

## Wishart and the Anti-Score

Trevor Wishart (b. 1946) is a major contributor to sonic art both in academic writing and in composition. Instead of a score, Wishart uses an anti-score. In this lightning talk, I will explain how Wishart presents the anti-score as a philosophy, how it can manifest, and how a music analyst might approach it.

In his books *On Sonic Art* (1996) and *Audible Design* (1994), Wishart explains his view that traditional notation is next to useless for electronic music, especially multimedia works. Notation works as a lattice, showing only two elements at a time like a two-dimensional graph. Notation is predisposed towards discrete segments rather than continuous ranges. Traditional notation focuses on the two elements of pitch and rhythm, and thus the music that uses traditional notation largely centers around pitch and rhythm. A score describes a piece after the fact, often in a manner conducive to further performances.

The anti-score differs fundamentally from graphic scores or action scores, all of which look similar in that they rely on text and drawings rather than musical notation. Like a graphic score, an anti-score avoids lattices. An anti-score allows continuity rather than (but also including) discreteness. But the purpose is different. In Wishart's first anti-score, his "travelogue" of *Journey-into-Space* (1973-5), he explains that an anti-score describes the process of creating an instance of sonic art with the express purpose of replacing the score for performance.<sup>1</sup> The anti-score of *Journey* reads like a journal of exploration in developing the piece. It is perhaps the most literal take on the definition he provides for himself. It illustrates another inherent quality of an anti-score: it is chronometric, but only in reference to the creative process, not about or within the sonic art. While an analyst engaging with a score will analyze its pitch and rhythmic content, an analyst with an anti-score will analyze what is there: a process, a series of rules, and a transformation of a sonic idea. It is abundantly clear how and when each element was developed in context.

The next piece Wishart wrote with an anti-score was his magnum opus *Red Bird* (1977), consisting of a veritable catalogue of sonic art dimensions. In the anti-score, he continually recontextualizes the musical form with the other dimensions, not-so-subtly suggesting to an analyst that it is the most important element. His later works, such as *Scylla and Charybdis* (1973-1992), offer numerous and more finely sliced dimensions, and further homogenize the weight of each dimension in the reading of the piece.

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<sup>1</sup> Wishart, 1975.