

# Nothing Is Surprising David Pocknee

***Nothing Is Surprising***

**for 3 performers**

**written for Inlets Ensemble**

***David Pocknee***

first performed in Miami, 19 September 2015

# Set-up

large canvas or heavy duty tarpaulin (approx. 2 x 2.5m) to protect floor

bottle of PVA glue

transparent tape

packet of chewing gum (strip-type, not bubble gum)

picture frame w/ A3 paper

cork w/needle

painter's overalls

painter's overalls with no foot covers

painter's overalls

picture frame w/ A3 paper

washing up bowl filled w/ acrylic paint

kitchen rolls for wiping hands

packet of chewing gum

the score *Inseparable*

washing up bowl filled w/ acrylic paint

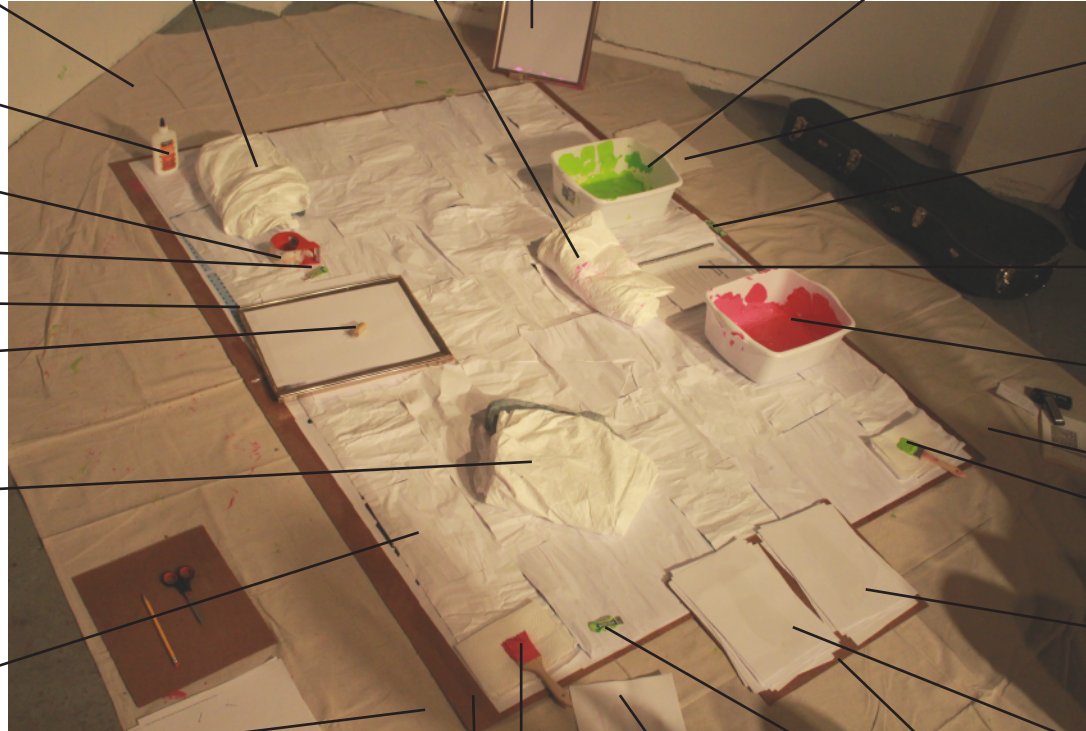
small bottle of water

paint brush

pile of 15-20 A4 sheets of photocopies of the performer's left feet, placed face down.

pile of 15-20 A4 sheets of photocopies of the performer's right feet, placed face down.

Piece of thin MDF, slightly larger than A3 size, with two sheets of A4 paper pasted onto the board to prevent the two piles of paper on top from sliding around.



