



ULTIMATUM

A short film by Desirée & Jean-Luc Mwepu

World Premiere · Tribeca Film Festival 2026

LOGLINE

At the Royal Ballet School's brutal auditions, two Black girls compete for a place in a world that wasn't made for them — but find each other along the way.

CONTACT & PRODUCTION

Production Company

Company: Två Träd AB

Producers: Svante Tidholm & Amir Halim

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Sales – TBD

SYNOPSIS

It's tryout time at the Royal Ballet School, and Saran's last chance to apply. The school is known for being extremely selective, only accepting girls who fit a certain mold. Saran, who is Black and looks nothing like the ideal image, knows this. As she prepares for the first exam, Saran meets Soleil, another Black girl. Despite being pitted against each other, they bond over their shared exclusion and support each other throughout the exams. As they progress through the tryouts, it becomes clear that only one Black person will be accepted into the school.

DIRECTOR'S STATEMENT

We made Ultimatum from an experience we know intimately.

As Black artists, we have often moved through spaces where belonging is measured differently. Presence itself becomes a question, and being seen carries a weight beyond ourselves. Sometimes, being together brings comfort. Other times, the structures around us make comparison inevitable, and connection turns fragile.

We have pursued our dreams for years. We have stepped into spaces that are traditionally exclusive and culturally coded. We know the tension of chasing a dream while knowing that the world may first see our difference before it sees our ambition.

Ultimatum comes from that tension. From the quiet pressure that asks us to measure ourselves against each other. From the fear that striving for what we love might require standing alone. From the fragile space between solidarity and competition, belonging and ambition, visibility and identity.

This film is an attempt to inhabit that space. To hold it, not explain it. It is not a lesson, nor a guide. It is a reflection, a shared pulse, and a question we carry with us.

— Desirée & Jean-Luc Mwepu

MATERIALS

Stills / artwork / trailers	https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1Z9Hg4QIR8PqFZGlazd8J-7a5JstGD
FilmFreeway	https://filmfreeway.com/Ultimatum2026

FESTIVAL RECOGNITION

"Superbly produced, performed, and directed. You capture the world of competitive ballet, and the subtle prejudices and biases that form obstacles in any path in life so effectively."

— Ben Thompson, VP Shorts Programming, Tribeca Film Festival

World Premiere Tribeca Film Festival, New York City
Festival Dates June 3–14, 2026

FILM INFORMATION

Title	Ultimatum
Directors	Desirée Mwepu & Jean-Luc Mwepu
Running Time	13 min 30 sec
Year	2026
Country	Sweden
Language	Swedish
Subtitles	English, French, Spanish, Swedish
Genre	Drama
Aspect Ratio	4:3
Sound	Stereo / 5.1
Format	Digital, DCP 25fps
World Premiere	Tribeca Film Festival, NYC (June 3–14, 2026)

CREDITS

CREW

Directors / Writers	Desirée Mwepu & Jean-Luc Mwepu
Producers	Svante Tidholm & Amir Halim
Cinematographer	Jean-Luc Mwepu
Editor / Colorist	Jean-Luc Mwepu
Composers	Maceo Frost, Jonathan Thane
Sound	Jesper Miller / Auditory
Production Company	Två Träd AB
Co-producers	Film i Väst AB
Supported by	Swedish Film Institute, Göteborgs Stad, Storyline

CAST

Saran	Desirée Mwepu
Soleil	Binta Bojang
Head Teacher	Johan Gry

ABOUT THE DIRECTORS



Desirée & Jean-Luc Mwepu on set

Desirée Mwepu — Director, Writer, Lead Actor, Costume Designer, Choreographer

Desirée Mwepu is a Sweden-based director whose work is rooted in the experience of growing up between different cultures. Her films explore belonging, distance, and identity with a personal, embodied perspective. Her debut short *A Sun in the Night* (*En sol i natten*) was nominated for Startsladden at Göteborg Film Festival (2022). With a background in costume design, she has worked on Spotify commercials and music videos for Daniela Rathana. *Ultimatum* marks her first co-directing project, where she also takes on the roles of writer, lead actor, costume designer, and choreographer.

Jean-Luc Mwepu — Director, Writer, Cinematographer, Editor

Jean-Luc Mwepu is a Sweden-based director with a visual, poetic style, often exploring identity, class, and the collision between worlds. He began making skate and BMX films as a teenager and has since written, directed, shot, edited, and graded a wide range of shorts and music videos. His debut short *Our Land* (*Utan er*) was nominated for Startsladden at the Göteborg Film Festival (2020) and won Best Film at Skåne Filmfestival. He studied screenwriting at Alma Screenwriting Academy and has directed commercials for Spotify and Volvo, as well as music videos for Omar Rudberg and Daniela Rathana.

Selected Filmography: *Without You* (2020) · *A Sun in the Night* (2022) · *Find Me* (2022) · *Some/Sum of Me* (2023) · *My Brother is Beyond the Towers* (2024)