

## *Wired*: Content Outline and Summary

*Wired* is a rich and complicated work with many points of entry and many different routes through the performance. We say that it honors the race, gender, and disability stories of barbed wire, but it is not a single narrative. In places, *Wired* engages questions of race, power, and dominance. It also touches on questions of incarceration, disability, and institutionalization.

We know that some audience members prefer to enter into a performance space and be surprised by the art, and others prefer to be informed about the work itself, its content, or any potential triggers/activations in advance. This guide is for those of you who would like some additional information.

We recognize that for all of us, works of art live in different places at different times and that the impact and provocation of images and ideas can change daily. It's difficult to know in advance how art will impact any person. So that you have notice of what is happening in the show and when (more or less), we have compiled several different time-stamped guides that outline moments that could be activating or triggering. We know that we cannot know the fullness of your experience, but this guide outlines some of the pathways the performance takes. We hope it will help you navigate *Wired*, and we invite you to build your own stories and interpretations of the work.

In the audio description, Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's track is sexually explicit in places and makes reference to race, gender, and sexual violence, as well as medical trauma.

If you need to leave the theater at any point in the show, please do so. Quiet spaces are available throughout the performance. You are welcome to reenter whenever you are ready. Ushers are available for support.

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### **ACT ONE**

**Section 1:** The wire enters and creates the space.

From high in the sky, two figures, agents, or deities of the wire, introduce us to barbed wire. In fully suspended flight, barbed wire both enables and prevents the

deities from connecting. When finally they land, the deities tie the wire to the stage making a sculptural barrier between audience and stage. The world of *Wired* is set.

Music: LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell

**Section 2:** Reflection on the boundaries of wired space.

Standing behind a sculptural gate that is sometimes a barrier, a window, and a portal, a solo figure meditates. Memories of all different kinds pass through his body and mind as he gazes forward through the sculpture.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

**Section 3:** This section engages whiteness, power, and Black hair.

Two figures, one Black and one white, emerge from darkness, each seemingly giving birth to the other. As one rises, they sit on the back of the first. White hands sink into Black hair, teasing its strands apart. In a duet, they emerge in and out each other, testing the boundaries of their relationship. Each testing the boundaries of themselves. White hands grasp Black hair. As one spirals below, falling into darkness, the two separate. When one disappears, the other rises high into the air, finally taking control of her hair, her body, herself; the solo figure soars and plunges through the sky. Freedom. Joy. Rage. Liberation. Hope.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

**Section 4:** The intricacy and beauty of barbed wire.

A solo figure bounces onto the stage with lyrical movement. Brief moments of contact with the ground send her flying into the air and across the space. With each bounce, her arms and body intertwine themselves in intricate patterns. A lullaby? Yes. And also a recognition that somewhere in the beauty of the wire lies danger.

Music: LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell

Audio Description note: Explicit naming of bodies and sex acts.

**Section 5:** Reflection on the boundaries of wired space.

Before the portal, a solo figure paces an invisible perimeter, floating feet barely grazing the ground. Again, he meditates. Now and again, portraits of people he knows and loves pass before him in his mind. Images hung, memorial like, on a barbed wire fence.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

**Section 6:** Barbed wire became an industrial phenomenon, building great fortunes for some.

Yearning, stretching, returning and falling again and again to an almost invisible starting point, the figure lying on her belly on stage is relentlessly dragged back to her starting point. The work of returning again and again creates barbed wire. Forward, fall, back. Forward, fall, back. The labor of creation. The labor of production. Relentless. Inescapable.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

Audio Description note: Passing reference to the arrival of the Pilgrims and the rape of America and its people.

**Section 7:** In poorer rural areas, barbed wire served as telegraph wire connecting people with each other and the larger world.

In partial silhouette, two figures emerge, separated but on parallel paths. Gestures of a distinct sign language bring them closer together. In duet, the firm lines of the signs round to embraces. Bodies touch. Gazes rebound between them. The light guides them into a separate world. Abruptly, the moment passes. The connection breaks. Were they ever there?

Music: LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell

**Section 8:** Reflection on the boundaries of wired space.

Behind both portals now, a different figure emerges. Contouring the space, she searches. Signaling. Seeking. As the lights fade and the mist settles, she spins wildly alone into darkness.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

**Section 9:** From inside and outside the wire.

A misty darkness is broken only by three boxes of light that restrain three figures wrapped in barbed wire. Fleeting glances pass between them. Bodies rising to kneeling and then descending. An invisible message. All three break for freedom. Now, in a world of barbed wire, they seek each other - connecting for brief moments in short duets. Then, finally, as the darkness returns, searchlights rake the space above their heads. The trio surges forward together at last. Connected. Humans wrapped in barbed wire.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

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**ACT TWO**

**Section 1:** Barbed wire creates and belongs to the sexualities of certain communities. This section engages with power, gender, and sexuality.

Two figures each sit on a moving sculptural window. Through the windows, dancing in the rich light, is a third figure, endlessly spinning. Staring out. Possibly trapped. Inviting us to stare back. Invitation accepted! One figure hastens forth, pushing forward, roughly making uncaring contact. The spinning figure reflects and asserts herself, so the invitation continues. Invitation accepted! The second figure leaves his gate, approaches, and begins a softer duet. The spinning figure reflects, rising, turning, leaping as the two figures approach her. Invitation accepted; tables turned. The spinning figure turns, leaps, rises, climbs. Lands. And freely disconnects.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

Audio Description note: An extended meditation on desire, this section describes kink, sexual acts, and names body parts.

**Section 2:** The United States has some of the most punitive and brutal practices and policies of incarceration and institutionalization. This section engages the country's race and disability history of incarceration and institutionalization.

Tracked by a spotlight and surveilled from above and from the side, a lone figure cautiously enters the space. Layering and unlayering. Dressing and undressing. Resisting and taking on. He enters the dream world of partnered duet only to find himself being offered the wire from above. As its coils wrap around his neck, the deity of the wire lands just in time to enforce his ownership of the wire. Embodied in wire, the figure creates his new landscape; powerful, graceful, alive. Then in a welter of emotion, he beats out his response to history.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

Audio Description note: This section makes reference to medical trauma and the burning of the American flag.

**Section 3:** A moment of personal reflection.

Two new figures race onto the torn-up stage, their pace slowing in a series of lifts as they begin to care for each other. The first figure returns now in a meditative soaring solo as he processes his history and his life story.

Music: LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell

**Section 4:** The wire becomes art.

Two figures push the portals onto the stage. As the art fills the space, all the figures return, transformed into agents of the wire who position and reposition the portals making art from the different shapes. Where previously the wire separated humans from each other, now it creates a beautiful space in which humans might live.

Music: LeahAnn "Lafemmebear" Mitchell

**Section 5:** The art creates connection.

As the gates recede, the figures turn to each other in a closing trio. One now wears wire as a stole; its power over him has melted away. He signals repeatedly to the others, who, airborne, touchdown and embrace him. As the trio separates, the remaining figures soar into the air, taking off and landing before finally coming to rest on the ground.

Music: Ailís Ní Ríain

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