This "page" should be taped to the MDF down its left side, allowing it open like the page of a book.

small bottle of water

taped together grid of A4 and A3 paper

All of the sheets of A3 and A4 paper should be crumpled alternately N-S and E-W.

underneath the top grid of paper there is another grid pasted to the MDF board

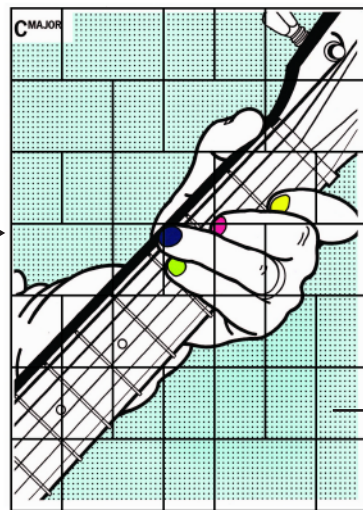
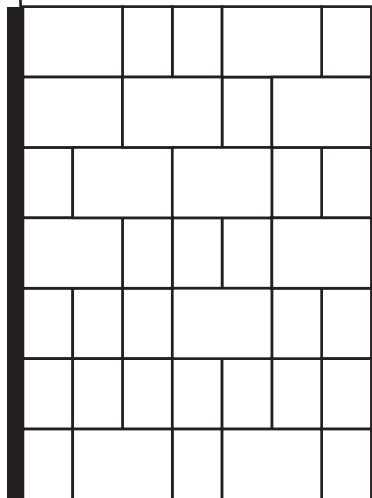
grid of printed A4 and A3 paper pasted to the MDF board

paint brush

packet of chewing gum

two sheets of A4 paper stuck together with a dried paint hand-print

thin MDF board (approx. 1.8 x 2.4m)



This design is taken from *Denny Laine's Guitar Book* and can be found in the pdf file performance-grid.pdf. This design will measure 1.57m x 2.10m

This diagram shows how the stage should be set up before the performance commences.

## The Stage

For ease of description, the four sides of the performance area or “stage” will be from hereon out referred to using the points of the compass (see diagram to the right).

Any orientation of the performance space to the audience is allowed, as long as the south side of the grid is closer to the audience than the north side. Asymmetric arrangements rotated between  $-60^\circ$  and  $+60^\circ$  from centre are preferred. Where the work is presented in the round, any orientation of the performance space is allowed.

All performers start the piece wearing the painter’s overalls placed on the stage. The overalls for the performer starting on the west side of the stage must have no feet. This performer must perform barefoot.

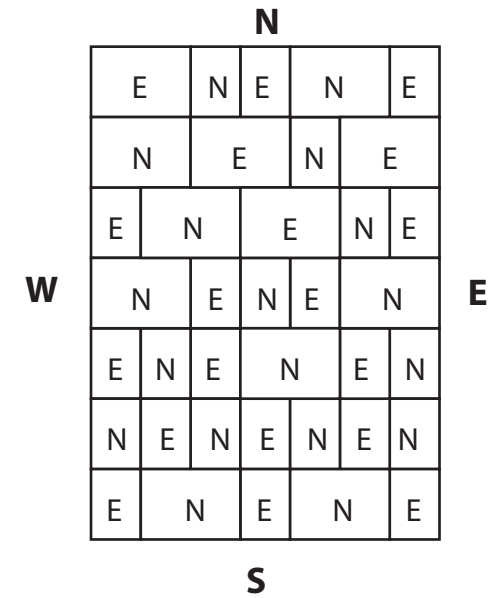
All three performers should start as shown in the photograph below, copying as closely as possible, the seating positions, orientation and posture of the performers shown.



**Performer 1**

**Performer 2**

**Performer 3**



### Top Layer Of Paper

The top layer of paper should be created by taping together a mix of white A4 and A3 pages in the design shown above. These pages should be taped on the underside, so that none of the tape is visible.

Each page should be crumpled either along its North-South or East-West axis, according to the diagram above.

