

FIRST THINGS FIRST

Joseph Simons



Photography: Brian Jamie



www.josephsimons.com.au

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ABOUT THE SHOW

SHOW SYNOPSIS

From one of Australia's most innovative young performers comes *First Things First* - a one-man show of technically virtuosic dance and hilarious physical theatre.

There's a first time for everything.

Catching public transport, speaking in public, changing a nappy...

Join Joseph Simons as he explores the transition from the unknown to the routine. Using his signature wit, intricate choreography and astounding musicality, Joseph seems to create entire worlds around him.

Never has a dance work been so open with its audience. Joseph breaks down the '4th wall' with such a refreshing honesty, that when teamed with his technically virtuosic dancing, makes for a unique theatrical experience.

NB: This production is currently in the process of building a National tour throughout VIC, NSW and SA in early 2015. Joseph Simons along with tour coordinator Regional Arts Victoria is looking to include QLD venues into this existing tour.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Created and Performed by Joseph Simons

With assistance from Tanja Liedtke Foundation and Rella Music



tanja liedtke foundation
inspiring dance

rella
music .net

BIOGRAPHY

Joseph Simons is one of Australia's most innovative and busiest young performers and creators.

Simons has worked as a dancer for **Chunky Move** (*Connected, I Like This*) Anything Is Valid Dance Theatre (*All the Mall's a Stage, Save Our Soloist*) and **Lucy Guerin Inc.** (*Structure and Sadness, Untrained*) touring extensively throughout Australia, UK, Asia and the United States. From 2007-2009, Joseph performed soloist roles with **West Australian Ballet**, and was invited to return in 2012 to perform the title role in Ivan Cavallri's new production of *Pinocchio*.

Joseph won the **Emerging Artist of the Year** at the 2009 West Australian Dance awards, and after a sell-out season of his solo work *Not On My Watch*, he was nominated for **Outstanding Male Artist** at the 2012 Perth Fringe World Festival. This year, he was awarded the prestigious **2013 Tanja Liedtke Fellowship***, allowing him to further his choreographic development in Germany.

Joseph has created works for the Flying Fruit Fly Circus (*Storm*), West Australian Ballet (*A Few Moments Of Your Time, Man Alive*), and various independent projects, including the music video for Elisha Bones' single '*Guts*'.

*Awarded to one Australian choreographer bi-annually

PERFORMANCE SPECIFICS

DURATION

Pre-show experience – 30 minutes

One Act – 60 minutes

SUITABLE VENUES

Proscenium Arch, Black Box, Thrust, Flat Floor Hall, Band Room Cabaret

MAXIMUM NUMBER OF PERFORMANCES PER WEEK

8 Performances

MINIMUM BREAK BETWEEN PERFORMANCES

240 minutes

LICENCING AGREEMENTS

Music used is all recorded, and has been cleared by APRA, with a 2% fee.

APRA OBLIGATIONS

Once tour is confirmed, 'First Things First' will require an APRA license in the category of Dramatic Context. All music used for First Things First has already been cleared.

TOURING PERSONNEL

The touring party consists of 2 people.

Name	Role
Joseph Simons	Producer/Performer
TBC	Stage Manager/Tour Manager

PERFORMANCE HISTORY

Year	Venue	Number of performances
2013	Ada Studio (work-in-progress)	1
2013	Dubbo Regional Theatre and Convention Centre (excerpts)	4
2014	Baruch Performing Arts Center, NYC (excerpts)	2
2014	Robert Helpman Blackbox Theatre, New York	1

AUDIENCE ENGAGEMENT

First Things First has a unique additional marketing structure, that includes a video blog showing 'behind the scenes' footage leading up to, and including the work-in-progress performance. This has proven very popular with other performances of *First Things First* with the previous series reaching over 9,000 views, helping to generate audience interest. These webisodes are roughly 2 minutes each, and provide a light, witty look at putting together *First Things First*.

See the full 'Making Of FIRST THINGS FIRST' series at:

http://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeFiH0lhxt0EfpRy2CWjXX2nOkk9Ww_4R

A series of Masterclasses are on offer to venues interested in extending the First Things First experience to the wider community.

Creator and performer Joseph Simons has had extensive teaching experience, working with dancers aged nine through to professional dance companies. He has conducted masterclasses across USA for tertiary level dance students, and been a guest lecturer for Dance at Western Australian Academy of Performing Arts (WAAPA) and Victorian College of the Arts Secondary School (VCASS).

*NB: Within a 24hr period, the performer is able to present:
2 performances OR one masterclass and one performance



Masterclass Series — First Things First tour

Joseph Simons is an experienced teacher, having taught students from dance schools, academic schools, tertiary institutions, and professional dance companies, including a series of masterclasses at universities across USA. His classes are energetic and fun, with a focus on students thinking for themselves.

