

WE INSIST!

MAX ROACH'S - *FREEDOM NOW SUITE*

STEREO 9002



FEATURING *ABBEY LINCOLN*
COLEMAN HAWKINS, OLATUNJI

CANDID

PLATTEN-LINDBERGER-VERLAGS-VERLAGS-GESELLSCHAFT

We Insist! (Freedom Now Suite)

Lilah Moley

Max Roach

- January 10, 1924 – August 16, 2007
- Born in Newland, NC
- Grew up in New York City
- Played with Charlie Parker and Dizzy Gillespie during the rise of Bebop in the 1940s
- Played in Miles Davis sessions for *Birth of the Cool*
- Formed a quintet with trumpeter Clifford Brown in 1954 shortly before his death



Album History

- Recorded August 31 and September 6, 1960
- Released in December 1960
- Avant-garde jazz
- Originally planned to be performed in 1963 for the 100th anniversary of the Emancipation Proclamation
- Decided to release it earlier because of the Civil Rights movement

Album Contents

Personnel

- Max Roach – drums
- Oscar Brown – lyricist
- Abbey Lincoln – vocals
- Booker Little – trumpet
- Julian Priester – trombone
- Walter Benton – tenor saxophone
- Coleman Hawkins – tenor saxophone
- James Schenk – bass
- Michael Olatunji – congas, vocals
- Raymond Mantilla – percussion
- Tomas du Vall – percussion

Track Listing

Side One

1. "Driva' Man"
2. "Freedom Day"
3. "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace"

Side Two

1. "All Africa"
2. "Tears for Johannesburg"

"Driva' Man"

- The brutality slaves faced while working on plantations
- Patrollers would bring back slaves that ran away and whip them
- Tambourine hits after each sung phrase mimics the sound of a whip



"Freedom Day"

- Freedom following the Emancipation Proclamation where 3.5 million slaves were declared free
- Mentions the right to vote and have a job

"Freedom Day, it's Freedom Day.

Throw those shackle n' chains away

*Everybody that I see says it's really true,
we're free"*



"Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace"

- Three-part song that is notable for its vocalizations
- The screaming in the Protest section brings a harsh tone to this idea
- The Peace section slows down to represent the ability to relax after fighting through protest for so long
- The only lyrics in this song are "I need peace"



"All Africa"

- Celebrates African tradition through polyrhythmic percussion and the lyrics listing native tribes

"Bantu, Zulu, Watusi, Ashanti, Herero, Grebo, Ibo, Masuto, Nyasa, Ndumbo, Umunda, Bobo, Kongo, Hobo, Kikuyu, Bahutu, Mossi, Kisii (Kissi/Kisi), Mbangi, Jahomi, Fongo, Bandjoun, Bassa, Yoruba, Gola, Ila, Mandingo, Mangbetu, Yosee, Bali, Angoli, Biombii, Mbole, Malinke, Mende, Masai (Maasai), Masai, Masai"



"Tears for Johannesburg"

- Focuses of the Sharpeville Massacre that occurred in South Africa in 1960
- On March 21st, 7,000 protestors went to the police station following their demonstration against pass laws
- 69 people were shot dead and 180 were injured by South African police
- Pass laws were legislation of Apartheid that limited the movement of black African citizens and segregated the population through an internal passport system



Conclusion



- The album received mixed reviews and little success at the time
- Many disliked the screaming in "Triptych: Prayer/Protest/Peace"
- Regardless, Roach promised to never again play music that wasn't socially relevant

How does this album relate to today's social injustice issues?

Augustyn, Adam. "Sharpeville Massacre." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 23 July 2020, www.britannica.com/event/Sharpeville-massacre.

"Max Roach – All Africa." *Genius*, genius.com/Max-roach-all-africa-lyrics.

"Max Roach – Driva' Man." *Genius*, genius.com/Max-roach-driva-man-lyrics.

"Max Roach – Freedom Day." *Genius*, genius.com/Max-roach-freedom-day-lyrics.

"Max Roach." *Encyclopædia Britannica*, Encyclopædia Britannica, Inc., 12 Aug. 2021, www.britannica.com/biography/Max-Roach.

"Pass Laws." *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 16 Sept. 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Pass_laws.

Reynolds, Nick. "Max Roach - We Insist: Freedom Now Suite Review." *BBC*, BBC, 2007, www.bbc.co.uk/music/reviews/xn9x/.

"We Insist! Max Roach Protests." *National Youth Jazz Orchestra*, 5 Nov. 2020, www.nyjo.org.uk/about/news/we-insist-max-roach-protests/.

"We Insist!" *Wikipedia*, Wikimedia Foundation, 1 June 2021, en.wikipedia.org/wiki/We_Insist!

Citations