

**Red Bird —Trevor Wishart**

Jason Noble, 2019

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Trevor Wishart is a contemporary British composer closely associated with extended uses of the human voice. Whether in acousmatic pieces such as *Encounters in the Republic of Heaven* (2011) or in pieces for live performance such as *Vox 4* (1987), his compositions masterfully exploit the subtlety and range of human vocal production: “all the colours of speech,” as *Encounters* is subtitled. Wishart’s music is also closely associated with the idea of *transformation*, in which one sound source appears to morph into another. This installment in our “Amazing Moments in Timbre” series, Wishart’s *Red Bird: A Political Prisoner’s Dream* (1973-77), begins with such a transformation: a rather alarming human scream appears to turn into a chirping bird. The piece weaves evocative—and in some cases disturbing—soundscapes through the many transformations that follow.

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/lekLl7o8yrc>

For more on Wishart’s ideas and compositions, here is a lecture he delivered at McGill University in 2018:

**Video:** <https://youtu.be/SyixalrH7xo>