All masterclasses are \$220

Contemporary Technique

Capacity: 8 – 20 Length: 1.5hr Age: 12+ Ideal Space: Large dance studio

Students learn basic principals of safety release technique, floorwork, travelling and allegro exercises. The class ends learning a choreographic phrase.

Dance Improvisation

Capacity: 8 – 20 Length: 1hr Age: 14+ Ideal Space: Large dance studio

Ideal for dance school students. Participants gain knowledge about the history of dance improvisation, while exploring their own bodies and its possibilities.

Designed to allow a full range of motion, and an uninhibited mind. Anything goes in this class! Be prepared to get silly!

Performing Alone

Capacity: 5 – 10 Length: 1.5hr Age: 12+ Ideal Space: Large classroom/hall

Students gain understanding of how to create an engaging piece of theatre using only yourself. Suited for highschool drama students. Participants are required to bring one 2 minute monologue to workshop throughout the class.

www.josephsimons.com.au

MARKETING COPY

One line

A quirky one-man show of virtuosic dance and hilarious physical theatre.

Short

From one of Australia's most innovative young performers comes *First Things First* - a one-man show of technically virtuosic dance and hilarious physical theatre.

There's a first time for everything.

Catching public transport, speaking in public, changing a nappy...

Join Joseph Simons as he explores the transition from the unknown to the routine with his signature wit, intricate choreography and astounding musicality.

First Things First was developed and in Berlin in 2013, and premiered in New York in 2014 to overwhelmingly positive responses and critical acclaim. Joseph's unique performance style has won over international audiences, and now is your chance to catch him in his home country!

Extended

From one of Australia's most innovative young performers comes *First Things First* - a one-man show of technically virtuosic dance and hilarious physical theatre.

Doing something for the first time is never easy. Remember when you first drove the car alone? Your senses are heightened, your body is tense, and you're careful not to make a mistake. Then you do it a second time, then a third. Before you know it, it's second nature.

Joseph Simons was inspired by 'the art of getting used to something' to create his latest show with his signature wit, intricate choreography and astounding musicality.

"This show is about first experiences" Joseph explains "and the transition between the unfamiliar to the routine."

Simons is one of the country's busiest performers, having worked with major Australian dance companies including Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin Inc and West Australian Ballet. After winning the 2013 Tanja Liedtke Fellowship (awarded to one Australian choreographer every two years), Joseph was sent to Berlin, Germany where he began creating *First Things First*.

After performing excerpts in Germany and Australia, *First Things First* premiered in New York in 2014 to overwhelmingly positive responses and critical acclaim. Joseph's unique performance style has won over international audiences, and now is your chance to catch him in his home country!

"I'm so excited to be touring the full-length *First Things First* around Australia. The comedy in the show comes very much from an Australian sense of humour. While the performances internationally have done extremely well, I'm looking forward to putting it in front of some Aussies!" Simons enthuses.

As German reviewer Anna Volksland puts it: "Joseph Simons instinctively understands timing, the real surprise, and the right humour - he is a kind of magician!"

Simons' passion for *First Things First* to defy genre is infectious.

"It's not just dance. It's not just comedy. It's not just physical theatre. It's an exciting, entertaining show with great music, some cool moves and a lot of laughs."

First Things First is the perfect show to bring along those who confess to not liking dance, or fearful that they won't 'get it'. Why not check *First Things First*? There's a first time for everything.

MARKETING MATERIAL

Upon request, First Things First has a series of production and publicity images, and an existing social media campaign. Raw footage of selected performance scenes are also available upon request.

MEDIA QUOTES

"Incredibly funny, intelligent, charming and amazing... Simons instinctively understands timing, surprise, and humour - he is a kind of magician!" ▶ Anna Volkland, ada-studio.de

"Audience members were literally weeping with laughter...Excruciatingly accurate and hysterically funny" ▶ australianstage.com.au

"[Joseph's] choreography snaps you back to attention...clever and comical"
▶ Drum Media Magazine

"The delivery was flawless, and proved to be a crowd favourite." ▶ The West Australian

AUDIENCE REVIEWS

"Joseph is the most amazing performer, dancer and a most humorous person I have ever encountered"

- Renee Z, 26

"*First Things First* was absolutely brilliant. I have never seen anything like it"

- Reiko S, 29

"Speechless. I don't really like dance, but that was so clever."

- Rodger G, 53

"A wonderful show, a brilliant artist"

- Ken L, 61

VIDEO LINKS

2.5 min Trailer:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=theEGoDVanI>

11.5 min work-in-progress:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SkjcelU-pW0>

'Making Of' episodes:

https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLeFiH0Ihxt0EfpRy2CWjXX2nOkk9Ww_4R

PRODUCTION IMAGES

All images by Sasha Popov.

High quality images are available upon request.



MARKETING ANGLES

Joseph Simons (creator and performer) grew up in Dubbo, NSW. He began dancing at the age of six and was choreographing by the age of 10.

