**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

**FORT SALEM SEASON CLOSES WITH**

***DRACULA’S GRANDMOTHER***

SALEM, NEW YORK – With the first weekend of Fort Salem’s World Premiere run of *Dracula’s Grandmother: A Musical Fable* in the past, the cast is preparing for the musical’s final two performances this coming weekend, Saturday, August 15 at 8 PM, and Sunday, August 16 at 2 PM.

“It’s hard to believe we did all this in nine days,” said Johnny Martinez, who plays Bram Stoker, the author of the novel, *Dracula,* and a lead character in the show. “I’m used to tours,” the veteran of national and European tours of *West Side Story* (“I’ve played just about every Shark”), “and community theatre. The tours rehearse for weeks, the community shows for months. It’s incredible how this came together so fast!”

Fort Salem changes its summer attractions every one or two weeks, and, in the truest traditions of professional summer stock, is often rehearsing one show on the same day another one is playing. “No elements of one set can be in the way of a show that may be rehearsing on the same day another one is performing. It’s a summer of solving problems as we recognize them, before we create too many,” says a dazed Jay Kerr, the Fort’s artistic director. “The trick is to find talented performers who can roll with the punches and thrive in a hectic environment. Everyone in the *Dracula* cast is magnificent; they work well with one another and deliver during performance. ”

Martinez, one of the founders of the Saratoga-based Tango Fusion dance groups, and a regional fixture as a teacher, choreographer, and director, loves the opportunity to explore his role without taking on those additional responsibilities. “As an actor, I just do what I’m told. Jay was staging a number and looked at me and asked me to throw a little tango into it. So I unbuttoned my shirt and started dancing!”

He is joined by Albany singer/actress Gail Garrison in the title role. For personal reasons, she has been absent from the stage for eight years. “This feels great, being back and having fun,” she says.

“Good thing we have very little scenery. Gail would have chewed it all up anyway,” says director Kerr of Garrison’s exuberant acting style, “although she certainly would have had some competition from David Braucher.” The play takes place at an 1897 rehearsal of the first reading of the play, *Dracula,* and Braucher plays the bombastic Sir Henry Irving, a Shakespearean actor of renown, who in turn is assigned the role of Dracula. “David is eerie as Dracula one moment, and very silly as he makes fun of over-serious actors the next,” offers Kerr. “The entire cast delivers.”

Kerr is echoed by J. Peter Bergman in an online review in Berkshire Bright Focus, in which he speaks of the “very funny concept,” and performers that are “a charmer,” “a delight,” “lovely voice and personality,” and “hysterical;” “twenty-three original songs, … some … really glorious contributions to the form … one of the most lyrical and singable shows … worthwhile and a few hours of unanticipated fun.”

*Dracula’s Grandmother* concludes its world premiere run this weekend in Salem. For tickets or more information, visit the theater online (fortsalemtheater.com) or call the theater box office: (518) 854-9200.