



**LITTLE
JOY**

**All-Terrain
Dance
Performance**

by Joshua Monten



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Inspired by the joyful arts of stage fighting, slapstick and Foley sound effects, "Little Joy" is an all-terrain vehicle of mass destruction for three charmingly violent dancers. Punches, slaps and kicks are built into intricate sequences of consensual violence. Following in the classic tradition of slapstick, moments of (imaginary) pain are expressed through exquisitely expressive movement. This is serious play, hilariously tragic, and thrilling to watch.

Simultaneously, the three performers create the sound effects for their own movements. A slap on the cheek is enhanced with the clang of a metal pan; the sight of hair being ripped out is accompanied by the sound of Velcro – a paradoxical juxtaposition that enhances the effectiveness of each impact while playfully exposing its artifice.

"Little Joy" can be performed on a traditional stage. It can also be performed outdoors, for instance in a public square. "Little Joy" has been programmed more than seventy times, including at Festival de Chassepierre (B), MAC La Mercè (ES), La Plage des Six Pompes (CH), Schaubudensommer Dresden (D), and in multiple cities throughout Ecuador und Peru.

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Length: 20 minutes. Can be performed up to three times per day.

Choreography: Joshua Monten

Dance: Sandra Klimek, Joshua Monten, Jack Wignall

Video: <https://vimeo.com/224157127>

Website: http://joshuamonten.com/jm/Little_Joy.html

Press Photos: <https://www.dropbox.com/sh/wdbg99r9z7zvfuz/AADoQ8GeBw1Xf1ATBEyIJ74Ua?dl=0>

BACKGROUND

Choreographer Joshua Monten has received numerous commissions to choreograph stylized fighting scenes in opera, theater and ballet productions. Typical projects include the street brawl fugue in Wagner's "Meistersinger von Nürnberg" and a baroque-style duel of cowboys and Indians in Rameau's "Platée." Continuing along this path led Monten to produce the evening-length dance production "Joy" and a related dance video (<https://vimeo.com/144849433>), both of which have been shown at dozens of venues since their premiere in 2016.

Now, with "Little Joy," Monten has distilled these experiences into a compact dance performance three dancers, 20 minutes long, appropriate for all ages, and ready to be performed in diverse locations, both indoors and outdoors. The inherent advantage of performing in public spaces is that it allows the audience to come thrillingly close, to see what full-bodied dancing feels like, to hear the dancers' shoes scraping and their joints creaking, to be infected by the movement's groove. The performers interact directly with the audience and invite them into the world they create. "Little Joy" is an ideal way to expose new audiences to contemporary dance.

VIOLENCE AS CHOREOGRAPHY

It was Freud who first identified "Schadenfreude": the powerful thrill of seeing someone else suffer misfortune. And indeed this guilty pleasure is the driving force behind "Little Joy." But don't worry: according to numerous scientific studies in many countries, depictions of violence do not lead to an increase in acts of actual violence in society. On the contrary, it is our belief that the effects of stage violence can be quite healthy – even cathartic.

The innovative, athletic, bloodthirsty but also fundamentally safe fight sequences in "Little Joy" were created in collaboration with stage fighting experts. Intricate sequences of consensual violence are deconstructed and reconstructed through distortions, changes of perspective and merciless repetition.

Our production showcases the early tradition of film sound effects known as **Foley**. Prior to each performance, the dancers set up a small sound stage at the back of the stage. Everyday objects such as frying pans, strips of Velcro, or plastic water bottles are repurposed to create the sounds of bodily harm. The effect is surreal: the use of sound effects enhances each impact, while simultaneously revealing its inherent fakeness. Even more surreal is the situation that the exchange of blows seems utterly consensual: the performers "turn the other cheek" to allow themselves to be hit again and again, as they search for the purest expression of violence.



PERFORMANCE LOCATIONS

"Little Joy" was designed to be extremely adaptable and suitable for diverse performing configurations. We propose three basic configurations.

On stage. "Little Joy" may be presented as a traditional stage performance. The audience can sit on one side of the stage, as in a proscenium theater. Or the audience can be arranged in a black-box performance space on three or four sides of the stage.