Awards and Achievements -

WINNER: Tanja Liedtke Fellowship 2013 -

WINNER: Outstanding Emerging Artist, 2009 West Australian Dance Awards -

NOMINATED: Best Male Performer, 2012 Perth FringeWorld Festival

Points of Interest -

- *First Things First* is Joseph's first full length show - Joseph has danced and toured for many of Australia's major dance companies including Chunky Move, Lucy Guerin Inc and West Australian Ballet
- Joseph has a passion for editing video, and has created several popular dance films
- Joseph is also a journalist for the national magazine DanceTrain, writing a column based on the experiences of a freelance dancer
- Joseph was born in Dubbo, NSW, and continues to be based there.

First Things First has a unique additional marketing structure, that includes a video blog showing 'behind the scenes' footage leading up to, and including the work-in-progress performance. This has proven very popular with other performances of *First Things First* with the previous series reaching over 9,000 views, helping to generate audience interest. These webisodes are roughly 2 minutes each, and provide a light, witty look at putting together *First Things First*.

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SPONSOR ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

'Rella Music' offered financial assistance for the World Premiere of *First Things First* in New York. Their logo is to appear on all printed programs for this show.



PRODUCTION DETAILS

TECHNICAL SUMMARY

First Things First is a very simple dance production, relying on the performer to create the world around him. Using on a standard lighting and sound rig, it requires a 3-hour bump in using a minimum of 2 venue staff.

SCHEDULE

Bump In (3hrs)

- Lighting: Adjustment of existing rig, set specials, plot states.
- Sound: Use existing sound system. Check levels, patching, foldback.
- Cue-to-cue tech run. Venue technician to familiarise operator with equipment.

Bump Out (2hrs)

- Return lighting rig to original condition
- Strike set/props

CREW REQUIRED FROM VENUE

Venue provides 2 x Crew (bump in/bump out/tech run)

1 x lighting technician

1x sound technician

STAGE

Min stage: 5m x 4m

This show works best with all flies out and a solid back wall at the back of the stage space (not essential)

Producer travels with all props and roll of tarkett flooring. This target is for aesthetic purposes. It is a white flooring that covers a space 4mx5m. If venue owns black tarkett, and their stage space is greater than 4mx5m, we recommend laying it, and the producer will lay the supplied white flooring over the top.

Joseph Simons to supply

- *White tarkette*
- *Black stool*
- *Clothes Rack*
- *Hand held props*

Venue to supply

- *Black tarkette (for stage spaces larger than 5x4m)*

LIGHTING

Lighting is simple and adaptable depending on venue facilities.

However, preferred lighting requirements are: 48 lanterns, 3 specials

This production requires very few lighting states.

1) General bright wash

- 2) Special: white, soft-edged circle DS Centre, approx 2.5m diameter
- 3) Special: white, soft edged circle US OP, bleeding onto the back wall, approx 4m diameter
- 4) Side lighting from Prompt and OP

NB As lighting and sound is to be operated by one crew member, it is imperative that light and sound desks are placed next to each other. If this is not possible, producer requires venue to provide 1 x crew member to operate with tour coordinator.

Joseph Simons to supply

- *Lighting design CAD plans*

Venue to supply

- *Standard lighting rig*

SOUND

- Recorded sound effects and soundtrack operated by CD or laptop.

NB As lighting and sound is to be operated by one crew member, it is imperative that light and sound desks are placed next to each other. If this is not possible, producer requires venue to provide 1 x crew member to operate with tour coordinator.

Joseph Simons to supply

- *Laptop with all sound elements*
- *Stage Manager to operate sound*

Venue to supply

- *Standard sound rig (with appropriate cords to play sound from laptop)*
- *Foldback for performer*

AV

N/A

WARDROBE

Wardrobe elements in this show are very simple and provided by the producer. All costume elements fit into a suitcase.

Joseph Simons to supply

- *All wardrobe elements*

Venue to supply

- *1 x dressing room with mirror and access to running water*
- *Iron and ironing board preferred*
- *Laundry facilities*

FREIGHT NOTES

First Things First will travel in a station wagon. The simple set fits into a series of suitcases and two rolls of 5x2m tarkette. Access to a loading dock would be preferable.

OTHER ISSUES

'First Things First' includes a pre show experience. Upon arrival, the audience are given a name tag (provided by producer) and a light refreshment (provided by presenter). This refreshment could either be built into the price of the ticket, or simply for sale in the foyer. The performer then greets the audience upon entry to the performance space as though he were hosting a dinner party. For this reason, the producer requires the venue to provide drinks for the audience which can be taken into the performance space. This novelty aspect has proven to be a great ice breaker for both the audience and the performer. Details can be negotiated.

REFERENCES

Ken Luden (Director of Margot Fonteyn Academy of Ballet, New York)
Invited First Things First to be premiered in his theatre
ken@fonteynacademy.org

Gabi Bier (Manager of Ada Studio, Berlin)
Programed work-in-progress showing of First Things First
ada-berlin@gmx.de

CONTACT

Producer

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Tour Coordinator

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