

Arranger's Note



What is it about *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) that makes people want to destroy it? And why do we then want to put it back together again? By way of example, consider *Of Oz The Wizard*, an avant-garde film that cuts up *The Wizard of Oz* word for word and plays it back in alphabetical order. Writing about his initial inspiration, creator Matt Bucy states, “The film choice seemed obvious to me. I didn't think about it much and couldn't say what made it perfect in my mind, but it was the only choice as far as I was concerned.” I too feel this way about *The Wizard of Oz*, perhaps because the film, more than any other, has helped me come to terms with a uniquely American form of nostalgia. What other culture in the world would value leaving a magical country of color, intrigue and beauty to return to a gray land of boredom and natural disasters? I feel both pride and shame about being an expat that longs for America, and by transferring this feeling to *The Wizard of Oz*, I have created a safe space where I can both glorify and challenge my heritage.

I started fiddling with *The Wizard of Oz* in 2012 due to an inexplicable desire to deconstruct “Over the Rainbow”, by far the most iconic song of the film if not The Great American Songbook. After a year of wrestling with the piece, which involved sketches sounding like a melting record player, a garbled tape, and Godzilla attacking Wichita, I ultimately decided to jettison all sensational aspects of the writing and opted for the “simple” radicalness of collage, which created a far more fulfilling and shocking musical experience than the usual vocal dog and pony show that I write myself into. Listening to the piece, another American - recording engineer Bill Hare - remarked “this is what a stroke sounds like.” We are confronted with the most intimate aspects of our listening being reordered in ways we cannot predict. And yet, in spite of the randomness that one might perceive in the work, I recognize myself a great deal in its ebbs and flows of energy. Something about appropriating *The Wizard of Oz* nurtured the parts of my musical self that I am most proud and happy to share with others.

As my life was being upended in every way imaginable while I was arranging “Over the Rainbow”, I decided (like Bucy) to put Harold Arlen and E.Y. Harburg's score for the entire film through the wringer. As is often the case when I create, I need a useful, unifying pretext that triggers responses and reactions whenever I am out of ideas. Enter Frizngård, a tiny Scandinavian