

Entire cast does fabulous job with comedy classic

"You Can't Take It With You," presented by the Spotlight Players, continues at 8 p.m. Friday, Saturday at the John Glenn High School Auditorium, 36105 Marquette, west of Wayne Road. For ticket information, call 595-0117.

By Debi Barsamlan
special writer

review

The Spotlight Players production of "You Can't Take It With You" is enchanting. The players pooled all resources to present an evening of wonderful entertainment. You'll leave the theater feeling warm all over.

The Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman comedy is, in itself, an American classic. It's the story of the lovely, crazy Sycamore family and its equally lovable and zany tenants.

The family's philosophy is that, above all else in life, one should be happy. These non-conformists believe that nothing as dreary as financial obligations should waylay anyone from pursuing that which interests him or her most. The Sycamores' interests, however, range from snake collecting to ballet to the manufacture of fireworks.

The play offers a hilarious array of idiosyncratic characters to challenge the acting talents of any theater group. The Spotlight Players rises to this challenge with enthusiasm. Its final product is really first rate.

BETTY GODDARD is simply excellent in her portrayal of Penny Sycamore, the cheerful mother who writes off-the-wall plays. Goddard's comedic timing is exceptional. Besides her talent, she has a laugh so delightful that by itself it's worth the price of a ticket.

Rik Kureth is another outstanding member of the cast. He portrays Grandpa, the family patriarch and originator of the family philosophy to pursue happiness. Despite his own wacky hobbies (snake collecting and attending high school commencement), he is the family's stabilizing force.

Kureth is wonderful in this role. He is an experienced actor with a commanding stage presence. Rik is a pleasure to watch.

Joseph Haynes' performance as Mr. DePinna is a lesson to any actor on just how much can be done with a small role to complement a production. Mr. DePinna is a balding, lovable neurotic who acts as Mr. Sycamore's assistant in the fireworks enterprise.

Haynes' portrayal is great. He is warm, funny and genuine. You can't

get enough of him.

OTHER OUTSTANDING performances are given by Bob Walker and Helen DeJullo. They portray stuffy, affluent conservatives who come on the wrong night to meet the family of their son's potential bride. Hilarious reactions are given by Walker and DeJullo to the extraordinary Sycamores. Their performances are spontaneous and convincing.

The entire cast is really top drawer. Everyone emits an enthusiasm that is contagious. It's great fun seeing a cast enjoy itself as much as this one does.

And believe it or not, this production is just as sound technically as it is artistically. The set is exceptional. Congratulations to Bob Walker for designing a convincing living room of the 1930s.

It is pleasing to look at and allows room for crazy babies and lots of action. Gall Susan Mack has created lighting effects that are near-professional.

The special effects needed for firecrackers are believable and dependable. And lastly the house music is upbeat, representative of the era and a fine finishing touch.

COSTUMES DO have to be mentioned. They are the weakest aspect of the entire production. Some costumes clearly indicate the 1930s as the time in which the action is taking place. Other costumes are obviously pulled from the closets of the '80s. The inconsistency is unfortunate. It detracts from the overall quality of the play.

What Carla Lenhoff has accomplished in her first effort at directing a full-length production is remarkable. She has coordinated and directed some fine talent and has created magic.

Her interpretation of the playwright's intent is exact. Her casting is near perfect. There are moments when blocking is weak. Important dialogue is occasionally upstaged. But experience is the best teacher. With this production, Lenhoff demonstrates tremendous potential.

Folks, this production is a gem. It's warm, funny and downright charming. Go see it for yourself. It's a great night of theater that shouldn't be missed.



Helen DeJullo and Bob Walker, both of Westland, are wealthy Mr. and Mrs. Kirby in the Spotlight Players production of "You Can't Take It With You."

Glen Lundgren and Lorraine Parent, both of Westland, portray Ed and Gay.

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