An Introduction to Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland

An extract from a presentation given by Jillian Keiley and Robert Chafe on 26 March 2004 as part of the *Shifting Tides: Atlantic Canadian Theatre Yesterday, Today, and Tomorrow* Conference held at the Graduate Centre for Study of Drama, University of Toronto.

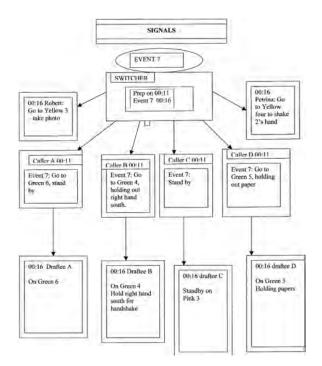
J: Since our inception, Artistic Fraud of Newfoundland has been developing a mathematically based choreography and directing system in order to produce very specific movement and sound instances on stage, like symphonic music but created with an actor's speaking voice, natural movement, technical elements and blocking. We call this device Kaleidography.

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- R: If for no other reason than to avoid continuously repeating the preceding long-winded sentence.
- J: Kaleidography involves the pre-rehearsal charting of instances of staging.
- R: This charting can be accomplished in many forms including music notation.

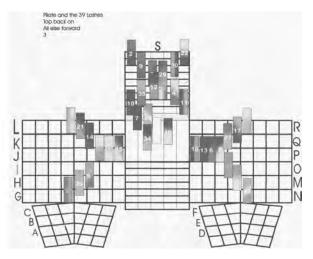


Score for The Cheat (1996) by Jillian Keiley.



Score for Signals (2001) by Jillian Keiley.

- J: Flow charts.
- R: Grid diagrams.



Grid for Jesus Christ Superstar (1998) by Jillian Keiley.

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J: And stuff that we simply cook up to suit our own needs.

bells bells she's cracking	bx shifting bx shifting
abe's cracking	9
she's cracking	
sucs cincking	
Rolls C. F.	
tx thandersheet	
see music schedule	23
fr	thunder roll
bells	2 bars fast
07065	Keiman rushing out on wharf
	2 bers fast
	thunder dissepating
	EMMAI
	2 bars fast
in position	
bells	2 bars fast
bells	skow bells 1 bar
bells	slow bells 1 ber
	skow bells 1 bar
bext	that was a beauty
bells	slow bells 1 bar
bells (continuing)	tremolo (FGA, 3 dampen)
	Dad. You should come home
lext	I thought she was going to split right in two. Sha's cracking.
text	yeah
CTOSS	off
	Ex bells cross bells br. tot bells bells bells bells bells bells bells continuing) off rhythm faid bells continuing) off rhythm faid bells continuing) off rhythm faid bells conty bells conty bells conty

Chart for Icycle (2001) by Jillian Keiley.

- R: That is what an Artistic Fraud "script" might look like.
- J: And while one of our Kaleidographic scripts will probably never get published.

	It's just a meeting, that's all		
Colin	I don't even know what to say to him	I'm not prepared	
laura	No	not	over terrifie
Ob Anita	I don't know what to	I'm not prepared for an e I'm not scared	emergency over water
Anita	I'm not scared		
2 PAT	how could a person do it - calculate it- 10		
Pall x	Baggage	Fallmin Rom	min Loan's
sandy x7	baggage emotional lian	itiyita.	
kelly	Did I leave any baggage		B might ram I
dayid	Leave		l might [
Sandy	of course I'm happy she's getting married	đ	
3 Andy	She looks kind of like cousin Louise		
and the second sec	ma winant heaht		1000 0000
VID0113C	Wait for	A PRIMA WALKSHIMA	100 001000
0.0000	What for this man this	Marris Marris	all results
III III III III III III III III III II	tori il matur	Dealer Dealer	A.44000.7.8
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0211	100 III III	1.00	
Venn	Pull the handle and the door will fall towa	rds you	
4 darcy	That guy keeps staring back here- what a	creep	
darey #7	what am		TRATING
ready	what is that small	it smells like something	Lunning
	is that smell coming from him	is provide the solution of	strange
main			
maja matt	what the net	ette same niese	range

Fugue Text for Fear of Flying (2006) by Jillian Keiley.

