

DIRECTOR'S NOTE

Thank you for joining us for this presentation of *When the Wolves Came In*. Created during my tenure as a Resident Commissioned Artist at New York Live Arts from 2012-2014, this program draws inspiration from jazz legend Max Roach's seminal album, *We Insist! Max Roach's Freedom Now Suite*. This album, originally intended to be released in 1963 to mark the centennial of the Emancipation Proclamation, was released in the fall of 1960 due to the severity sparked by the sit-ins in Greensboro, NC, and the urgency of the growing civil rights movement in the US and South Africa.

As overarching commentary, I keep going back to Roach's response when asked about the song, "Freedom Day:" "Freedom itself was so hard to grasp...we don't really understand what it really is to be free." At this point in my life, I am very well aware of the freedoms I possess. But as a Black Gay American man, I am equally aware of my limitations and those that exist for so many in a poly-phobic society of our current times.

I began working on *When the Wolves Came In* after a visit to the Hector Pieterse Museum in Soweto, South Africa. While there, I became fixated on the power of perception, and the ways that the 13-year-old Pieterse's death in an anti-Apartheid protest shines a spotlight on questions of personal choice and collective rights in the struggle for freedom. For Michael Brown, Tyler Clementi, Eric Garner, Islan Nettles, and the countless other faceless and nameless women and men facing violence and discrimination, these questions still have terrible resonance.

Max Roach's album timelessly tackles these very same issues and questions; his jazz work figures as an evaluation of rights perceived through his experience and expressed through his art. As dance works, this program was created to live in a skin well aware of the cyclical hardships of our history, and the very present fear of an unknowable future.

-Kyle Abraham