



Family Drama 'You Can't Take It With You' Strong After 70 Years

The Pulitzer Prize-winning play debuted in the 1930s.

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Linda Park, Veralyn Jones and Lawrence Pressman

Photo by Geoffrey Wade

On the winding road of life, family, love and ambition often take a backseat to the magnetic embrace of success, power and career.

If this point-of-view appeals to you don't miss the **Antaeus Company's** production of Kaufman and Hart's *You Can't Take It With You*, running through Dec. 9 in the NoHo Arts District.

Set during the depression, this is the story of two very different families coping with love and searching for the American dream. The Sycamore family celebrates independence and freedom from convention.

The exacting Kirby family believes in rules, hard work and rigid organization. Merry mayhem ensues when Alice Sycamore falls in love with Tony Kirby.

This bouillabaisse of eccentricity and chaos is nothing less than profound in its wisdom, wit and humor.

Rarely does a comedy examine love and family in the intense yet light-hearted manner more than apparent in this play. The Sycamore-Vanderhof family, for instance, is unique in its unconditional acceptance of just about everyone and their obliviousness to social and peer pressure.

George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart strike a balance between reality and drama that yields great philosophical questions and incisive laughter.

You Can't Take It With You premiered over 70 years ago, debuting on Broadway in 1936, where it ran for 837 performances and won the Pulitzer Prize for Drama.

Gigi Bermingham's direction allows the actors to fully mine the depth of their characters. She brilliantly positions both casts while keeping the pace quick and the language vibrant. Her's is a talent only beginning to see the light of day.

Stand-out performances include Eve Gordon (Penny Sycamore) in the Sycamore cast and Julia Fletcher (Penny Sycamore) in the Kirby cast for their sensitive, wacky yet vulnerable portraits.

Kellie Matteson (Essie Carmichael) (Sycamore) proves a passionate and convincing daughter and wife.

John Apicella (Mr. Anthony W. Kirby) is wonderful and realistic in his proper, straight-laced, and controlled portrayal.

Nicholas D' Agosto (Tony Kirby) lights a fire under both his character and the show with an unforgettable and balanced turn as the kind, courageous and dedicated beau.

But it is Lawrence Pressman (Martin "Grandpa" Vanderhof) (Sycamore) who runs away with the play by giving a performance of such depth, character, tranquility and possibility that you don't want to see it end.

Adding to the play are Tom Buderwitz's abundant scenic design, Heather Ho's properties design, A. Jeffrey Schoenberg's costume design, Jeremy Pivnick's lighting design and Jeff Gardner's sound design.

All in all, this quest for simplicity in a complex world hits all the right notes and proves once more that sentences and syllables written from the heart and soul can be timeless.

With this unique and substantive selection, Antaeus shows that it is a theatre company true to its creed of performing classics and unafraid of taking risks or paving new paths for playwrights, directors and actors in North Hollywood and Los Angeles.