

**Cipher For  
The Light-  
house Twins  
David  
Pocknee**

# **Cipher For The Lighthouse Twins**

**for two readers**

David Pocknee

This piece was written for Inlets Ensemble and was first performed in Audiotheque, Miami on 19 September 2015.

Special thanks to Alex Lough and Ana Lemnaru who helped me hone the rules for this piece.

### **Set-up**

Two readers sit facing each other, each with a copy of this book.

These readers will hereon be referred to as Reader 1 and Reader 2, or *Reader X* and *Reader Y* where the instructions for the roles are interchangeable.

The Readers can be sat at either side of a small table, with the books placed on the table; cross-legged on the floor; or comfortably sat in chairs, facing each other, with approximately one metre between them.

The performance of this piece should be as relaxed, informal and uncontrived as possible. No attempt should be made to dramatize or apply extraneous performance practices to the work. The primary experience an audience watching this work should have is of watching two people informally engaging in an activity similar to reading.

## **The Piece**

This is a turn-based piece.

*Reader X* will turn a page/pages based on the instructions given on the current open page of their book, and *Reader Y* then turns a page/pages in response, based on the instructions given on the current open page of their book. *Reader X* then turns a page/pages in response... etc.

This continues until one of the performers notices that they have reached a loop (defined below), at which point they close the book and can either end the piece or re-start it.

The number of re-starts can be chosen beforehand, can be based on a pre-chosen duration, or can be decided collectively during the performance.

Ideally, the piece should last longer than the duration it takes to become boring.

## **The Symbols**

In this book, each page shows a series of four sets of symbols, each representing a number of page turns in a certain direction:

- ◀◀ = two pages backwards
- ◀ = one page backwards
- ▶ = one page forwards
- ▶▶ = two pages forwards

On each page of this book, the symbols to the left of the “=” indicate to the Reader of the book the four possible actions that the other Reader might perform during their turn i.e. turn two pages forward, turn one page forward, turn one page backwards, turn two pages backwards.

The symbols to the right of the “=” are the pages that should be turned in response by the Reader of the book on their following turn, depending on which action the other Reader performs.

Once *Reader X* has turned the pages indicated by the instructions on their current page, they wait for *Reader Y* to react. *Reader Y*, takes note of the amount of pages turned by *Reader X* and in which direction, and uses the symbols on their current page to determine how many pages they turn in response.

The work continues, with each Reader alternately watching the other's page turns and then reacting to them according to the instructions on their current page.

At their turn, a Reader has the choice of following the instructions on their current page or, if they have noticed a loop, closing their book. When one Reader closes their

book, the other Reader must close their book as well. A Reader can not initiate the closing of books if it is not their turn.

## **Loops**

Loops are created when sequences of page-turning between the Readers repeat in succession.

Once a sequence of page-turns has been repeated three times or more it is considered a loop.

e.g.

Reader 1: ▶

Reader 2: ◀

Reader 1: ▶

Reader 2: ◀

Reader 1: ▶

Reader 2: ◀

Loops may be as short as a set of one instruction per Reader that keeps the two readers repeating the same two page-turning actions (as seen in the example above), or may be much longer e.g. a sequence of 10 actions.

Readers should constantly be watching for loops.

## **Page-Turning Rules**

When two pages are to be turned, they must be turned one at a time, with the first page being fully turned before starting to turn the second page.

The Reader watching must wait until the other Reader has fully turned all of their pages before beginning to turn their own,

## **Beginning**

To begin the piece, both performers turn to a random page.

Reader 1 checks the time on a clock and, according to the amount of seconds past the minute, chooses to turn one or two pages forward or backwards using the following system:

$n$  = number of seconds past the minute shown on the watch

$0s \leq n < 15s$  = forward 2 pages

$15s \leq n < 30s$  = forward 1 page

$30s \leq n < 45s$  = backward 1 page

$45s \leq n < 60s$  = backward 2 pages

Reader 2 watches how many pages Reader 1 turns, and in which direction. Reader 2 then looks at the symbols on their current page to determine how many pages they must turn, and in which direction. Reader 1 responds etc.

## **The Printing**

This score should be printed single-sided on A5-size paper, or its North American equivalent, and bound well.

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