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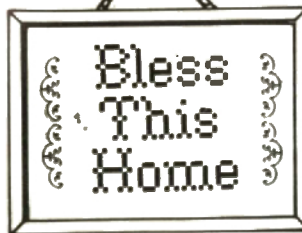
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**SHOWTIME**®

STATEN ISLAND CIVIC THEATRE

**YOU CAN'T  
TAKE IT  
WITH YOU**



A COMEDY  
IN 3 ACTS

by  
**MOSS HART**  
and

**GEORGE S. KAUFMAN**



Directed by MICHAEL TENNENBAUM



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# SHOWTIME®

November-December, 1985

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A bit of the show's history, written by its director
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COVER: Illustration by Ken Frye

Volume 4 ..... Number 2

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Cast and crew gather 'round as birthday boy Frank Capra cuts the cake during a break in the filming of "You Can't Take It With You" in 1937. Capra directed the film.

# About the Play

By Michael Tennenbaum

Consider the humble beginnings of the play you are watching tonight, *You Can't Take It With You*—winner of the Pulitzer Prize for best play, the Academy Award for best picture and the most-performed straight (non-musical) play in the entire catalog of American theatrical literature—started its life as Moss Hart's "other idea."

Hart and George S. Kaufman had first collaborated six years earlier on *Once In a Lifetime*, a free-wheeling satire on the newborn art of talking pictures. From this auspicious debut it was clear that Hart's gift for plot and character development was the perfect complement to Kaufman's irreverently acerbic wit. After completing *Merrily We Roll Along*, a play whose chief claim to fame was its reverse chronology, they discussed plans for an adaptation of Dalton Trumbo's yet-unpublished political novel.

Michael Tennenbaum directs this production of "You Can't Take It With You."

*Washington Jitters.* But after a few conferences they appeared to lose interest in this project.

It was then that Hart re-introduced this "other idea" that he had had more than a year earlier—a play about a family of mad but lovable people who lived exactly as they pleased, with no concerns about the goings-on of the real world.

Within three days, the pair had worked out all of the characters. And with a burst of creative speed fired by their enthusiasm, they finished the play within a month. There was much discussion about the title. *Foxy Grandpa*, *Money In the Bank*, *They Loved Each Other* and *The King Is Naked* were all considered and rejected. Finally they decided on one they thought would guarantee commercial success—*Grandpa's Other Snake*. This bizarre choice was rejected by Kaufman's wife Beatrice, who pointed out that few varieties of life were more repellant to the average person than the snake, venomous or not. So they settled on *You Can't Take It With You*, an unpopular candidate with the writers but the favorite choice of Sam Harris, the play's producer.

With George Kaufman at the helm as director, the play opened in New York on Dec. 14, 1936, to unanimous critical and commercial success. Within a year, touring companies were performing the play all over the country, with audiences eager to see the latest Broadway hit. Its trans-Atlantic voyage did not go as smoothly—in London the play closed after only one week! The British found little humor in these purely American crack-pots, and the play struck many in the audience as just not making sense. (Are these the same people who gave us *Monty Python's Flying Circus*?)

But even happier times lay ahead for the play in its homeland. Realizing that interest in Hollywood for this play would be high, Kaufman announced that the asking price for the screen rights to *You Can't Take It With You* was to be an unprecedented \$200,000! There was some surprise when the purchaser turned out to be Columbia Pictures, not yet one of the major studios, whose hard-headed boss, Harry Cohn, bought the play for his ace director Frank Capra, who

had seen it in New York and loved it.

Capra saw in this play not only a commercially successful comedy, but also another opportunity to film his personal philosophy of life, to applaud the "little guy," the average man who struggles for happiness in an indifferent world and succeeds through the sheer power of his uniqueness and individuality. It is a theme that would ring throughout all of Capra's classics—from *Mr. Deeds Goes to Town* and *Meet John Doe* to the beloved *It's a Wonderful Life*. To this end, Capra and his screenwriter, Robert Riskin, reshaped *You Can't Take It With You* to correspond to this message. The major change was to build up the character of Anthony Kirby, Sr., the Wall Street banker, to equal the role of Grandpa, the play's protagonist. In this way the story became less an amiable farce about a zany family than a good-natured but ultimately serious story about life choices and familial love.

Of course, Capra was smart enough to let this message take a back seat to the play's inherent wackiness, and the film went on to garner its own share of applause, earning Oscars for best picture and best director and nominations in five other categories.