Outdoors. "Little Joy" is extremely suitable for outdoor performance – indeed, it was conceived for an outdoor premiere at the renowned Buskers Bern Festival. The dancers can perform directly on pavement, grass, dirt, or a raised stage. The performance begins with a series of interactions with the audience, which sits and stands around the performers on three or four sides.

Site-specific. "Little Joy" can be performed on location in any space suitable for being transformed into an impromptu Foley sound studio. Both indoor and outdoor locations may be appropriate, such as a large parking garage, a bar, an industrial kitchen, a storage shed, a recycling center, a junk yard, a factory, an apartment, the foyer or backstage area of a theater. The main criterion is that there be metal objects that would make noise when they are hit.

TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS

Performance and set-up times. "Little Joy" lasts approximately 20 minutes. It can be performed up to three times per day. The dancers require at least 60 minutes of rest between each performance. Set-up time vary depending on performance venue; for outdoor locations, 30 minutes is typical.

Stage. Minimum performance area: 6m x 4m. Ideal performance area: 10m x 10m. No special dance floor required.

Light. If performed outdoors during the day, no lighting equipment is required. If performed indoors, or outdoors at night, the performance area requires basic illumination.

Sound. "Little Joy" requires the use of recorded music and live sound. The Presenter is expected to provide a sound system including speakers (two 250W portable speakers are ideal), two voice microphones with stands, a small mixing board and a mini jack cable to connect to the Company's iPod. If needed, the Company can bring some of this equipment with them.

Props and set. The set is constructed on-location out of assorted metal pans, wooden sticks, and a small table. The company brings these materials with them on tour.

WORKSHOPS

Stage fighting can be an immense amount of fun and is highly suitable for dance outreach workshops – even for pacifists. In the context of our touring activities, the choreographer and cast of "Little Joy" are available to offer "dance-combat" workshops for both adults and children aged 10 and above. These workshops provide a viscerally engaging and rather untypical entry into the field of contemporary dance, an opportunity to explore the boundary between play and real-life violence, and the chance to rediscover ones innate physical creativity.

BIOGRAPHY

Joshua Monten (choreographer)

Joshua Monten was born near New York City and studied literature and cultural anthropology at Duke University before beginning his dance studies. As a dancer he has performed with Bern Ballett, Staatstheater Nürnberg, Theater Freiburg, öff öff productions and DA MOTUS! He has worked with choreographers such as Stijn Celis, Hofesh Shechter, Juha Marsalo, Doug Varone, Konstantinos Rigos und Tino Sehgal. Joshua Monten regularly choreographs for ballet, opera, theater and freelance dance productions. He has received numerous choreography commissions from Ballet National du Rhin, Opéra National de Lorraine, Staatstheater Nürnberg, Gdąnsk Dance Festival, The Yard (USA), Kaserne Basel, Theater St. Gallen, Konzert Theater Bern, Zentrum Paul Klee and Art Basel. His work has been broadcast on television stations such as Arte and Mezzo and has been seen live by more than 250 000 audience members. In 2012 Joshua Monten founded his own dance company which has subsequently given hundreds performances at festivals and theaters around the world, including Hivernales d'Avignon, Singapore Fringe Festival, Ramallah Contemporary Dance Festival, Krokusfestival Hasselt, Festival de Chassepierre, Belgrade Dance Festival, Tanzwoche Dresden, and Queer New York International Arts Festival.

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

2016 Wichtrach (CH) (try-out)
Gerzensee (CH) (try-out)
Tanzfaktor, Cologne (DE) (try-out)

2017 PLATEFORME: Nouvelle génération d'interprètes, Théâtre Sévelin 36, Lausanne (CH) (try-out)
Gessnerallee Theater A, Zurich (CH) (try-out)
Buskers Bern Festival (CH) (**premiere**)

2018 Das Tanzfest, Aarau and Winterthur (CH)
Fête de la danse, Yverdon-les-Bains and Geneva (CH)
Buskers Chur Festival (CH)
Danza Nueva Festival, Lima and Pucallpa, (PE)
Fragmentos de Junio Festival, Guayaquil (EC)
Schaubudensommer, Dresden (DE)
La Plage à Six Pompes Festival, La Chaux-de-Fonds (CH)
Festival Mac la Mercè, Barcelona (ES)
International Festival of Modern Choreography, Vitebsk (BY)

