

THE RACE

The Race was originally written on the Chapman Stick in about 2003 or so. It was recorded on the first String Planet CD with an instrumentation of Chapman Stick, drum kit and string quartet. The Race is reflective of my overall goal at the time, which was to combine a 20th-century classical sound with an aggressively pop/rock rhythm section, and to make that combination sound natural and convincing. Lurking in the back of my mind were the wondrous harmonies of my favorite composers from the early to mid 20th century (Copland, Prokofiev, Shostakovich, Stravinsky, Ravel, etc.), as well as the progressive rock groups that I loved in the 70s – Yes, ELP and Gentle Giant.

Combining those energies is still a target of mine. The Race probably comes as close to achieving that synthesis as anything I've ever written. I have scored it for string quartet and piano, but the piano could easily be supplemented or replaced by electric bass and guitar (or Chapman Stick, why not??), with added drum kit or shaker to keep that insistent up-tempo groove going.

It's a programmatic piece of music – hopefully you can conjure in your mind's eye an actual race, with all the excitement, changing of leads, and ups and downs that accompany that. The introduction revs it up, and then we take off from there, ending in a last-minute spill over the finish line.