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presents

You Can’t Take It With You

by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart

Director Malcolm Tulip
Scenic Design Vincent Mountain
Costume Design Jessica-Eli Weiss
Lighting Designer Andrew Fritsch
Sound Design Henry Reynolds, Gavin Bidelman, Devin Kerr
Diction Coach Annette Masson
Wig & Makeup Designer Alex Michaels
Stage Manager Christina M. Hagan

Setting:
The home of Martin Vanderhof, New York City, 1936
Act I: a Wednesday evening • Act II: a week later • Act III: the next day

There will be two intermissions.

You Can’t Take It With You is presented by special arrangement with Dramatists Play Service, Inc.

Latecomers will be seated at a suitable break or scene change. As a courtesy to others, please set pagers to silent mode. Cellular phones and electronic watch alarms should be turned off so they will not interrupt the performance. Photography and videotaping are not permitted due to copyright restrictions. Flash photography endangers performers by causing momentary blindness.

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In the records of the American theatre, the Kaufman and Hart collaboration lasted only ten years, from 1930 to 1940. This, however, seems hard to believe. The popularity of their plays was so tremendous during their partnership and their plays have continued to be so popular ever since, that they seem, in the perspective of the present day, to have been “always there”—like Gilbert and Sullivan or Rodgers and Hammerstein.

The story of their first joining up together was fascinatingly told in Moss Hart’s autobiography, Act I, published in 1959. Hart, at twenty-five years of age, was in 1929 a penniless, aspiring young man with one single ambition: to be a Broadway playwright. He had written a handful of plays with no success until he completed a comedy about the migration then taking place of actors from the stage to Hollywood, as the change-over from silent films to “talking pictures” put a premium on actors who could “talk.” This comedy won some interest from the highly-reputed Broadway producer, Sam Harris, who offered to have the play adapted into a musical comedy. Though yearning greatly for any kind of stage production, Hart said “no.” Harris then offered a production if Hart would enter into a collaboration with George S. Kaufman, who could help iron out the comedy’s kinks. Since Kaufman was one of the most successful playwrights in the country, this was for Hart a wonderful opportunity which he hastened to accept.

The play he and Kaufman wrote—and rewrote and rewrote again and again—was Once in a Lifetime. On its opening in September 1930, it became one of the greatest successes of its time. Hart sprang overnight from penury to riches, from oblivion to being one of the brightest stars of the inner circle that was known as the Algonquin Roundtable. It put Kaufman and Hart as a team on a pedestal in the theatrical hall of fame.

Over the next ten years they wrote seven other shows together. All of them won the most enthusiastic attention — the opening of each was a major event. Four of them were long-run hits, and the other three were successes that would have been considered major accomplishments from any other playwrights than these two from whom only fifty-megaton smashes were now expected. The seven were Merrily We Roll Along (1934), You Can’t Take It with You (1936), I’d Rather Be Right (1937), The Fabulous Invalid (1938), The American Way (1939), The Man Who Came to Dinner (1939), and George Washington Slept Here (1940).

After 1940 the two did not work together again—not because they had a falling-out, as was the case with Gilbert and Sullivan, but because Hart had a psychological need to prove that his success was not due to a dependence on Kaufman. He had to prove to himself that he could work alone. He did it brilliantly for the next seventeen years, and Kaufman’s career also continued to thrive. During this time Hart wrote Lady in the Dark, Winged Victory, Christopher Blake, Light Up the Sky, and The Climate of Eden. In addition, he wrote many screenplays that were produced in Hollywood, including the 1954 version of A Star Is Born. His most notable screenplay was Gentleman’s Agreement which won an Academy Award.

Before and after working with Hart, Kaufman wrote such hits as The Butter and Egg Man, The Coconuts, and Strike Up the Band (all as a solo playwright); The Royal Family and Dinner at Eight (with Edna Ferber); The Dark Tower (with Alexander Woollcott); Animal Crackers (with Morris Ryskind); Park Avenue (with Nunnally Johnson); and The Solid Gold Cadillac (with Howard Teichman).

The two men remained the best of friends. Hart’s autobiography was regarded by many in 1959 as being largely an idolizing tribute to George S. Kaufman. On Kaufman’s death on June 2, 1961, Hart delivered a moving address at the funeral. He himself died barely seven months later, on December 20, 1961.

