Olana
for solo vibraphone
by Kyle Gann
2007
Olana (2007)

I’ve been going through a phase of naming pieces after the places I conceived them in, and percussionist Kerry O’Brien convinced me to write a vibraphone piece for her friend Andy Bliss on the day we visited Olana, the estate of the Hudson Valley Painter Frederic Church. The piece does little more than try to capture and sustain a mood. If I were to add a rather dry technical note, I could say that I arrived at its particular tonality by looking at the vibraphone key layout and thinking about the problem of trying to change interval size with the two mallets in one hand. I tried to turn that challenge into an advantage by arranging the tonality over each changing drone note to maximize the unchanging position of parallel intervals - resulting, I hope, in a piece that lends itself to an expressive performance.

Thanks to Andrew Bliss, who helped edit the score, and who performed the premiere at the University of Kentucky, Lexington, on February 8, 2008.

Duration: 9 minutes
To Kerry O'Brien

Olana

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keep the pedal down through chord changes and let the new chords emerge

very gradually crescendo

Olana
gradually decrescendo
Olana
ever so slight ritard

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