When the film opened at Radio City Music Hall in September of 1938, the original play was still running. In yet another unprecedented decision, producer Sam Harris moved the play into a larger theater and cut ticket prices to match those at the Music Hall. Thus, the play continued to draw good audiences, despite the popularity of the picture. Never before had a play run against the movie that was made from it.

Over the years, *You Can't Take It With You* continues to weave its spell over audiences. In high school auditoriums and community theatres all over the country, people are still charmed by the antics of the Sycamore family. The recent successful Broadway revival is a testament to Kaufman and Hart's surefire knowledge of what makes theatre work, as well as a statement about our own secret hopes and dreams. Because, when you think about it, don't you wish you could live in that wonderful household, too? ■



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## Staten Island Civic Theatre presents

# YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

A comedy in three acts  
by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman

Directed By

**MICHAEL TENNENBAUM**

Setting By **Jeffrey Drucker**      Lighting By **Mitchell Drucker**

Costumes By  
**Jennifer Straniere**

This production is made possible, in part, with public funds from the New York State Council on the Arts, Staten Island Council on the Arts and Department of Cultural Affairs of the City of New York.

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## CAST

(in order of appearance)

Penelope Sycamore .....	KAREN MICHA
Essie .....	BARBARA GATTI
Rheba .....	KIKO CHARLES
Paul Sycamore .....	MARC GOLD
Mr. DePinna .....	PHILIP S. STRANIERE
Ed .....	JOHN GATTI
Donald .....	JEFFREY WESTBY
Martin Vanderhof .....	LEO LUNNEY
Alice .....	LAUREN RAMPULLA
Henderson .....	JOHN ADRIAN
Tony Kirby .....	MARK BUNEO
Boris Kolenkhov .....	ROBERT ELLMAN
Gay Wellington .....	ELLYN MITCHELL
	(Nov. 30: MAUREEN E. KNUDSON)
Mr. Kirby .....	HAROLD KALLAN
Mrs. Kirby .....	VERNA LAURIA-WARNER
FBI Men .....	JOHN LISANTI
	JOSEPH SCOTT
	ARNOLD BAUMAN
Olga .....	PEGGY HORN
	(Dec. 6-8: JEAN MAHLMANN)

### The Scene

The home of Martin Vanderhof, New York. Spring 1936

Act I: A Wednesday Evening

Act II: A week later

Act III: The next day

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## WHO'S WHO in the CAST

**JOHN ADRIAN** (*Henderson*) is making his first appearance with Civic Theatre, but is no newcomer to the stage. He has studied at the Studio ARENA Theatre School in his native Buffalo and delighted audiences with his portrayals of King Pellinore in *Camelot*. Tappercomb in *The Lady's Not for Burning* and Bellamy in *The Fantasticks*, to name a few. Mr. Adrian made his New York debut in the 1976 off-Broadway production of *The Case and Tryal of John Peter Zenger* in the dual role of Governor William Cosby and Mr. Justice Delancy. Mr. Adrian, who is a tax collector for New York State, can discourse at length on the subject of type casting.

**ARNOLD BAUMAN** (*F.B.I. Man*) has just completed a national bus and truck tour of *Abie's Irish Rose*. He is pleased to be working with his old high school friends again.

**MARK BUNEO** (*Tony*). This is Mark's third show with Civic Theatre, having last been seen in *Is There Life After High School?* Mark has been seen in many other Island shows and would like to put it on the record that he was absolutely heartbroken about leaving high school. Grace-T.F.B.U.

**KIKO CHARLES** (*Rheba*). "To make a dream a reality." This is Kiko's Civic Theatre debut; her other credits include *A Raisin in the Sun*, *Does a Tiger Wear a Necktie?*, *For Colored Girls ...*, *Elenora* (in which she played three roles) and *Still Life*. Her dance credits include Expo 67, Hemisphere 68, Town Hall and Tompkins Park with Rod Rogers, Luli Goldin and Pearl Reynolds. Kiko's hobbies include fishing, dancing and writing music.

**ROBERT ELLMAN** (*Boris Kolenkhov*) recently emigrated from the Soviet Union where he performed extensively in Russian Theatre. He appeared in productions of *The Lower Depths*, *The Cherry Orchard*. *The*

*Sea Gull* and *No, No Nanette*. He is pleased to be working in capitalist theatre.

