

## Arranger's Note



On New Year's Day 2016, the Internet was abuzz with news of an avant-garde film, *Of Oz The Wizard*, that cuts up *The Wizard of Oz* (1939) 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." What is it about *The Wizard of Oz* that makes people want to destroy it? Why do we want to break it and put it back together again? Perhaps it is because this film, more than any other, forces us to confront a uniquely American version of nostalgia. What other people in the world would leave a magical country of color, intrigue and beauty to return to a gray land of boredom and natural disasters? All Americans love and hate their American past, and by loving and hating *The Wizard of Oz*, we create a safe space where we can feel sympathy and pity for ourselves.

Like Bucy, I was drawn to *The Wizard of Oz* in 2012 through a 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 that, I recognize myself in the ebbs and flows of energy of this work more than any other I have ever composed. Something about appropriating *The Wizard of Oz* unearthed a trove of musical instincts in me, or at least nurtured 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