

Entertaining comedy examines old maxim

By Charlie Krig

Though we've been told it for years, people refuse to believe that *You Can't Take It With You*.

The University Theatre's production of this Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman comedy gives a light, entertaining look at the old maxim.

The main plot stems from a young lady, named Alice, who wants to marry a young man, Tony. Sounds simple enough, but wait until you meet the members of her family.

Penny, her mother, has been writing plays for several years (ever since a typewriter was delivered to their house by mistake). Her father, Paul, plays with erector sets and makes fireworks in the basement with Mr. DePinna, who brought something to the house three years ago and decided to stay.

Alice's sister Essie practices her own wretched version of ballet to a xylophone played by her husband while being instructed by a slightly wild Russian. Add a grandfather character who likes to collect snakes. He also donated his name to the late milkman, who stayed like Mr. DePinna but who died at their house because the milkman couldn't be buried without one.

Needless to say, Tony's parents, a staid, proper Wall Street banking family, don't mix too well with Alice's relatives.

The first act moves well because it's basically an exposition of the characters, their motives, and relationships. The second act, stuffed full of action by the authors, flows even more easily to its climax with able help from the actors as their feelings and complications begin to show.

However, the third act suffers from a chronic case of wordiness and philosophizing. It must be noted that this is caused by the playwrights' overzealous desire to discuss the problems of life not because of the director's approach to the scene staging.

Judith Hart shines brilliantly as the flighty Penelope Sycamore. Her feeling for the silly mother creates a satisfying character. There is no doubt of a bit of typecasting with veteran Lincoln actor John Wenstrand in the role of Grandpa.

Several other actors do exceptional work in smaller roles. These include Dan Reinhr as the bumbling Mr. DePinna, Kathy Morrow as the dancing Essie, and Suzie Wurtz and Randy Parker as Tony's stuffy parents.

As a total production the play leaves a little to be desired, but with the seasoning of two performances this weekend the cast should be in fine form this week. Most importantly, they should wait for the audience's laughter to subside before resuming their lines rather than suppressing the comedy.

But the costumes, and preshow music add high points that lend authenticity to the mood and period of the play.

Although the play lacks the fine polish, precision, and timing that a truly good comedy needs, it still provides an evening of enjoyable humor.

The play will be shown at 8 p.m. through Friday at Howell Theatre.



Photo by Kevin Higley

You Can't Take It With You is a light comedy about a bizarre family which includes a play-writing mother, a father who plays with erector sets and a daughter who dances ballet to the xylophone under the tutorage of a wild Russian.

Concert Tuesday

A new transcription of George Frederick Handel's "Water Music" will be featured in a free concert by the UNL School of Music Brass Ensemble Tuesday at 8 p.m. in Kimball Recital Hall. Jack Snider, director of UNL bands, will conduct the 19-member ensemble.

Jim Schmucker, a Band Dept. graduate assistant and tuba player in the ensemble, transcribed "Water Music." Schmucker said Handel wrote the piece for a string orchestra with a few brass instruments. The ensemble's performance of his transcription will have a more full sound than the original had, he said.

The program will open with "Fanfare" by Paul Dukas. Also included in Tuesday's concert will be a set of four songs for brass by Ludwig Mauer and the "Sonata No. 2" by Johann Pezel, conducted by Clay Collier, UNL senior music major.

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