**BARBARA GATTI** (*Essie Carmichael*) last appeared in *The Music Man* as Ethel Tofflemeir. Barbara has yet to appear in a non-musical here at Civic Theatre where she has not had to sing or dance. She's worked very hard practicing rusty ballet steps with her dance mistress, Miriam (Buddy) Taaffe, as she gets "Happy Feet" on stage for the first time. Another first—she plays wife to her real-life husband John (Oh, Ed!). Thanks to JG, MT and MT for all their help, confidence and support.

**JOHN GATTI** (*Ed Carmichael*) last appeared as Juror #5 in S.I. Shakespearean's *Twelve Angry Men*. Last season, he won the S.I. Register award for best actor for his acclaimed performance as Phil Romano in Seaview Playwright's *That Championship Season*. However, he is proudest of the six Monsignor Farrell High School musicals he has directed, including the recent *Runaways*. John will direct our upcoming *Luv*. He handles publicity for the theatre and is a member of our board of directors. John proudly announces that he has never played the xylophone before this show.

**MARC GOLD** (*Paul Sycamore*) was last seen on the Staten Island stage in the dual roles of Constable Locke/Traveling Salesman in this summer's production of *The Music Man*. Rescued from Brooklyn Theatre, "Laugh out loud funny" Gold emerged in our enormously successful *California Suite*. Former editor of the Fire Island News, Marc has appeared on "Late Night with David Letterman" as National Horseradish Promoter.

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**At the College of S.I.**  
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# WHO'S WHO in the CAST

**PEGGY HORN** (*Olga Katrina*), actress, singer, teacher, home-owner, debtor, bridesmaid, graduate student, costumer, theatregoer, daughter, aunt, friend, champagne lover, quick change artist, assembly program piano player, party animal, sharp-shooter and tap dancer is again performing in her favorite play, this time as a woman, and loving it.

**HAROLD KALLAN** (*Mr. Kirby*). It's been a long time between shows here at Civic Theatre. Prior appearances were *Gypsy*, *Diary of Anne Frank*, *Detective Story*, *The Odd Couple* and *Hot-L Baltimore*. He's currently involved in training Wall Street personnel, so the role of Kirby is a timely one.

**JOHN LISANTI** (*F.B.I. Man*) last worked with the director on *Arsenic and Old Lace* (SIST) and is happy to be working with him in this show. John would like to take this space to thank his family and friends for their enthusiastic support and interest.

**LEO LUNNEY** (*Grandpa Vanderhof*) last appeared as Drumm in our production of *Da*. Also for Civic Theatre, he has appeared as Vinnie in *The Odd Couple* and Dan Hillard in *The Desperate Hours*. At Seaview, he was featured as Old Mahon in *The Playboy of the Western World*, and for Looking Glass as Captain Keller in *The Miracle Worker*.

**KAREN MICHA** (*Penny Sycamore*) appeared in the last production here at Civic Theatre, *Is There Life After High School?*, and obviously believes "the play is the thing."

**ELLYN R. MITCHELL** (*Gay Wellington*) recently appeared in SICT's *Is There Life After High School?* with eight wonderful actors (Ixnay this). She has portrayed Mrs. Paroo in *The Music Man*, the title role in *Mame*, Miss Hannigan in *Annie* and Susannah in *Bedroom Farce*. Ellen has directed *Da* (SICT) and *Miss Julie* (Seaview Playwrights) and stage-managed ... *Hound/Chamber Music*, *Macbeth* and many others. A member of our board, Ellen is a soon-to-be-graduated nurse.

**LAUREN RAMPULLA** (*Alice*) is making her dramatic (?) debut here at Civic Theatre. She is a dancer by choice and word processor by necessity. Lauren has performed with modern dancers Beth Tyler, Wendy Osserman and Pam Finney. She has recently become a member of "Nancy & Co.," a dance theatre group that performs in the tri-state area. Lauren wishes to thank Edith Meeks, Laura Gay Johnson and Lisa Rampulla for their support and confidence.

**JOSEPH SCOTT** (*F.B.I. Man*) is excited to be appearing in his first Staten Island Civic Theatre production. He is a drama major at New York University, in conjunction with

