

# Motionhouse



Touring outdoor dance  
in Europe.

Jo Valentine | Motionhouse

# Who is Motionhouse?

- Dance theatre company
- Founded 25 years ago
- Based in Leamington Spa, Warwickshire
- A National Portfolio Organisation of ACE
- Wide-ranging programme that includes work for middle scale theatres, small outdoor festival pieces and large-scale outdoor spectacles
- Outreach and education that includes schools workshops, community classes, creative residencies and professional development workshops

# Our current outdoor rep

Chaser

Created in 2005

3 dancers

15 minutes



# Our current outdoor rep

Underground

Created in 2008

4 dancers

25 minutes

**Motionhouse**



# Our current outdoor rep

Cascade

Created in 2011

4 dancers

25 minutes

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# Our current outdoor rep

Waiting Game

Created in 2011

2 dancers

2 JCBs

15 minutes

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# Our current outdoor rep

Traction

Created in 2011

6 dancers

3 JCBs

20 minutes

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# Before you make your work

- Will it appeal to a wide range of people?
- Size of audience?
- Sight lines? In the round?
- What about the language barrier ...
- What's the running time?
- How many times per day can you perform?
- Day or night?
- How much tech support will you need?
- Think about tourability – train, plane or automobile
- Talk to experienced UK promoters (eg. Without Walls group), invite them to work-in-progress and get their feedback
- Consider a mentor



# Be prepared

- Your show needs to be good, really good!
- Research your market
- Don't launch until you're ready
- Work out your costs and fees
- Prepare information for promoters and respond quickly to enquiries
- Good quality marketing tools
- Think about translations but beware Google translate!
- French, Spanish, German and Italian
- Investigate showcase opportunities

# Tools for selling

- A good quality film of your show. A trailer at least, a full length film if possible. Foreign promoters won't buy what they haven't seen
- A page [for promoters](#) on your website
- Good quality leaflet/flyer about the show that you can take with you to festivals and showcases
- Leaflet/flyer with information about the company, who you are
- An Information Pack – some artistic blurb about the show plus practical info; outline tech requirements, number of people on tour, running time, number of shows per day, photos of the set if applicable, contact information. Don't include a price!

# Get them interested

Captive trailer



Underground trailer



# Timeline for selling

- November – e-flyer campaign, including images and links to film clip
- November onwards – start to pencil bookings (majority of festivals take place at week-ends) and agree prices
- Follow up with emails, get a dialogue going
- Good idea to double pencil
- Confirmation can be a long time coming as festivals usually have to wait for funding decisions
- A few early festivals in March/April but peak season is May to July
- August can be quiet in Europe but some September festivals

# Following up

- Once a festival shows an interest, let them know the fee and be clear about what else they need to provide – accommodation, per diems, travel, technical support
- Try and agree the price in sterling so you're not taking the risk on currency fluctuation
- Be prepared to negotiate
- Send them a full Event Plan
- Can they send you a photo of the performance site?
- Final stage is contract – either party can provide this but don't have two!

# The boring stuff

- VAT – can you zero-rate your fees?
- Are you insured in Europe – public liability, equipment, travel insurance
- Do your performers all have passports and EHIC cards?
- Many festivals will request Form E101 – apply early for this!

# How was it for us?

- Holland and Belgium – lots of festivals (some better than others!), promoters generally laid back and friendly, most speak English
- Germany – often don't try and negotiate on the fee, very organised and efficient
- France – a tough nut to crack, very intellectual approach, don't always speak English
- Italy – money is always an issue
- Spain – some success here

# Showcases we have been to

- Fira Tarrega, Spain
- Chalon dans la rue OFF, France
- City of Wings, Belgium
- MiraMirO, Belgium
- MintFest, UK



# Outdoors in 2011-12 we ...

- Gave a total of 495 performances
- Watched by 40,165 people
- At 24 festivals or events
- In 8 countries



# Why do it?

- For the artistic challenge
- Because it can work financially
- Because you get to see some beautiful bits of Europe
- And learn new skills from other artists you meet
- For the buzz of performing to hundreds or even thousands of people at a time

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