

Old favorite keeps 'em laughing

Performances of the Ridgedale Players production of "You Can't Take It With You" continue through Sunday, May 17, at the playhouse in Troy. For ticket information call Donna Backus at 444-8328.

by Chuck Moss
Special writer

Ridgedale Players ends its 55th season with a winner. Veteran Director Hal Safran serves up Hart-Kaufman's old shoe "You Can't Take It With You" in a production that's a rollicking, slap-happy giggle.

This 1940s farce is ideal for amateur theater. A tale of starstruck lovers, the comedy features the ami-

review

ably doty Sycamore family, whose peccadillos range from playing the xylophone to evading taxes. Each character is best done broadly and the more ham, the more guffaws.

The evening ranges from chuckles to screams, as the large cast of goofballs blithely pursues its obsessions. Virtually everyone in the cast deserves applause. Gentle Garner and Don Johannes, as Penelope and Grandpa Vanderhof respectively, are the genial linchpins who keep the show running smoothly. They are the solid walls against which the zanies bounce.

Jim Rink's mad Donald is truly inspired, Carmelo Trotto's Mr. DePina is totally plausible. Doris Harman plays the Grand Duchess with flawless hauteur, and Michael C. Block is winsome as Tony, the beau who loves the nutsoes.

A SPECIAL AWARD goes to Thom Griffin, Jonathon Frankel and Donn Kerr, a gaspingly funny, walking sight-gag as the three G-Men.

ing slight-gag as the three G-Men.

The set is well put together, if unmemorable, and the lighting competent. Sound is bare-bones but more than adequate, with fireworks and xylophone.

Director Safran and Assistant

Mark Carley have done a fine job. The timing is perfect and the large cast doesn't seem to crowd on Ridgedale's little stage.

One minor carp concerns the contemporary references stuck in to update the show. It doesn't work, as

"You Can't Take It With You" is so clearly a creature of its times.

Birmingham resident Chuck Moss is a freelancer who writes on a variety of subjects for the Observer & Eccentric.

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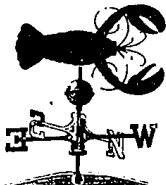
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