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About the Cast

Lee Chrisman (Mr. Kirby) soph., Kalamazoo, MI
Wyatt Ewing (Jim) junior, Keaouhu, HI
Kate Garfield (Essie) junior, Livonia, MI
Beckah Gluckstein (Alice) senior, Rochester Hills, MI
Sari Goldberg (Rheba) senior, New York, NY
Daniel Kane (Henderson) junior, Northbrook, IL
Ali Kresch (Mrs. Kirby) junior, BFA Perf/BA English, Hewlett, NY
Zac LeMieux (G-Man) senior, Traverse City, MI
Frank Maiorana (Donald) senior, Sterling Heights, MI
Jessica Maynard (Gay Wellington) soph., Pasadena, CA
Kevin McCarthy (Mac) junior, Atlanta, GA
Seth Moore (Mr. De Pinna) soph., Larchmont, NY
Zoe Palko (Olga) senior, Ludington, MI
Marc Paskin (Tony Kirby) junior, Wilmette, IL
Pat Rourke (Martin Vanderhof) junior, Port Huron, MI
Matt Semler (Paul Sycamore) junior, Pittsburgh, PA
Aaron Seeburger (Ed) junior, BTA Theatre, Midland, MI
Alison Velasco (Penelope Sycamore) junior, Monroe, NC
James Wolk (Boris Kolenkhov) senior, BFA Perf./BA English, Farmington Hills, MI

The performers in this production are composed of undergraduate students pursuing a BFA in Performance in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance unless otherwise notated. The designers are composed of faculty and undergraduate students in the Department of Theatre & Drama and guests. Scenery, costumes, properties, sound, and lighting were realized by the students and staff of University Productions, the producing unit of the School of Music, Theatre & Dance.

About the Artists

Gavin Bidelman (Sound Designer) is a senior music theory and sound engineering student in the School of Music, Theatre, & Dance. UM: Audio engineer, SMTD Sound and Video Services.


Alex Michaels (Wig Designer) is a graduate of the Musical Theatre program at U of M. UM: Wigs/Makeup: The Gold Diggers, 1918, Company. Acting New York: The Field of Mars, chapter one. Acting Regional Theatre: Thoroughly Modern Millie, Chicago, Seussical, Oklahoma!, Footloose.

Vincent Mountain (Scenic Designer) is an Assoc. Professor of Design in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama. UM: The Hot L Baltimore, Hansel and Gretel, Jesus Christ Superstar, Suor Angelica/ Gianni Schicchi, Xerxes, Hamlet, Parade, The Good Person of Szechwan, La Périchole, Falstaff. Regional Theatre: One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest, Macbeth, Orpheus Descending, A Midsummer Night's Dream, The Devil's Disciple, Alley Theatre; Playland, Intiman Theatre; Rosters, Seattle Group; La Traviata, Opera Theatre of St. Louis; Little Women, Central City Opera, Opera Omaha, Chautauqua Opera. Other: MFA in Design, UCSD.

Henry Reynolds (Sound Designer) is an Asst. Professor in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama and the sound engineer and information systems administrator for University Productions. UM: Sound designer: The Laramie Project, The Rover, The Nutcracker, A Streetcar Named Desire, The Grapes of Wrath, To Kill a Mockingbird, Our Country's Good, I Am A Man, Born in Sync '06, Block-M Records showcase, Videobabble. Other: Pioneer High School, sound supervisor, AES student member.

Christina M. Hagan (Stage Manager) is a senior design and production student in the Dept. of Theatre and Drama studying stage management. UM: Stage manager: The Laramie Project; asst. stage manager: Seussical, The Hot L Baltimore, A Chorus Line. Regional Theatre: Heritage Repertory Theatre: production stage manager - South Pacific, Sunday in the Park with George, substitute stage manager - Enchanted April; North Shore Music Theatre: Production Assistant: Fame, Cinderella, Abyssinia.

Devin Kerr (Sound Designer) is a junior performing arts technology student in the School of Music, Theatre & Dance studying sound engineering. UM: Sound asst., Suessical; performer: Sync '06, Block-M Records showcase, Videobabble. Other: Pioneer High School, sound supervisor, AES student member.
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About the Artists

**the R.S.A. Regional Theatre:** Production manager, Ann Arbor Summer Festival, 1987 - 2001.

**Malcolm Tulip (Director)** is an Asst. Professor in the Dept. of Theatre & Drama and a graduate of L’Ecole Jacques Lecoq. UM: *The Burial at Thebes, A Midsummer Night’s Dream, Friends, The Rover, The Diary of a Scoundrel, The Imaginary Invalid, She’s All Yours, Rimer of Eldritch*. **Regional Theatre: Directing:** Retreat from Moscow, Habbit Thursday Opera, Art, Elizabeth Rex, *The Caretaker, Merry Wives of Windsor*, MI Shakespeare Festival, Iowa State Univ. **Acting:** *I Am My Own Wife, Blithe Spirit, Lord Byron*, Toby Belch, Shastilytsey, Falstaff, Touchstone, Dogberry.

**Jessica-Eli Weiss (Costume Designer)** is a senior BFA design and production major in the Dept. of Theater & Drama. UM: Asst. to the costume designer: Jackie O; assst. stage manager: *The Gold Diggers*; assistant curator, Opera in the Americas exhibit; Michigan Daily.

Acknowledgments

Special thanks to Jim Horton, Neeraj Mehta, and Michael Udow. Additional thanks to Dawn Rivard for wig rental and Jerry DePuit for the use of his accordion.

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Asst. Stage Managers......................Shima Morris, Erica Ranade, Joe Schlenke

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Assistant to the Scenic Designer.........Joseph Walls

Assistant to the Lighting Designer......Justin Lang

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Sound........................................Ryan Jones

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