

kanata theatre
presents

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

by **MOSS HART and
GEORGE S. KAUFMAN**

Directed by Brooke Keneford

The scene is the home of Martin Vanderhof, in New York.

Act 1: A Wednesday evening in the 1930's
(During this act the lights are lowered to
denote the passing of several hours.)

Act 2: A week later

Act 3: The next day

There will be two intermissions; coffee, soft drinks and desserts will be available.
Please be considerate: ensure that pagers and cellular phones are turned off.
The use of cameras or tape recorders during the performance is not permitted.

You Can't Take it With You

by **Moss Hart & George S. Kaufman**

Directed by **Brooke Keneford**

CAST

PENELOPE SYCAMORE

ESSIE

ELKE

PAUL SYCAMORE

MR. DE PINNA

ED

DONALD

MARTIN VANDERHOF

ALICE

HENDERSON

TONY KIRBY

BORIS KOLENKHOF

GAY WELLINGTON

MR. KIRBY

MRS. KIRBY

G-MAN

Rosemary Keneford

Kelly Fuoco

Els Raynaert

Mark Bazerman

Robert Fairbairn

Rob Mitchell

Kyle Villeneuve

Jim Holmes

Katie Betts

Gerry Thompson

Paul Behncke

Rob Johnstone

Erin Ryan

Jim Ritchie

Mary Holmes

Don Bell

Jeff McNally

Jeff Parent

Gill Levy

GRAND DUCHESS OLGA



THEATRE REVIEW

'30s zaniness dated and over-the-top

BY BRUCE DEACHMAN

When George Kaufman and Moss Hart wrote their Pulitzer Prize-winning *You Can't Take It with You* in 1936, it was just the sort of zany comedy and altruistic message that a country mired in overwhelming unemployment and uncertainty overseas needed. Carpe diem was the lesson; seize the day and live life, and for 1930s Broadway theatre-goers, it was a welcome respite from the grim world outside.

That moral is no less applicable today, but the play itself doesn't travel the 66 years well, and ultimately reveals itself for what it is: a wacky, at times sentimental, collection of odd nuts and bolts, whirled around for a couple of hours, then wrapped at the last minute in a pretty bow.

On the one hand, *You Can't Take It with You*, which opened Wednesday night at the Kanata Theatre's Ron Maslin Playhouse, is an against-all-odds love story slapped up against differences of class and ideology. On the other, it's an overly-manufactured collection of farcical and wholly unbelievable characters thrown together in a silly plot, all pressed into a mould that would later provide a template for countless television sitcoms.

Tony Kirby (Paul Behncke) and Alice Sycamore (Katie Betts) are the unlikely couple-to-be. While Tony's

parents are well-heeled, ramrod-straight Wall Street types, Alice's are anything but, and the inevitable meeting of the two clans offers predictable results.

Alice's mother, Penny, has been convinced that she's a playwright ever since a typewriter accidentally found its way into their home eight years earlier. The father, Paul, experiments with fireworks in the basement and plays with Meccano. A sister, Essie, makes candies and hopes to one day be a ballerina. Essie's husband, Ed, fancies himself a xylophonist. And the patriarch of the household, Alice's grandfather, Martin Vanderhoof, opted out of the rat race 35 years ago, preferring to collect stamps and snakes, play darts, and attend commencement exercises at nearby Columbia University. It's a happy unit that doesn't for a second — and rightly so — let an absence of talent get in the way of enjoying life to the fullest, even if that means eating Corn Flakes for dinner.

And not for want of moxy on the part of Kanata Theatre's cast, directed by Brooke Keneford, does the play bog down. Rosemary Keneford's Penny, for example, is a wonderful delivery of social ineptness and zeal. Jim Holmes, as the grandfather, steals the show with the play's best-written character, serving up perfectly-timed, humorous observations and retorts that are at once illogical and irrefutable. Most of the others in this 19-member cast have their moments, too, each benefiting from the playwrights' undeniable reputations as humorists.

But the zaniness is far too bold, too unremitting, and the dialogue too dated for much beyond Frank Capra's 1938 film version.

As Alice says to Tony, in trying to convince him that it's of no use, "It's just no use, Tony, it's just no use!"

You Can't Take It with You continues until Saturday, and again Feb. 5-9, at the Ron Maslin Playhouse, 1 Ron Maslin Way. Tickets for the 8 p.m. shows are \$12 each, and available at the box office, or by calling 831-4435.
