

JOYRIDE

Originally conceived as a piece entitled *Angry White Male*, *Joyride* is written for a number of percussionists drumming on a car or van. I actually wrote this in 2000 as a student teacher in Bismarck, ND for a concert with my students called “The Rhythm Factory Experience”. This was then revisited with another group of my students a couple of years later in a project called “The Industrial Percussion Lounge”. Soon after, this was performed at Birch Creek Performance Center in Door County, WI and served as a nice transition project to its most recent home – Naperville Central High School’s *Drumshow*.

The following are some suggestions for staging and performance, recognizing that all cars/vans are different and that the circumstances surrounding each performance are probably completely different in every venue:

- Be aware that this piece relies heavily on visual content; so be sure to address this aspect of this piece early in rehearsal.
- Use old drumsticks (preferably marching sticks) that can take a lot of abuse and tape them so as to present a unified look.
- If performing this piece as seen on the attached DVD, bear in mind that the majority of action happens on the passenger’s side, so while it may be tempting to use the car/van with headlights facing the audience, the original setup is actually more audience friendly.
- I am perfectly fine with additions, subtractions, or alterations of any sort with this piece on account of the many sounds different types of car make.
- Rehearsals can actually take place in lieu of a car by building an imaginary car in a larger room with strong, plastic band chairs placed back to back, four rows deep (assuming the director is comfortable with your students drumming on them).
- Most salvage yards will actually donate a car with the only financial charge incurred being or delivery - and even then, recognition in the performance programs have actually moved the shops to waive those costs in the past.
- And finally, I highly recommend that this piece be taught simply by rote. I am not normally a proponent of this approach, but given the circumstances of students climbing, jumping, etc., I have found rehearsals to be much safer and more effective when they are not trying to keep track of individual sheets of music.

Even though *Joyride* is logistically a little more work than most percussion ensemble pieces, I have found that the rewards far outweigh the work going into it. –Good luck and God bless!

**free*