N = Crumpled North-South

E = Crumpled East-West

### Inseparable Score

Performer 2 will need a copy of the score of *Inseparable* for the performance of this piece.

The score is destroyed each time it is performed, so enough copies will need to be printed for the rehearsal and performance.

## The Paint

The paint used should be acrylic paint.

The paint should be of two colours, each one a different colour as close as possible to one of those on the nails of the hand in the image used in the piece:



When choosing colours it is best to err on the side of gaudy, neon “Miami” colours.

The paint is used twice in the piece, and on both occasions demands a slightly different consistency.

To start the piece, the paint should be viscous, such that it can easily stick paper together.

For the “running section”, the consistency should be less viscous, such that when the paint is on the “runner’s” feet, it causes paper to only briefly adhere to the soles of their feet.

To gain this consistency, water is added to the paint during performance.

## The Two Washing Up Bowls Used To Hold the Paint

Two washing up bowls, or similar container should be used to hold the acrylic paint.

Both of these containers must be the same size, and both must be large enough to easily fit Performer 2’s feet in.

## Thin MDF Board (approx. 1.8 x 2.4m)

Approx. 1.8m x 2.4m of thin Medium Density Fibreboard (MDF) (this can be constructed out of laying smaller boards next to each other to create a larger panel).

The guitar chord image created from A4 and A3 is directly pasted onto this.

## Two Sheets of A4 Paper Stuck Together With a Dried Paint Hand-print

This needs to be prepared at least an hour prior to the performance.

Take two sheets of blank A4 paper.

Cover the palm of one of your hands with one of the colours of acrylic paint used in the performance and make a hand print in the centre of one of the sheets.

Adhere the other sheet of paper to the one with the hand-print using the hand-print.

Line up the edges of both sheets as closely as possible.

## Photocopies of the performer’s right and left feet.

These may photocopies or scans of Performer 2’s feet, centrally placed in the page.

Both images must be in black and white with inverted colours, so that the background is white, and the foot itself is black.

The images of feet found accompanying this score can also be used, if the creation of these pages is problematic.

## Chewing Gum

All chewing gum should be of the strip, rather than capsule type. Bubblegum is not an acceptable substitute.

## Paint Brushes

Both of these paint brushes should be moderately large, the same size, and be of the type you might use for re-painting a skirting board.

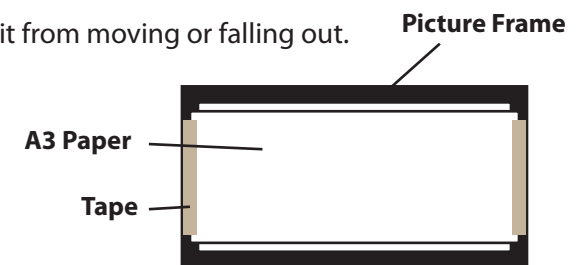
## Cork w/ Needle

A sewing needle inserted blunt-end first into the end of a wine cork.

This can be glued in place to prevent it from moving or falling out.

## Picture Frame w/ A3 Paper

An empty picture frame (16x12inches) with a blank sheet of A3 paper taped taut across it, anchored on both of the short sides.



As many of these actions can be of indeterminate length, the exact alignment of the performer's beginning and termination of actions is only guessed at. The visual arrangements of actions in this score is used to illustrate likely temporal arrangements of events, but should NOT be used as a guide to timing in a performance. Each action should go on for as long as is necessary. This score is not to scale.

Performer 1  
Performer 2  
Performer 3

Chewing Piece

Obtain a pack of chewing gum.  
The gum should be in strip form.  
Bubble gum is not allowed.  
Open the pack of chewing gum.  
Chew

for the duration of the *Nothing Is Surprising*.

