

'You Can't Take It With You' lacks zaniness

By HELEN ZUCKER

May 1 make a suggestion to acting companies engaged in getting next year's schedule together? Write to Samuel French, Inc. and ask them to park George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart's "You Can't Take It With You" in some archive marked "Classic Comedies of the 1930s." Perhaps in the year 2000 when descendants of the Marx Brothers exhume this script, it will seem fresh again.

The Meadow Brook Theatre production of "You Can't Take It With You," directed by John Ulmer, gives us a peek into the play's weaknesses and none of its zany charm. The slow pace makes us listen carefully to lines that don't bear up under careful listening.

A play with so flimsy a storyline should zip past at lightning speed or not at all. And the Vanderhof Sycamore clan belong in an engagingly messy, slightly Bohemian, Morningside Heights crowded townhouse. Peter-William Hicks gorgeous, carefully-thought-out set suggests ample space, cleaning companies who come in the sky, and a readiness to return to bourgeois living that is absent from the script — and the spirit of the play.

HARRY ELLERBE is almost believable as Martin Vanderhof, the grandpa who collects stamps, hunts snakes, goes to the zoo, and visits cops with MD degrees at midnight. The trouble is that Ellerbe is so intelligent an actor it is difficult to imagine him as a man who would be content with such pursuits for 30 years.

Ellerbe springs into life the moment he engages in intellectual combat with the tax-man and his answer to the tirade of the tax-man.

Ellerbe seems restless as the benign, loving, ever-patented Grampa. He's wonderful when he allows a flash of impatience at letters left in the refrigerator for three days, when he convinces the tax people he's been dead for years and therefore owes no taxes; in fact, he deserves a refund.

Ellerbe's best moment is the highlight of the evening. While throwing darts at the wall.

Ellerbe pauses for a wicked moment and contemplates sinking a dart into the ample buttocks of a drunk, sleeping actress on the coach. Ellerbe was the sole support of this household. No one else comes across as having enough intelligence to support a hamster. An actor with large gifts, Ellerbe is miscast in the role of a 50s hippie who is so content to listen to commencement speeches.

HE SEEMS more likely to be making them. As for eating cornflakes at dinner every night, Ellerbe looks far more like a grandpa who enjoys a fine bottle of wine and asparagus with a special sauce. Since this is an anti-race play, Grandpa Vanderhof has got to be not only cute, lovable, and bright, but sweetly lazy. Ellerbe is most of the Meadowbrook cast don't seem to have a lazy bone in their bodies.

Maestro Brown, as dancing, candy-making Essie, who leaves letters in the refrigerator, obviously knows how to dance. She even falls. We wonder why her teacher, Kolenkhov, keeps saying, "She stinks." I wanted to pack her off to an audition at some dance festival.

Mary Benson as Penelope Sycamore, the mother who writes plays because a "typewriter was accidentally delivered eight years ago," exudes gracious charms and the conviction that she could write plays if she weren't so busy trying to be puffy.

Andrew Dunn as Pat Sycamore, the father who makes fireworks in the basement, and sips out of Tinkertoys in the living room, seems as confused as his wife. Dunn's best moment is the "morning-after scene" when he wonders whether he oughtn't to have "become an architect." It only lasts a second, but it's a sincere second.

JOHN KOCH is good as Mr. DePina, "the iceman" who came to dinner eight years ago and simply stayed on to make fireworks." He looks funny, posing in his laurel wreath and toga for Penelope, smoking a cigar and taking life easy. Koch exuded a sense of being an orphan, a man with no one, a reason for his hermitic existence.

Thom Haneline is easy as Ed, Essie's husband. But he plays Beethoven too well; like Essie, I wanted to ship him off to an audition. Haneline moves well too.

Eric Tavaris and Mary Pat Gleason are the saviors of this production. Whatever lively moments there are belong to Tavaris, as the Russian dance teacher, Kolenkhov, and Ms. Gleason as Gay Wellington, the actress found "on top of a bus." Tavaris seems to be doing a night-club gig all his own, and his deft movements, expressive brows, and doleful "news of Russia," are wonderful comic relief. Ms. Gleason is beautifully, believably drunk and truly funny. Jeanne Arnold, the superb medium of last season's "Bithe spirit," doesn't seem to have a Russian bone in her body. She looks and acts like a British Queen. Alas, I waited all night to see Ms. Arnold deliver up blitzes with Russian panache, but Ms. Arnold's Countess Olga who "works at Child's" was completely off-key. No soul in her blitzes.

