

Where Pink Floyd has denied any connection between their 1973 album [Dark Side of the Moon](#) and the 1939 MGM film [The Wizard of Oz](#), recording artist [Eliza Wren](#) has gone so far as to record a double album synchronized to the 1985 film [Return to Oz](#), the Disney sequel to *The Wizard of Oz*.

[Eliza Wren](#) wrote 30 original songs that run exactly the length of *Return to Oz*, and she performed them synchronized with the film at the Sundance Film Festival on January 21, 2009.

I interviewed Eliza Wren recently and she told me that she had first seen [Return to Oz](#) when she was four or five years old. She always wanted to see it again but her mother discouraged her because of the film's dark imagery.

*Return to Oz* combines two L. Frank Baum books, [The Marvelous Land of Oz](#) and [Ozma of Oz](#), and though a Disney film, it's [surprisingly creepy](#).

[Drawn to dark themes](#), however, she rented the film as an adult and not only thought it was an excellent movie, but also that it would be a great project to create an alternative musical soundtrack to the film, inspired in part by the Pink Floyd/Oz connection. The sparseness of *Return to Oz* and what Eliza saw as "unnecessary" dialogue made it a "perfect candidate" for writing synchronized soundtrack music.

Composing the synchronized music for the project was relatively easy. "This is something I've just wanted to do for years. I love writing music to visuals. I do feel it was kind of natural. And one thing I really like was that a lot of the songs are things I'd written previously and, like, fit perfectly. And so it was kind of one of those creepy cool things that worked out." Actually synchronizing those songs to the film in the recording studio, however, was another matter entirely. "That was not easy," she told me. She had done a performance of *Return to Oz* at the Draft House in Austin, Texas. "That was 100% live. We were watching the movie and it's like if we know this moment is coming up it's like OK let's get ready. Let's count. OK here it is." For

Sundance, they made a recording of the entire performance with each part on a separate track, allowing them to remove selected parts and perform those live. But here's the amazing thing: they didn't have the movie in the studio while they were recording. She had to take the recordings from the studio to her home, sync those up with the film and jot down notes about any needed changes, and then head back to the studio. As if that weren't enough, the hard disk she used to store their recordings crashed and they had to re-record a substantial portion of the music.

Arranging to perform *Return to Oz* at Sundance presented a number of challenges, as well. Eliza Wren's *Return to Oz* was somewhat unusual for Sundance in that it was not an original film, but rather a music event with a movie screening. While they began planning to perform at Sundance about a year in advance, their performance wasn't booked until a month before the scheduled date. Also, Disney not only charges Eliza Wren a fee for each performance, but also imposes some restrictions on screenings of the film, most notably that alcohol cannot be served during the performance. Still, things came together well. Eliza Wren asked [Fairuza Balk](#), the star of *Return to Oz*, to [host the event](#) and she was excited to participate. The reaction from those who have seen the performance has been very positive, and Eliza Wren will be [performing](#) *Return to Oz* again at a Halloween show in Austin, TX, followed by performances in New York and Los Angeles.