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Sewing Needle Piece #1

Pick up the empty picture frame with an A3 piece of paper stretched taut over it.  
Pick up the wine cork with the sewing needle inserted blunt-end first into it.  
Hold the cork so that the needle is pointing sharp-end-first towards the top of the line drawn down the centre of the paper.  
Start making holes in the paper as fast as possible.  
Each hole should be at least one needle-length away from the previous one.  
Keep doing this until the paper has completely split down its centre.

approx. 1-2 mins

Inseparable

Follow the instructions in the book *Inseparable*.

approx. 4-5 mins

Paper Tearing Piece

Pick up the pre-prepared two sheets of A4 paper adhered together with a dried paint hand-print.  
Pull apart the two sheets causing minimal damage to both.

(a variation of textscoreaday #293)

approx. 3-4 mins

these lines indicate cueing

### Prepare for Sewing Needle Piece #2

Remove the two halves of A3 paper attached to the picture frame.

Attach a new, blank piece of A3 paper in the same position.

Place the frame, the cork, the chewing gum and the tape in the North-West corner just outside of the grid, so that the only thing in your corner is the bottle of PVA glue.

Wait for a cue from Performer 2.

### Glue Piece

Pick up a full bottle of PVA glue from the North-West corner.

Squirt the glue all over the paper on the floor of the performance space. Squirt in circular motions.

Do not let the flow of glue stop.

Cover more and more of the stage with glue as Performers 2 and 3 move off the stage.

*approx. 1 min*

*approx. 30s*

Clean your hands of paint with kitchen towel as fast as possible.

*approx. 15s*

Move the score to "Inseparable" off of the grid.

Pick up both containers of paint.

Walk on your knees, following the path shown on the right.

Place down the two containers each side of the small MDF board.

Then stand up with one foot on each pile of photocopies.

*approx. 10s*

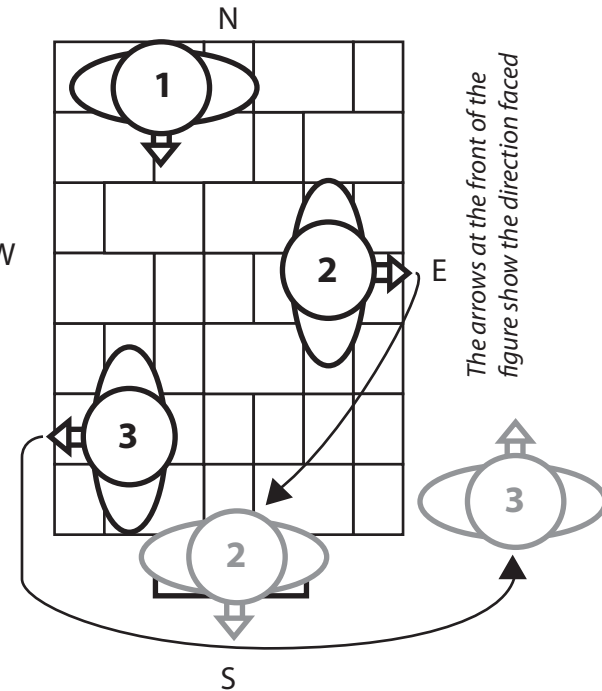
W

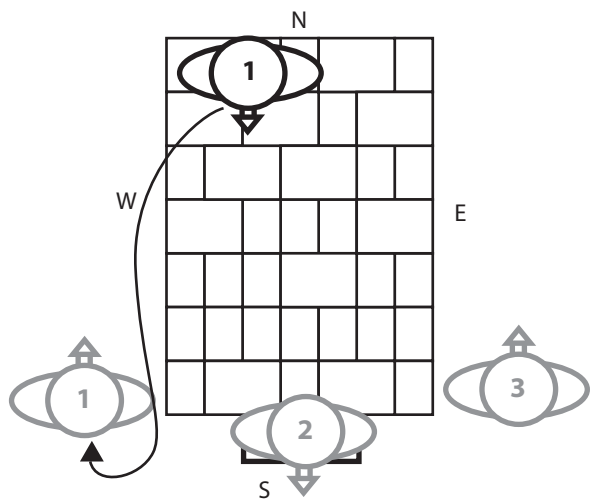
The arrows at the front of the figure show the direction faced

Wait for a cue from Performer 2.