Al Ratcliffe, Jack Prokop, and Arthur Kahn seemed to be having fun in their brief appearance as G-men.

The food on the dinner table at the final looked terrific.

Lighting by Barry Griffith and costumes by Mary Lynn Bonnell were good (though how Ms. Arnold was going of that grand get-up beats me). Well, win some, lose some. Meadow Brook should be doing better productions with the resources they have.

The theatre is in Wilson Hall at Oakland University near Rochester. The play runs through May 25. For reservations, call 377-3316.

Meadow Brook series to start on June 29

The Meadow Brook Music Festival's Sunday pops series opens June 29 with Neville Marriner conducting the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in Ravel's "Bolero," newly popularized in the movie "10."

Marriner, the festival's artistic director, continues the opening night program with a performance of Hertz's Bass Concerto, with Detroit Symphony Orchestra principal bass Robert Gladsstone as soloist, and brings the evening to a finale with Tchaikovsky's "1812 Overture," complete with cannons.

"Stars and Strips Forever" and other John Philip Sousa marches will burst upon the scene July 6, along with fireworks. Leonard B. Smith leads the Detroit Concert Band in this salute to American tradition.

Pianist Garrick Ohlsson performs Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 on Aug. 24 with the Minnesota Orchestra, as a part of "Last Night at the (Meadow Brook) Proms." Proms concerts are the English equivalent of American pops concerts.

John Covelli performs as pianist and conductor with the Detroit Symphony Pops in a program that features Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" on July 20.

SONG STYLIST Joan Morris and pianist-composer William Bolcom will present popular songs from the turn of the century. July 17.

Film composer John Addison, known for his scores to "Tom Jones" and "A Bridge Too Far,"

leads the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in music from the great motion pictures Aug. 3.

A laser-light show will accompany the suite from "Star Wars," music from "Close Encounters of the Third Kind" and "Star Trek," plus excerpts from Holst's "The Planets" and other music with an outdoor concert theme on Aug. 10. Richard Hayman conducts the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Two pianists Ferrante and Teicher return to Meadow Brook on Aug. 17. Achieving international prominence with their recordings of the "Theme from the Apartment" and "Exodus," Ferrante and Teicher have sold 22 million records and have been awarded 17 gold records.

Pianist Garrick Ohlsson performs Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No. 3 on Aug. 24 with the Minnesota Orchestra, as a part of "Last Night at the (Meadow Brook) Proms." Proms concerts are the English equivalent of American pops concerts.

John Covelli performs as pianist and conductor with the Detroit Symphony Pops in a program that features Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" on July 20.

SONG STYLIST Joan Morris and pianist-composer William Bolcom will present popular songs from the turn of the century. July 17.

Film composer John Addison, known for his scores to "Tom Jones" and "A Bridge Too Far,"

SOMERSET INN
CASH & CARRY LUMBER
1500 W. 10TH AVE. S. (100)
EVERY DAY TILL 4:00 P.M. 8-132

THE OTTER (10)
1500 W. 10TH AVE. S. (100)
EVERY DAY TILL 4:00 P.M. 8-132

THE VISITOR (10)
1500 W. 10TH AVE. S. (100)
EVERY DAY TILL 4:00 P.M. 8-132


THE VISITOR (10)
1500 W. 10TH AVE. S. (100)
EVERY DAY TILL 4:00 P.M. 8-132

GRAND OPENING

ALL STORES JOIN IN CELEBRATION

OF OUR 10th LOCATION

BUILD YOUR OWN DECK WITH ERCTO-PAT DECK KITS AND PRESERVATIVE PRESSURE-TREATED LUMBER



	8'	10'	12'	14'	16'	18'	20'
2x4	189	229	279	319	359	399	439
2x6	289	359	429	499	569	639	709
2x8	459	579	699	819	939	1059	1179
2x10	589	739	889	1039	1189	1339	1489
2x12	1044	1303	1562	1821	2080	2339	2598
4x4	399	599	854	1109	1364	1619	1874

REG. SPECIAL

2x4 - 8' 228 189
2x4 - 10' 296 229
2x6 - 8' 357 289
2x6 - 10' 440 359
4x4 - 8' 449 399
4x4 - 10' 715 599

FULL-SAWN ROUGH LANDSCAPE TIMBERS

3x5 - 8' \$3.39
4x6 - 8' 5.99
6x8 - 8' 12.19

FENTON

FREE GIFTS FOR THE EARLY BIRDS

OVER FIVE HUNDRED PRIZES INCLUDING

- A MOPED
- A PORTABLE TV
- ABITIBI PANELING
- AN ARMSTRONG CEILING AND MORE!

