

"You Can't Take It With You"

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faws, will be equal much longer to keeping their owners upright in their seats, or whether it might not be better to close their eyes, stop their ears, and slide unresisting to the floor, thus getting away from it all.

That is to say, hilarious is not the word for "You Can't," &c. Something stronger is needed. A mere list of some of the characters may hint the reasons why. The reasons are mostly the members of the Sycamore family. There is the mother who used to paint but had given it up for play-writing eight years before when somebody delivered a typewriter to the house by mistake. There is the father who devotes his waking hours to manufacturing fireworks in the cellar. There is the daughter who aspires to the ballet and gives frequent and visible manifestation of it. There is her young husband, who alternately works a printing press and plays the xylophone in the living-room of the home.

Lastly, there is Grandpa, who thirty-five years before had gone up the elevator to his office and had come straight down again without getting off, never to return to work. His hobbies include attending commencement exercises and collecting snakes, and he has never made an income tax return because he does not believe in it. There are

a few accessory zanies, not members of the family.

When these people get to acting and interacting on each other the confusion is indescribable. At their grandest they and the authors conspire to produce a perfect orgy of polite lunacy. As necessary foils are the one daughter wholly sane, the young man who loves her and the latter's wealthy and somewhat stodgy father and mother, thrust headlong into the seething cross-currents of the Sycamore family's affairs.

The beauty of the thing is that the authors have not surrendered to irresponsible whimsy. They may have allowed their heads to whirl, but they have kept their feet on the ground. Underlying everything is the homely human touch. At their wildest the Sycamores are believable, or sufficiently so.

One wonders whether during the two weeks in Philadelphia the authors may not remove the causes for ungracious reservation on that one-third of an act. How much nicer it would be if the second-act curtain developed from something indigenous to the soil of the real story rather than from a purely external event. And if some ending could be found less reminiscent of the ten-twenty-thirty's oft-repeated tableau of the stern father relenting. But this may be too much looking a gift horse in the mouth.

The cast is something. Henry Travers does not act but is Grandpa. Josephine Hull as the tremulous mother; Louise Platt, a charming if faintly mannered ingénue; Jess Barker, a forthright and likable juvenile, and George Tobias as the Russian need be singled out only because their opportunities are richer. Donald Oenslager's single setting is a gem of antiqued chromo art. If there is a single possibility on the directorial side missed by Mr. Kaufman it did not become apparent on first sight or second

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PHILADELPHIA, Dec. 4.

FOR something like two and two-thirds acts of "You Can't Take It With You," which was disclosed last Monday night at the Chestnut Street Opera House, the Messrs. Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman devote themselves diligently to a glittering and gorgeous glorification of goofiness. It is as if they had said, "We'll show those Spewacks!" and had proceeded to do so. (Note: The Spewacks are the authors of "Boy Meets Girl.")

For those something like two and two-thirds acts the whole question with the audience is whether back muscles, strained by paroxysms of laughter, and chest muscles, sore with the effort of restraining guff-