Crawl on all fours, following the path shown in the diagram on the right.

*approx. 10s*





Crawl on all fours along the path shown in the diagram on the left.

*approx. 5s*

Wait for Performer 2 to finish "Running Piece".

Pick up the paint brush and the bottle of water to your right.  
 Add enough water to the container of paint closest to you, such that the paint less viscous, and suitable for use in the "Running Piece" outlined below (this will take some experimentation in rehearsal).  
 Use the paint brush to mix the paint and water.

Pick up the paint brush and the bottle of water in the South-East corner.  
 Add enough water to the container of paint closest to you, such that the paint less viscous, and suitable for use in the "Running Piece" outlined below (this will take some experimentation in rehearsal).  
 Use the paint brush to mix the paint and water.

Wait for Performer 1 to arrive at South-West corner and for both containers of paint to be mixed.

Wait for Performer 1 to arrive at South-West corner and for both containers of paint to be mixed.

*Running Piece*

Stand with one foot on each pile of paper photocopies of feet, facing South.  
 Place your left foot into the container of paint to the left of the piles of photocopies.  
 Place your left foot back on the pile of photocopies.  
 Place your right foot into the container of paint to the right of the piles of photocopies.  
 Place your left foot back on the pile of photocopies.  
 Start running on the spot, in such a way that the papers under your feet fly backwards onto the glue squirted on the grid.  
 Stop when all the paper has been redistributed or your feet have become too dry to move the paper.

*approx. 15s*

Wait for Performer 2 to finish "Running Piece".

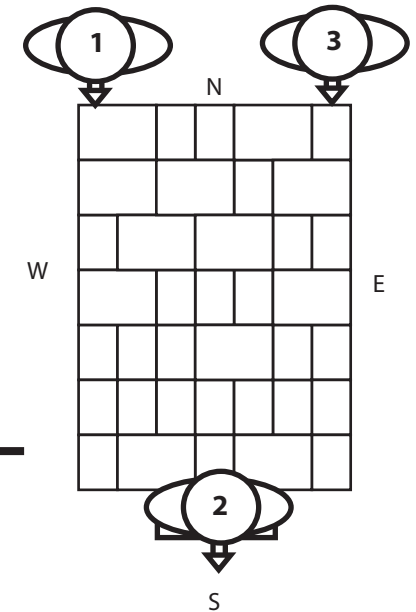
*approx. 15s*

*Painting Piece*

If the photocopies thrown over the stage by the "Running Piece", have not spread themselves evenly over the stage, re-distribute some of the pages such that they are more evenly spread.

Pick up the South-West container of paint just used for *Running Piece*.  
Crawl to the nearest piece of paper thrown out by the piece which is either a photocopy or footprint of a right foot. (Footprints will be the same colour as the paint in the container you are holding).  
Using the paintbrush, paint a curved line (like a single segment of the edge of  $<90^\circ$  of a circle) between the current piece of paper and the nearest, unconnected, right-foot print or right-foot photocopy. Where possible choices are equidistant, the paper closest to the south side should be chosen.  
Repeat the above action until all of the right-foot prints and right-foot photocopies are connected.  
Whilst painting, slowly move to the North of the stage, until you are in the position shown in the diagram below.

approx. 1 min



Stand Still.  
Keep facing South.  
Wait until you can hear that the other two performers have finished their actions and are still.

*Painting Piece*

If the photocopies thrown over the stage by the "Running Piece", have not spread themselves evenly over the stage, re-distribute some of the pages such that they are more evenly spread.

