

An Empty Stage: Where History and Possibility Meet

Walk into Saint Michael's Playhouse.

Push open the door to the theater.

Take a seat and look at ... an empty stage.

Close your eyes for a moment and listen. You just might hear two voices – one of history and one of possibility.

The history tells a tale of generations past. Of Bela Lugosi playing Dracula, of (Academy Award winner) Jon Voight on the verge of stardom. The possibility speaks of what can happen on this very stage, this very season.

History speaks again. Over 60 years ago, Henry Fairbanks had an idea: To create a professional theater company of New York actors at Saint Michael's College during the summer months when the campus was quiet. On opening night, June 30, 1947, Saint Michael's Playhouse was ablaze with colorful lights. Excited theatergoers in fancy dress arrived in flashy cars. The lights dimmed, the show began, and when that first, magical performance was over, the audience stood for a dozen curtain calls.

Possibility takes its turn. This past January, as has happened for years, hundreds of professional actors from Broadway, Off-Broadway and other New York City stages lined up in Times Square looking forward to auditioning for one of just four productions taking place this summer in Greater Burlington, Vermont. Of those, fewer than two-dozen are to create exciting new history at Saint Michael's Playhouse.

And, as has been the case for decades, while the snow still falls on the Green Mountain state, directors, choreographers, and designers living in New York, Los Angeles, Philadelphia and Boston are already hard at work on the summer's Playhouse productions.

Henry Fairbanks started with a converted barn on a college campus. The first audience on that first night over sixty years ago started with a sense of expectation. Both are part of history now, but both shared one important dream – a dream that has made Saint Michael's Playhouse one of the premier summer stock theatre companies in the country. And they both believed in possibility.

Watch possibility become part of a rich history this summer at Saint Michael's Playhouse.