



2024 SPRING PRODUCTION



You Can't Take It With You

Directed by Martha Thompson

A Classic American Comedy from the 1930's

SYNOPSIS:

Grandpa Vanderhof and his wacky family, the Sycamores, have been happily living their zany lives in his house by Columbia University in New York for many years. This family (and their friends) are a madcap group of eccentrics, marching to the beat of their own drum, with pride and joy. Their hobbies include collecting snakes, building fireworks in the basement, writing a myriad of plays that never get published, and taking ballet lessons. Things like stress, jobs, and paying taxes to the government are for other people, not for them! But when practical young Alice Sycamore becomes engaged to her company's Vice President Tony Kirby, the Vanderhof/Sycamore clan must straighten up to meet the new in-laws. Disaster ensues when the Kirbys arrive at the wrong time and, despite the best laid plans, see Alice's family in all of its crazy glory. The evening ends with everyone in the house getting arrested, and Alice ending the engagement. It isn't until Grandpa's wise speech to Mr. Kirby about the importance of living life to the fullest that the two families find a way to accept each other, and love conquers all. You Can't Take It With You is a madcap, idealistic comedy that reinforces the idea that you can only live life to the fullest by doing whatever makes you happy.

Penelope "Penny" Sycamore

Usually goes by Penny, Penelope is the mother of Essie and Alice, wife of Paul, and daughter of Martin. She writes plays and paints as hobbies because it makes her happy, but is terrible at both. Penny is a loving mother and wife and is constantly concerned with the welfare of her family. Her main goal is to make sure everyone is happy, particularly her daughter Alice. A huge part! On stage almost all the time.

Martin “Grandpa” Vanderhof

Referred to mostly as Grandpa in the play. Father-in-law to Paul, father of Penny, grandfather of Alice and Essie. He is an eccentric happy old man who has never paid his income tax because he doesn't believe in it, as he feels that the government wouldn't know what to do with the money if he paid for it. He lives his life by the philosophy: “Don't do anything that you're not going to enjoy doing.” He goes to circuses, commencements, throws darts, and collects stamps. A challenging role indeed, but most of your blocking is...sitting in a rocker.

Alice Sycamore

Fiancé of Tony Kirby, daughter of Paul and Penny, Granddaughter of Martin, sister of Essie. She the only "normal" family member. She has an office job, and is rather embarrassed by the eccentricities of her family when she has Tony and his parents at her house, yet she still loves them. She tends to be a pessimist. The actress for Alice needs to show characteristics of love, embarrassment, worry, and many more.

Tony Kirby

Fiancé of Alice, Son of Mr. and Mrs. Kirby. He sees how, even though the Sycamores appear odd, they are really the perfect family because they love and care about each other. His own family is very proper and has many issues none of them will admit. He is vice president of Kirby and Co. This actor will need to have an adorable properness to him. The audience will need to be on Tony's side right from the start.

Anthony W. Kirby

Husband of Mrs. Kirby, father of Tony. He is a very proper man who is president of Kirby and Co. and secretly despises his job. His hobby is raising expensive orchids. He is also a member of the Harvard Society, the Union Club, the National Geographic Society, and the Racquet Club. Being rich and borderline snobby is a good start for an actor to experiment with for this role. Whoever has this role will also need to not laugh when hilarity ensues.

Essie Carmichael

Wife of Ed, daughter of Penny and Paul Sycamore, Granddaughter of Martin, sister of Alice. She is childish. As a hobby she makes candy that Ed sells. Essie dreams of being a ballerina. She has spent 8 years studying with Boris Kolenkhov, but is a terrible dancer. Actresses who perform these embarrassing, bad dances need to keep a very straight face, and is willing to dance intermingled with Kolenkhov. Hilarity will ensue.

Boris Kolenkhov

A Russian who escaped to America shortly before the Russian Revolution. He is very concerned with world politics, and the deterioration of Russia. He is the ballet instructor of Essie, aware that she is untalented at dancing, but knows that she enjoys dancing so he keeps working with her. He likes the Greeks and the Romans, questions society, and is interested in world affairs. He is opinionated and often loudly declares that something "stinks"! This actor can be either very large and boisterous. Will need to be able to support Essie physically, and keep a straight face.

Paul Sycamore

Father of Essie and Alice, husband of Penny, Son-in-law of Martin. He is a Tinker who manufactures fireworks in the basement with the help of his assistant Mr. De Pinna. His hobby is playing with erector sets. It will help have an age appropriate actor for this role. A common, fatherly character is all Paul needs.

Ed Carmichael

Husband of Essie, son-in-law of Paul and Penny. He is a xylophone player, and distributes Essie's candies. Ed is an amateur printer who prints anything that sounds good to him. He prints up dinner menus for his family and little quotes that he places in the boxes of Essie's candy. He also likes to make masks. The actor will need to be confident in all his crafts, but show meekness when he is later confronted with a visit from the feds.

Mr. De Pinna

The iceman who came inside to speak to Paul five years before, and never left. He helps Mr. Sycamore build fireworks, and moonlights as a model in Mrs. Sycamore's paintings. He is a nutty guy. This is kind of a side-kick role to Paul. Witty, random jokes. A perfect role for someone who can have a lot of fun designing a uniquely written character.

Donald

The boyfriend of Rheba, who seems to serve as volunteer handyman for the Sycamores. In the words of Mrs. Sycamore, "The two of them are really cute together, something like Porgy and Bess." The characters of Donald and Rheba, according to the script, are African-American. These roles, and their dialogues, can be altered freely.

Rheba

The maid and cook to the Sycamore family. She is dating Donald. She is onstage a lot, but doesn't necessarily say anything. The characters of Donald and Rheba, according to the script, are African-American. These roles, and their dialogues, can be altered freely.

Wilbur C. Henderson

An employee of the IRS. He comes to collect the tax money owed by Grandpa, and can't understand why the latter won't pay income tax. A one-scene role that has brought out tons of laughs and stomach cramps from audience all over. Perfect for someone who wants to act, but may not have a lot of time to commit.

Miriam Kirby

Wife of Mr. Kirby, mother of Tony. She is an extremely prim and proper woman and is horrified by the goings-on in the Sycamore household. Her hobby is spiritualism. A small, female role, but one that shows a great deal of emotion.

The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina

She was one of the Grand Duchesses of Russia before the Revolution, another being her sister, the Grand Duchess Natasha. Since then she has been forced to flee to America where she has found work as a waitress in Childs Restaurant. The rest of her family has had a similar fate, such as her Uncle Sergei, the Grand Duke, who is now an elevator man. She loves to cook as a hobby. This character will appear later in the play, and the actress needs to be able to be a bit over-the-top, but not overdo it. A memorable, not necessarily overwhelming, Russian accent is desired.

Gay Wellington

An actress whom Mrs. Sycamore meets on a bus and invites home to read one of her plays. She is an alcoholic, gets very drunk and passes out shortly after arriving at the Sycamore's home. A very small role, but onstage for several scenes. The actress mustn't be afraid to be physically carried by another actor, and can act "passed out", in hilarious positions, without breaking character.

G-Man 1 "The Man", G-Man 2 "Jim", G-Man 3 "Mac"

Three agents who come to investigate Ed because of the communist things he prints up, such as "God is the State – the State is God". These actors must be okay having a very small role in the show.

Ensemble/Understudies

Will consist of the understudies to the above mentioned characters AND will be the ensemble for the court room and jail house scenes.