

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE PRESENTS

YOU
CAN'T
TAKE IT
AWAY
FROM

BY

GEORGE S. HAUFMAN & MOSS HART

LEEDS CIVIC THEATRE

22nd – 26th APRIL 1980

YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU had its premier showing at the Booth Theatre in New York on 14th December 1936 where it ran for 837 performances. One of the critics wrote "Sam H. Harris (the producer) opened not so much a play as a madhouse last night and set his audience down at 11 o'clock still laughing at the delirious doings". Other critics were equally impressed and the play won the coveted Pulitzer award for the best play of 1937. It was toured by several companies throughout the United States and enjoyed equal success at the St James Theatre in London; the film version had its première at Radio City in May 1938.

The authors themselves describe the single set:

"The living room, something of an understatement, for here meals are eaten, plays are written, snakes collected, ballet steps practised, xylophones played, printing presses operated - - - if there were room there would probably be ice skating. In short, the brood presided over by Martin Vanderhof goes on about the business of living in the fullest sense of the word. This is the house where you do as you like and no questions asked."

The character of Martin Vanderhof was based upon George S. Kaufman's own father, Joseph Kaufman; the play was Kaufman's private tribute to him.

It is now becoming accepted that the mid thirties to forties were the finest years for the English speaking comedy; arguably the best of those comedies were written by Kaufman and Hart; Of the nine plays on which they collaborated "You can't take it with you" was the third and ran the longest - just beating "The man who came to dinner" (739 performances).

Hart was the younger of the two and had tried his hand at writing for the theatre with mixed success; Kaufman was his hero - a giant in the theatre world of the 1920s. Hart's autobiography describes in classic detail his first meeting with the great man in Kaufman's bare, shabby writing room on the top floor of his otherwise sumptuously decorated and furnished

large house. Hart had written a play but could not get it right - hence the meeting which resulted in a cut, amended and highly successful version of "Once in a lifetime" (in which Trevor Nunn is now directing the Royal Shakespeare Company in London).

The ensuing partnership was a strange one in many ways in that the two men were much alike in temperament. Both disliked the pretentious, both were extremely intelligent and rather shy and both suffered from severe attacks of first-night nerves; Kaufman could not sleep for weeks prior to the opening of a new play and Hart could not eat during the same period, being violently sick if he did so.

Kaufman was a brilliant director; between 1920 and 1957 he directed forty-five productions. He will be remembered for some of the finest scripts ever written, including several for the Marx Brothers of which "A night at the opera" is possibly the best known.

George Kaufman died on 2nd June 1961 and Moss Hart, his friend for so many years, delivered the eulogy. He spoke with deep feeling:

"To be brief at a moment like this" he said "is to seem dismissive, and yet I can almost see George peering down from over the rims of his glasses and hear his voice saying 'IT NEEDS CUTTING'."

Hart himself died only six months later.

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THE ACTION of the play takes place in the living room of Martin Vanderhof in New York:

ACT I - Wednesday evening.

ACT II - One week later.

ACT III - The next day.

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THERE WILL be two intervals of fifteen minutes each during which the theatre bar will be open. Ice cream will be on sale in the auditorium and coffee will be available in the bar.

C A S T

PENNY SYCAMORE	Joyce King
ESSIE	Chris Wilson
RHEBA	Dorienne Pemberton
PAUL SYCAMORE	Jim Young
Mr DE PINNA	John Pemberton
ED	Don Wilson
DONALD	Robin Clayton
MARTIN VANDERHOF (Grandpa)	George Teale
ALICE	Alison Weighell
HENDERSON	David Scott
TONY KIRBY	Joe Herron
BORIS KOLENKOV	Malcolm Brown
GAY WELLINGTON	Jean Blundell
Mr KIRBY	Barry Weighell
Mrs KIRBY	June Stevenson
OLGA (The Grand Duchess)	Ann Benson
THREE G-MEN	David Scott, Michael Haigh Justin Benson

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STAGE MANAGER	Laurie Ball
A S M	George Westmoreland
PROPERTIES	Anne Robinson, Gill Thresh
PROMPT	Vicky Atkinson
PUBLICITY	Robin Clayton
MUSIC	Gordon Carlin
BOX OFFICE	Margaret Rhodes
SET DESIGN	Malcolm Brown
SET CONSTRUCTION	Fred Mower
FRONT OF HOUSE	Margaret Artle

DIRECTED BY DENNIS STEVENSON

Coming shortly

1066 and all that....

A musical comedy based on that
memorable history by Sellar and
Yeatman.

Book and lyrics by Reginald Arkell
Music by Alfred Reynolds

DIRECTED BY GEORGE WESTMORELAND

NEXT SEASON our programme will
include

ANTONY AND CLEOPATRA
BY WILLIAM SHAKESPEARE

NEXT WEEK

Electricity Players present

THE LOVE MATCH by Glenn Melvyn

Our thanks to Richard Hart (Leeds) Ltd for
the loan of the printing press featured in
this production.

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THEATRE TECHNICIANS

Nick Morris and
Peter Waddicor

The public may leave the Civic Theatre at the end of the performance
by all exit and entrance doors and such doors must at that time be
open. All gangways, passages and staircases must be kept entirely free
from chairs or any obstruction. The safety curtain must be lowered
and raised once immediately before each performance to check that
it is in proper working order.

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE

LEEDS ARTS CENTRE was formed in 1945 as an amateur society to encourage and foster interest in the arts.

THE DRAMA GROUP presents five productions at the Civic Theatre each year - usually including a musical or revue type show.

THE GREEN ROOM GROUP puts on plays and other forms of entertainment in the rehearsal rooms to give members valuable experience of acting and producing before tackling major parts or productions in the Civic Theatre.

THE FINE ARTS GROUP meets twice each week throughout the year for drawing, painting and other creative work.

SOCIAL ACTIVITIES are organised for members, such as theatre visits, outings, parties etc.

NEW MEMBERS are always welcome so if you are interested in joining or would like more information please ask our members at the Box Office this evening or write to:

The Secretary, Leeds Arts Centre,
Stansfeld Chambers, Great George Street,
Leeds 1.

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BOOKINGS : Advance bookings for any of our shows may be made at the Tourist Information Bureau in Calverley Street near the Central Lending Library during the month before each production. Alternatively you may ask at the box office this evening or telephone Leeds 892346.

COSTUME HIRE : Some of the costumes you have seen tonight and countless others from different periods are available for hire from the Leeds Arts Centre costume collection at reasonable rates.

If you are interested please telephone Leeds 756796 and discuss your requirements with Mrs Margaret Rhodes, our wardrobe mistress.