



A HISTORY OF WESTON THEATER COMPANY

During the Great Depression and in the midst of Weston's long, dark winters when the town was cut off from the villages on the other side of the hills, neighbors came together to put on plays that brought to life stories of the world beyond.

A former church renovated for the town dramatic club by Weston-born architect Raymond Austin, the Weston Playhouse attracted the attention of director Harlan Grant, who launched the theatre's first theatre season in the summer of 1937. Owned by the Weston Community Association and rented by the theatre company during the summer season, **the Playhouse was supported by its community through three war-torn summers in the 1940s, a fire that destroyed the original Greek revival building in 1962, and flooding which challenged its replacement a decade later and again in 2011.**

From these beginnings, **families like the Walkers, the Lloyds, and others, created a first-class theater that never lost the connection to its town and the surrounding region.** The pathway from the Walker Farm south on Route 100 to the Playhouse on the Green became known as the "Avenue of the Stars." Come the 1950s, the theatre had become a mainstay of Southern Vermont's cultural landscape and the Playhouse was recognized as an attractive destination for out-of-town visitors.

By the turn of the last century and **under the 30-year leadership of the '3 Guys' (Malcolm Ewen, Tim Fort, and Steve Stettler), Weston transformed into a professional theater.** Broadway and regional theater stars made their way to Weston summer after summer to create exceptional entertainment for a welcoming audience of community members, second-home owners, and weekend tourists. The theater became known as the home of "Broadway in Vermont.

In 2017, with generous support that came widely and in many forms from our community, we boldly opened a second venue at Walker Farm. This modern, year-round center for the arts complements Weston's summer programming on its flagship Playhouse stage. It allows the organization to expand its role as an incubator for the arts, and foster connections with its cherished community. **In 2018, after 30 years, the trio of Founding Directors (Ewen, Fort, and Stettler) handed the reins to new Executive Artistic Director Susanna Gellert, an artist from New York with deep ties to Vermont, to lead Weston into the future.**

Aside from becoming Vermont's newest, and oldest theaters, the significance of building a modern complex amid the barns and silos of the actual farm where the idea of our theater was incubated ties us even more deeply to our enduring social roots. With the addition of this new space and subsequent launch of a year-round music series, enhanced original works program, and community programming, **we've grown into a creative hive that welcomes artists, audiences, and important conversations to Weston year-round.**

In 2021, Weston Playhouse Theatre Company rebranded as Weston Theater Company, a name which more appropriately holds all that we do.

Today, **Weston is an award-winning regional theater, nationally recognized for its multi-stage summer festival and year-round Education and New Works programs.** At both Weston's historic Playhouse and Walker Farm venues, the theater brings over 15,000 visitors to the town of 500 each year by presenting diverse, surprising stories and astonishing, thrilling artists. Weston continues to flourish as a home for exceptional theater in an exceptional community.