

## You Can't take it With You By: Ron Irwin, October 22, 2012



Joseph Ruskin  
Photo by Karianne Flaathen

### Rating for You Can't Take it With You – 5 stars

I am increasingly becoming convinced that some of the very best and most entertaining live theatre in Los Angeles is not to be found at the highly acclaimed mega venues but rather at the great many 99 seat and black box theatres that proliferate the greater Los Angeles area. Oh to be sure it is hard to beat the major venues when it comes to musicals which is pretty much all they offer, but for real life passion I am a huge fan of the more intimate venues such as Antaeus in North Hollywood where I recently saw “You Can’t Take it With You.”

This was my first visit to Antaeus and it was very impressive. I don’t mean the lobby which is diminutive but when we entered the house we were immediately struck by an absolutely gorgeous set. Even my hyper critical teen daughter Kari said: “Wow dad that is one beautiful set.” But back in the diminutive lobby the company offered refreshments at reasonable prices. That is extremely rare at any entertainment venue large or small. But then there was the show.

Folks “You Can’t Take it With You” currently at the Antaeus Theatre is knee slappin’ gut bustin’ dang nabbit hilarious. I do mean it is a very well crafted, superbly directed, and magnificently acted comedy the classic the film version of which won the Oscar for Best Picture in 1938. In 2012 it is brought back to life on stage at Antaeus.

“You Can’t Take it With You” originally written by George Kaufman and Moss Hart is a tale of an absurd but deeply loving middle class family who has just barely survived the great depression. They are introduced in a most interesting way to a very upper crust family with at first a cataclysmic but uproarious result.

Every character is very well played by the cast I had the pleasure of seeing. The [play](#) is double cast so sadly I cannot speak of the players I did not see but I can’t imagine they would be any less. But the audience was simply swept away by the deep wit and charming demeanor of Martin “Grandpa” Vanderhof as exquisitely portrayed by actor Joseph Ruskin. Grandpa Vanderhof is the grandpa we all wish we had in our lives.

Do yourself a big favor and go see this play. Things are pretty messed up right now and laughter is the best medicine and this show provides a mega dose. It runs from now through December 9th 2012 Tuesdays through Saturdays at 8 pm and Saturdays and Sundays at 2 pm. It is at the Antaeus Theatre Company, 5112 Lankershim Boulevard, North Hollywood, California 91601. Further information and ticketing is available by calling: 818-506-1983 or online at [www.antaeus.org](http://www.antaeus.org).