



Antaeus Plays Timeless **YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU**

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You Can't Take It With You/by Kaufman and Hart/directed by [Gigi Bermingham](#)/The Antaeus Company/through December 9

Playwrights Kaufman and Hart saw the vitality and urgency of comedy within drama when they penned ***You Can't Take It With You*** in 1936. It won a Pulitzer for Drama in 1937 and then a Best Picture Oscar for the film version in 1938. Their other big hit *The Man Who Came to Dinner* in 1939 has a similar theme and tone. In both plays it's wild, zany over-the-top characters and off-kilter incidents that blow the lid off the humdrum existence of the well to do middle class, and to meaningful avail. In ***Y.C.T.I.W.Y.***, the wealthy Kirbys are about as unlike the crazy free-living Sycamores

as black is to white. Yet, when meshed together, merriment and unexpected happiness abound. With a spectacular cast (double) and brightly paced direction from Gigi Bermingham, Antaeus' ***Y.C.T.I.W.Y.*** is a splendid tonic for our depressing economic times and simply a whole lot of fun.

Set during the Depression, ***Y.C.T.I.W.Y.*** is appealing first and foremost to actors and other artists, for, represented within the eccentric family circle, is a whole mix of creativity with devotion to dancing, playwriting, painting and the bizarre world of invention. Papa (Paul Eiding) spends day and night down in the basement building explosives with his partner Mr. De Pinna (Jeremy Guskin), Mama (Eve Gordon), who never finished her experimental stage with painting has inexplicably switched to writing plays, married daughter Essie (Kellie Matteson) wants to be a ballerina despite her ineptness. Grandpa Martin ([Lawrence Pressman](#)) attends commencements, cares for pet snakes on display in the living room and refuses to pay his taxes. "What has the government done for me?" he wisely declares. Essie's husband Ed (Ryan [Vincent Anderson](#)) prints subversive comments on a printing machine and circulates them with the homemade candy Essie has made. Donald ([John Wesley](#)), a friend of maid Rheba ([Veralyn Jones](#)) is a freeloader collecting unemployment. Boris Kolenkhov ([Jacob Sidney](#)) is a Russian immigrant who drops by to give Essie dance lessons and to hold court about the state of the world. The only so-called 'normal' member of the family daughter Alice (Kate Maher) works in an office for the Kirbys and is in love with son Tony (Nicholas D'Agosto), Vice President of his father Anthony's ([John Apicella](#)) company. The major action of the plot involves the Kirbys dropping by to meet the Sycamore family. Mr. and Mrs. Kirby ([Amelia White](#)) are all too stuffy, proper, closed-in and basically miserable, assuredly at odds with the Sycamore lifestyle.

The entire cast are harmoniously in tune and make divine music throughout under the steady and inventive hand of director [Gigi Bermingham](#) who remains totally loyal to Kaufman and Hart's brilliant script. Standouts in the cast are Pressman, so good-natured and defiantly self-confident as Grandpa; Gordon, delightfully ditzzy as Penny; Maher, beautiful and bewildered about where her love should lie. Guskin as De Pinna and Sidney as Kolenkhov play the foreigners with meticulous panache. Praise as well to [Rhonda Aldrich](#) in a small role as an inebriated actress and to White who does double duty as Mrs. Kirby and a deliriously entertaining Russian Grand Duchess. The ensemble also includes Jeremy Shouldis, Caleb Chomer and as the G-Man, billed as guest star, on the night I attended, [Philip Proctor](#). As it is double cast, be sure to check their website to attend the performance you desire. The intricately cluttered and striking set design is by [Tom Buderwitz](#) and lovely costumes by [A. Jeffrey Schoenberg](#).