HAND SPLIT CEDAR POST & RAIL FENCE


\$0.95 SECTION

INCLUDES 1 - POST AND 2 - 8' RAILS

SPRUCE STOCKADE FENCE

NO. 1 GRADE

\$1.95 6'x8' PANEL



STUDS

CONSTRUCTION GRADE

2x4x8 - 99¢

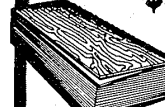
ECONOMY GRADE

2x4x7 - 57¢*

2x4x8 - 67¢*

CDX SHEATHING PLYWOOD

4x8 - 1/2" \$6.69



FIBERGLASS INSULATION

UNFACED SQ. FT. ROLL


6'x15' R-19 16 1/2" \$8.08*

6'x23' R-19 16 1/2" \$12.37*

KRAFT-FACED R-11

3 1/2" x 15"

10 1/2" SQ. FT. \$9.24 ROLL



ASPHALT SHINGLES

— SELF SEAL

— 5% TAB EXPOSURE

— CLASS C, U LABEL

SPECIAL

REG. \$8.32 BDL. \$24.96 SQ.

\$7.32 BDL. \$21.96 SQ.

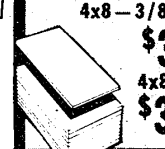
DRYWALL

4x8 - 3/8"

\$3.09*

4x8 - 1/2"

\$3.19*



GARAGE SIDINGS

CLEAR SOUTHERN PINE CLEAR REDWOOD DOLLY VARDEN

1x6 No. 106 ... 45 1/2 in. ft. 1/2 x 8 5010 - 70 in.

1x6 No. 117 ... 48 1/2 in. ft. 1/2 x 6 5010 - 50 in.

1x6 No. 115 ... 45 1/2 in. ft. 1/2 x 6 11 - 39 in.

CONSTRUCTION LUMBER


	10	12	14	16	18	20
1 1/2" 2x4	91	919	925	933	944	941
1 1/2" 2x6	230	330	380	440	559	611
1 1/2" 2x8	374	534	574	634	777	1099
1 1/2" 2x10	479	741	874	1022	1154	282
1 1/2" 2x12	845	1045	1183	1323	1474	1643

PICNIC TABLE

HEAVY CONSTRUCTION WITH FRAME AND FIVE 2x10 - 8's

\$44.14

FRAME ONLY \$24.99



NO. 2 / STANDARD WHITE WOODS

	REG.	SALE
1x2	11 LIN. FT.	09 LIN. FT.
1x3	17 LIN. FT.	15 LIN. FT.
1x4	17 LIN. FT.	15 LIN. FT.
1x6	27 LIN. FT.	25 LIN. FT.
1x8	34 LIN. FT.	32 LIN. FT.
1x10	42 LIN. FT.	39 LIN. FT.
1x12	63 LIN. FT.	52 LIN. FT.

D & BETTER WHITEWOOD SELECTS

1x4 ... 59 LIN. FT. ... 45 LIN. FT.

1x6 ... 1.05 LIN. FT. ... 79 LIN. FT.

DELIVERY AVAILABLE — FREE DELIVERY WITHIN 25-MILE RADIUS ON ORDERS OVER \$2000

MT. CLEMENS
5 S. GROESBECK
South of Cass Ave.
469-2300

UTICA
48075 VAN DYKE
East of 11 Mile & 1/2 Mile
739-7463

WEST SIDE
12222 INKSTER RD.
East, Plymouth & Schaefer
937-9111

LINCOLN PARK
3255 FORT ST.
East, Southfield & Goddard
386-5177

FENTON
14375 TORREY RD.
Torrey Rd., Long Lake Rd.
629-3300

YPSILANTI
626 N. HURON
481-1500

WATERFORD TWP.
7374 HIGHLAND RD.
& Williams Lake Rd.
666-2450

BRIGHTON
525 MAIN ST.
1 Mile S. of Telegraph
227-1831

SOUTHFIELD
22800 W. 8 MILE
1/2 Mile S. of Telegraph
353-2570

SOME ITEMS MAY NOT BE AVAILABLE AT ALL LOCATIONS

LUMBER YARD HOURS — ALL LOCATIONS
MONDAY THRU THURSDAY 8 A.M. - 6 P.M.; FRIDAY 8 A.M. - 6 P.M.
SATURDAY 8 A.M. - 5 P.M.; SUNDAY 10 A.M. - 4 P.M.

ALL ITEMS CASH & CARRY — SALE ITEMS MARKED WITH * — PRICES GOOD THRU MAY 11