R: And we'll probably never be famous enough to be chased by the paparazzi.



Robert Chafe pursued for an interview. Photo by Robert Chafe (sort of).

- R: There have been a few actors who have given us the benefit of the doubt.
- J: Over the years we have cultivated a highly skilled group of performers who have become adept at interpreting these charts that look like the devil's own hieroglyphics to the untrained eye.



Fear of Flight (2005). "Bride" played by Holly Rolfe. Photo by John James.

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Chekhov Variations (2002). "Trigorin" played by Andy Jones, "Irina" played by Sherry White. Photo by Sheilagh O'Leary.



Jesus Christ Superstar (1998) "Jesus" played by Keith Loukes, "Judas" played by Steve Guy. Photo by Jeff Melbourne.

R: [...] I banged into Jillian Keiley at a Christmas party. Then but a mere acquaintance, Jill was ranting about some fantastic idea of dropping sixty square feet of polyester over a twenty person chorus. On top of the sheet, a woman in the throws of unrequited love. By the end of the night we had come up with the basic premise of *Under Wraps: A spoke opera*. Though I, of course, quickly twisted it to be a gay man in the throws of unrequited love.



Under Wraps (1997, 2000). "David" played by Steve Cochrane, "Mark" played by Robert Chafe. Photo by Marni Burkhardt.

- J: The idea was to compose a ninety minute *a cappella* opera with naturally spoken text.
- R: The challenge was to integrate our timing system with text, grid blocking, music, lighting, and a full chorus.
- J: Eighteen brave actors were to move around the set concealed by a 40 x 60 foot parachute cloth. These actors

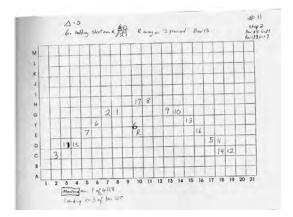
under the cloth were strictly choreographed to arrive and position themselves on precisely marked areas on the stage using a grid system.

- J: The two actors on top of the sheet were also precisely directed and their blocking, like *The Cheat* [see Image 8], harmonized with the blocking of the actors under the cloth.
- R: Well, myself and Steve, Steve Cochrane here, on top of the sheet couldn't see exactly where they were under the sheet, and those under the sheet couldn't see at all where we were, or even where the other chorus members were most times, so the timing of all the events on stage was critical.



Under Wraps (1997, 2000). "Mark" played by Robert Chafe. Photo by Marni Burkhardt.

J: The precision imposed using the grid and timing system made it possible.



R: Though the cast did joke during rehearsal that the process was called Kaleidography not because of the kaleidoscope effect, but because they kept on "kaliding" into each other.



Under Wraps (1997, 2000). "David" played by Steve Cochrane, "Mark" played by Robert Chafe. Photo by Marni Burkhardt.

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- J: *Under Wraps* also developed the music/text relationship for Kaleidography. Robert wrote the script, Petrina Bromley, also the musical director, wrote the score. But we had a lot of things to figure out. What exactly gets written first? How do we fugue text, keep it comprehensible, and keep the craft in the story?
- R: We learned how to integrate our chorus so that the speaking actors could have natural sounding dialogue with a group that was singing the other half of the conversation.
- J: We learned how to place text in the music, so the actor understood the exact timing and placement of each line, by working months before the rehearsal was on its feet learning the lines to a click track.



Score for Under Wraps (1997) by Petrina Bromley.

- R: And, importantly, we developed a way for the actors to still control their character and line interpretation under the constraints of this strict system.
- J: *Under Wraps* opened in February of 1997 in St. John's, and toured to Halifax, Calgary, Banff, and Vancouver.