

Sight & Sound Theatres HCI Partner Profile March 2019



Sight & Sound brings Bible stories to life on a spectacular stage, featuring an exceptional cast, special effects, massive sets and live animals.

Each year, we welcome more than a million people from around the world who come to experience these amazing stories. With over forty years of bringing the Bible to life on stage, we've had quite a journey.

But how did we get here?

Growing up on a dairy farm in rural Lancaster County, our founder Glenn Eshelman was so inspired by the beauty of the world around him that he began painting landscapes as a boy. As he grew up, Glenn continued to pursue his artistic interests, eventually buying a camera to take reference photos for his paintings. Photography quickly became his passion.

After marrying his wife, Shirley, Glenn sold his artwork out of the trunk of his car to make ends meet. But in 1964, his side show became the main act. After presenting his scenic photography at a local church using a slide projector, a turntable for musical underscore and a microphone for narration, the audience response was overwhelming. This first unofficial "Sight & Sound" show became a humble success.

By the mid-1970's, Glenn and Shirley were taking their multimedia presentations to audiences all around the United States. This popularity gave way to a permanent home for their productions, and in 1976, the Living Waters Theatre opened for business. It was here that Sight & Sound Theatres was born.

Over time, more live theatrical elements were added to the shows, and in 1987, our first complete, full-length Biblical production debuted: Behold the Lamb. In just a few short years, we outgrew the Living Waters Theatre, and the realization of a new dream began: a larger, better-equipped facility on a plot of land just across the cornfield. In 1991, the Entertainment Centre opened to rave reviews.

But no journey is without its trials.

On a cold January morning in 1997, billowing black smoke filled the Lancaster County sky as a devastating fire destroyed the six-year-old Entertainment Centre. For a moment, the future seemed uncertain and the road ahead unclear.

But Glenn and Shirley would not give up on their vision. Just 18 months later, the construction of a brand new building was complete. This new 2,000-seat, state-of-the-art theater featured a massive, 300-foot panoramic stage that wrapped around the audience, with the ability to house sets four stories tall. The first show to take the stage was Sight & Sound's signature production — Noah. Audiences gasped as they were immersed in a spectacular ark full of animals that surrounded them on three sides.

By the early 2000's, sell-out crowds sparked a new idea from Glenn and Shirley: what would it look like for Sight & Sound Theatres to expand? Their vision to open a second location was finally realized in 2008, when the nearly identical twin theater opened in the beautiful Ozark Mountains of Branson, Missouri.

Today, with a decade of operating two theaters, producing and premiering a brand new show every other year and designing each production to travel between Lancaster and Branson, we are slowly honing our craft of taking stories from the pages of Scripture and bringing them to life on stage.

What began with a dairy farmer, his wife, a few slide projectors, a passion for creativity and a desire to serve God, grew into the Sight & Sound Theatres we know today—the nation's largest organization of its kind, and one of the top three theater destinations in the country. We are humbled by this success and grateful to remain a family-owned business, led by the next generation of the Eshelman family with a passionately committed team of 600 employees.

As we look to what the future may hold, we are continuously exploring new ways to bring the Bible to life and how we might provide more opportunities for more people to experience these timeless stories.

We look forward to hosting you and your Bank Clubs as we continue to bring the Bible to life for many more years to come!

Click the link below to watch our video "Sight & Sound Theatres – Story of Faith".

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=WFhy5pBqcFI>