



## You Can't Take It With You by Jenna Maxfield



Tony Abatemarco, Marcelo Tubert, Patrick Wenk-Wolff

Photo by Geoffrey Wade

Bringing laughter and warmth to the stage is Kaufman's and Hart's *You Can't Take it With You*. This screwball comedy is put on by the Antaeus Company, which is a cooperative theater ensemble dedicated to bringing classical theater to Los Angeles. Since the company's formation in 1991, Antaeus has been practicing "partner casting," which means that all of their shows have two casts that switch off performances.

Antaeus originally started

this practice in order to accommodate their actors' busy schedules and need to make a living, but over time, they've seen that the double casting has benefited performances by keeping the actors sharp and enabling them to collaborate on their role with their partner.

Whether it was the partner acting, expert direction, or a combination of both, *You Can't Take It With You* is a complete joy to watch. The play gives us a tiny peek inside the Sycamore household, and a peek is more than enough to see that the Sycamores aren't your normal 1930s middle-class family.

At the heart of the family is Penny, the lovable, eccentric mother played by Julia Fletcher and Eve Gordon. At the play's open, Penny is writing a



Jeremy Glazer, Lizzie Zerebko, Jeff Doba

Photo by Geoffrey Wade

play, but you could just as easily find her painting a portrait, singing an aria, or composing music. Penny's interests change suddenly and with no regrets for what occupation she's leaving behind. She simply does what makes her happy. The same goes for her husband, Paul Sycamore (Marcelo Tubert and Paul Eiding), whose fascination with explosives has him constantly blowing things up in the basement with the help of Mr. De Pinna (Tanny Abatemarco and Jeremy Guskin). Mr. De Pinna was an ice man who came into the Sycamore house to speak with Mr. Sycamore eight years before and then never left. This kind of thing is completely normal to the Sycamores as is Ellie Carmichael's (Kellie Matteson and Linda Park) obsession with dancing. Ellie is Penny and Paul's married daughter who is



Larry Bates, Julia Fletcher

Photo by Karianne Flaathen

learning ballet from a defected Russian (Jeff Doba and Jacob Sidney). Ellie may not have any natural talent at dancing, but it doesn't matter as long as she's happy doing it.

That is the family's motto...do what makes you happy, and it has never been a problem until Alice Sycamore (Kate Maher and Lizzie Zerebko), Paul and Pennie's younger daughter, falls in love with the president's son at the company where

she works. Alice is the only "normal" Sycamore family member, and though she loves her family, she is embarrassed by their eccentricities. When Tony Kirby (Jeremy Glazer and Nicholas D'Agosto) asks Alice to marry him, she cringes at the idea of mixing her family's with Tony's. The Kirby's are everything that society dictates a wealthy couple should be, and Alice knows that even a tiny dose of her own family will be too much for the Kirby's. It's when these two families get together for a dinner party that the real fun begins.

While the play is full of laughs, there is worthwhile message beneath all the fun. What is success? Is it money and luxury? A big house and nice car? Or maybe it's invitations to all of society's most elite

parties. Perhaps, success is all of these things, but at what cost does this kind of success come by, and does it make you happy? Rich, yes, but happy? That's debatable. It's these questions that *You Can't Take It With You* explores. So often in life, we get caught up in the race to the top. We yearn for that moment when we can say that we have it all, but along the way, so many of us lose sight of what really matters. The Sycamores are without question eccentric and strange,



Tony Abatemarco, Marcelo Tubert

Photo by Geoffrey Wade

but they may just be on to something. Under all the explosions and funny paintings and ballet practice is a family who loves each other and supports each other in every endeavor—no matter how crazy it may seem. Maybe that's the kind of success we should all be looking for.

Overall, Antaeus' production of *You Can't Take It With You* is a gem. The ease in which the cast interacts with each other puts forth the illusion that you're watching an actual family on stage and not actors, and isn't that what quality theatre is all about? The actors in *You Can't Take It With You* feed off each other's energy and nothing about the production is forced or contrived. I suggest taking the time to see both casts perform the show. You won't regret it.

The rest of the cast includes: Karen Malina White and Veralyn Jones (Rheba), Michael Hyland and Ryan Vincent Anderson (Ed Carmichael), Larry Bates and John Wesley (Donald), Joseph Ruskin and Lawrence Pressman (Grandpa/Martin Vanderhof), Patrick Wenk-Wolff and Jeremy Shouldis (Henderson/Mac), Janellen Steininger and Rhonda Aldrich (Gay Wellington), Josh Clark and John Apicella (Mr. Kirby), Shannon Holt and Amelia White (Mrs. Kirby/Grand Duchess Olga Katrina), and David Glasser and Caleb Chomer (Jim/2<sup>nd</sup> Man)

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**You Can't Take it With you** by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart. Directed by Gigi Birmingham. Scenic design by Tom Buderwitz. Lighting design by Jeremy Pivnick. Costume design by A. Jeffrey Schoenberg. Sound design by Jeff Gardner. Properties design by Heather Ho. Production manager is Gil Tordjman.

**Theatre:** THE ANTAEUS COMPANY 5112 Lankershim Blvd. North Hollywood CA, 91601 (a block and a half south of Magnolia; free parking available in Citibank lot on Lankershim Blvd. South of Otsego St.)

**Running time:** Two hours and thirty minutes with one 10 minute intermission

**Schedule:** Performances: Oct. 18-Dec. 9: **Thursdays @ 8 pm:** Nov. 1, 8, 15, 29; Dec. 6 (dark Nov. 22) **Fridays @ 8 pm:** Nov. 2, 9, 16, 23, 30; Dec. 7 **Saturdays @ 2 pm:** Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24; Dec. 1, 8 **Saturdays @ 8 pm:** Nov. 3, 10, 17, 24; Dec. 1, 8 **Sundays @ 2 pm:** Nov. 4, 11, 18, 25; Dec. 2, 9

**Ticket prices:** Thursdays and Fridays: \$30, Saturdays and Sundays: \$34

**Tickets online:** [www.Antaeus.org](http://www.Antaeus.org)

**Tickets by phone:** (818) 506-1983