

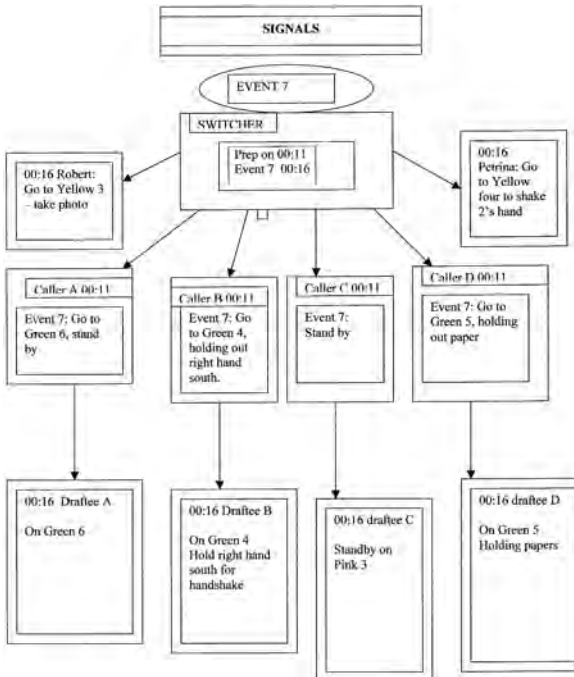
AN INTRODUCTION TO ARTISTIC FRAUD OF NEWFOUNDLAND

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.
- 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.

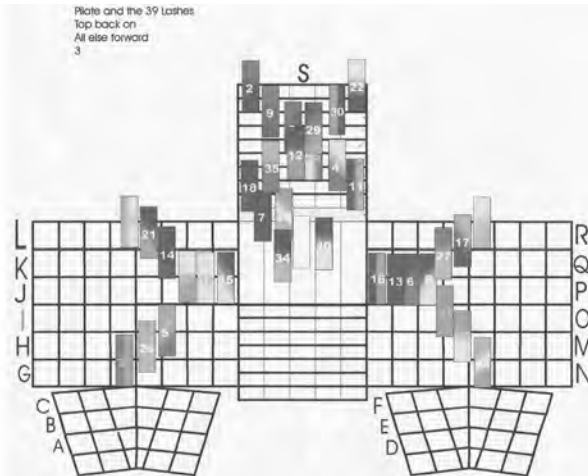
Score for *The Cheat* (1996) by Jillian Keiley.



Score for *Signals* (2001) by Jillian Keiley.

J: Flow charts.

R: Grid diagrams.



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

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.



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.

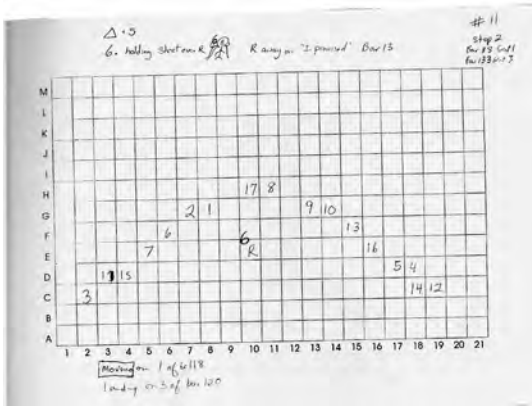
- J: The two actors on top of the sheet were also precisely directed and their blocking, like *The Cheat* [see Image 8], harmonized with the blocking of the actors under the cloth.
- R: Well, myself and Steve, Steve Cochrane here, on top of the sheet couldn't see exactly where they were under the sheet, 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.

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.

The image shows a musical score for the play *Under Wraps*. It features a fugue for three vocal parts (Sparkes) and two instrumental parts (Dave). The lyrics are "Da - a - vid Sparkes It's dis - hon - est oo". The score is written on a grand staff with treble and bass clefs. The vocal parts are in the upper staves, and the instrumental parts are in the lower staves. The lyrics are written below the vocal staves. The score is in a key signature of one sharp (F#) and a 4/4 time signature. The tempo is marked "Allegretto". The score is for a three-part fugue. The first part is for Sparkes, the second for Sparkes, and the third for Sparkes. The instrumental parts are for Dave. The lyrics are "Da - a - vid Sparkes It's dis - hon - est oo".

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.

