the form of a baseball game, singers and instrumentalists drifting on boats, and like that. I'm thrilled to see Mr. Bertolozzi (to refer to him *Times*-style) pursuing it, and I look forward to driving down to hear his piece. What's less gratifying is that this kind of creativity has so receded from our musical life that the authors treat it as whackily out of the ordinary ("bizarre," "quixotic," *actually* playing the bridge). Back in the old days, before Reagan somehow made the entire world conservative, using a bridge as a musical instrument - however newsworthy - would have hardly raised eyebrows.

Posted by Kyle Gann at July 2, 2007 4:39 PM