Pick up the South-East container of paint just used for *Running Piece*.  
Crawl to the nearest piece of paper thrown out by the piece which is either a photocopy or footprint of a left foot. (Footprints will be the same colour as the paint in the container you are holding).  
Using the paintbrush, paint a curved line (like a single segment of the edge of  $<90^\circ$  of a circle) between the current piece of paper and the nearest, unconnected, left-foot print or left-foot photocopy. Where possible choices are equidistant, the paper closest to the south side should be chosen.  
Repeat the above action until all of the left-foot prints and left-foot photocopies are connected.  
Whilst painting, slowly move to the North of the stage, until you are in the position shown in the diagram above.

approx. 1 min

*Sewing Needle Piece #2*

Kneel in the North-West corner, facing South.  
Pick up the picture frame and cork left there earlier.

Watch Player 2's left foot as they walk the painted path.  
Making holes in the paper as fast as possible, trace the position of Player 2's left foot in relation to the entire performance area as they walk.  
Stop when Player 2 reaches the end of their walk.

*approx. 1 min*

*Walking Piece*

Move your right foot to the right-foot foot print or photocopy that is the first page in the painted trail for that foot.  
Move your left foot to the left-foot foot print or photocopy that is the first page in the painted trail for that foot.  
Make sure that your feet line up as closely as possible with the orientation of the image on the page.  
In any order, move your feet to each consecutive page in their painted trail, always lining up your feet as closely as possible to the image.  
Stop when both feet have reached the end of their respective trails.

*approx. 1 min*

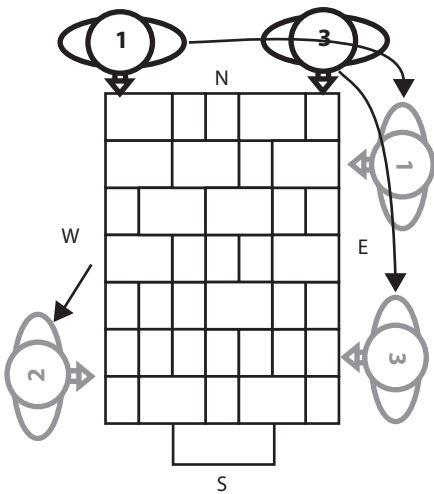
*Sewing Needle Piece #2*

Kneel in the North-East corner, facing South.  
Pick up the picture frame and cork.

Kneel in the North-East corner, facing South.  
Pick up the picture frame and cork.  
Watch Player 2's right foot as they walk the painted path.  
Making holes in the paper as fast as possible, trace the position of Player 2's left foot in relation to the entire performance area as they walk.  
Stop when Player 2 reaches the end of their walk.

*approx. 1 min*

Remove the chewing gum from your mouth, stick it to the centre of the paper on the frame and stick the needle through the centre of the gum, so that it stays there. Place the frame inside the container of paint.



Crawl on all fours to the North-East corner (follow Performer 3) (see diagram). Kneel, facing West.

With Performer 3, tightly roll up the top layer of paper, to reveal the guitar design pasted to the board underneath.

When you and Performer 3 have rolled up the top layer such that you have reached the West side of the stage, hold it in place whilst Performer 2 tapes it down.

Exit the stage.

Standing still, remove the chewing gum from your mouth and stretch it between the where your two feet are placed.

Walk to the South-West Corner (see diagram). Kneel down facing East.

Pick up the tape left in the North-West corner (crawl to get it).

Wait.

With the tape, tape down the rolled up layer of paper held by Performers 1 and 3 to the West side of the board, such that it does not move or unfurl.

Exit the stage.

Remove the chewing gum from your mouth, stick it to the centre of the paper on the frame and stick the needle through the centre of the gum, so that it stays there. Place the frame inside the container of paint.



Crawl on all fours to the South-East corner (see diagram). Kneel, facing West.

With Performer 1, tightly roll up the top layer of paper, to reveal the guitar design pasted to the board underneath.

When you and Performer 1 have rolled up the top layer such that you have reached the West side of the stage, hold it in place whilst Performer 2 tapes it down.

Exit the stage.