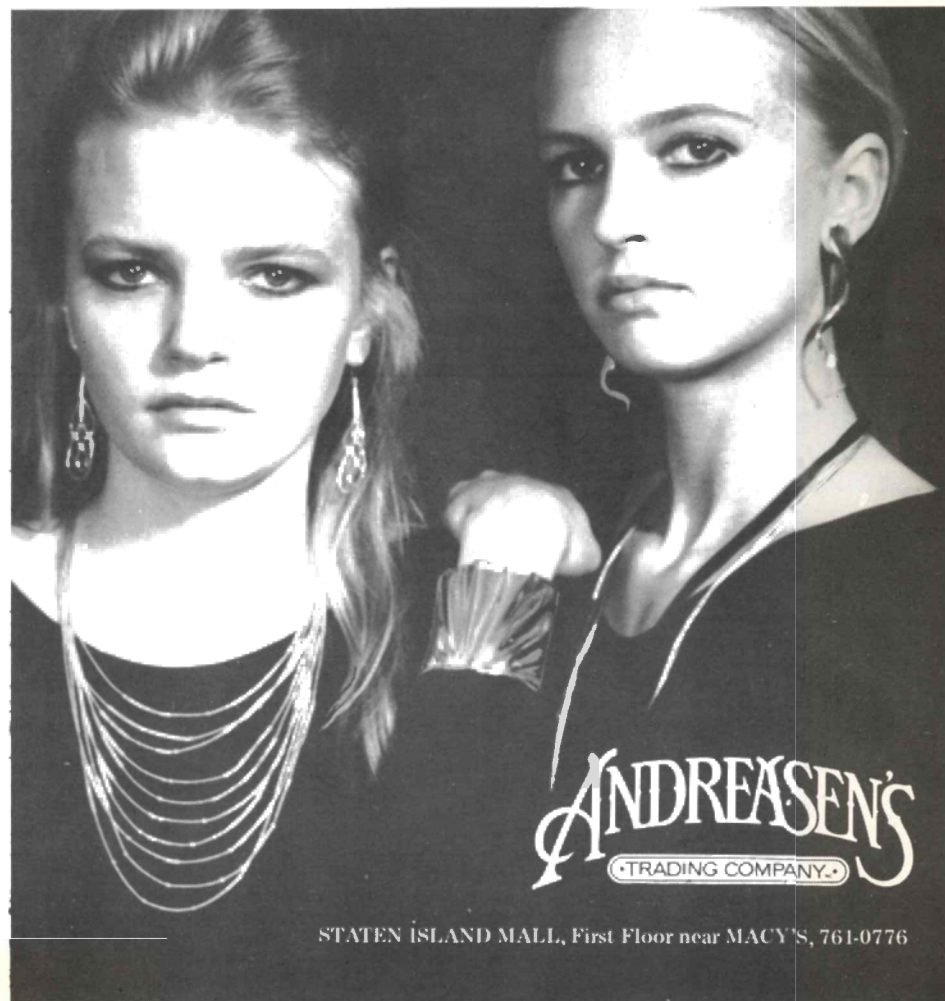
the Circle in the Square Theatre, and he has appeared in the daytime television soap, "One Life to Live."

**PHILIP S. STRANIERE** (*Mr. De Pinna*) auditioned for the show thinking it had to do with smuggling. He was surprised, however, to find out it wasn't, but decided to do it anyway since he had always wanted to appear in a show with Karen Micha, whom he has admired since his childhood.

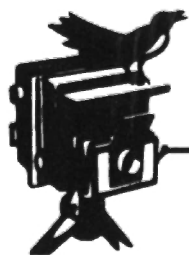
**VERNA LAURIA-WARNER** (*Mrs. Kirby*)

is making her first appearance with Civic Theatre. She appeared as the IRS agent in the same play when it was performed at New Dorp High School a few years ago. Verna is a teacher of speech and drama at New Dorp.

**JEFFREY WESTBY** (*Donald*) is a native of Staten Island who enjoys cooking, cycling and furniture restoration. He is currently restoring his home to its original beauty. Singing, dancing and acting are his favorite hobbies, which he studies at HB Studios in Manhattan. He has appeared in such shows



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# WHO'S WHO in the CAST

as *Julius Green South, The Boyfriend, They're Playing Our Song, Whorehouse, Joseph and Evita* with Center Stage Productions. Jeff is a graduate of The Fashion Institute of Technology; this show marks his Civic Theatre debut.

**MICHAEL TENNENBAUM** (*Director*) has directed *Indians, La Boheme, Luv, Story Theatre, Don't Drink the Water, A Funny Thing ...* and many other plays at various theatres all over the city. He served as artistic director for the Good Medicine Company and the Brooklyn Arts Group, two companies he founded and losted. Mickey would like to express his gratitude to his new friends at Civic Theatre and especially to KMOD, the Heart of Rock 'n' Roll.

**JEAN MAHLMANN** (*Assistant Director*). *You Can't Take It With You* marks Jean's

debut at being on the other side of the rehearsal table. She completed a season of summer stock at Millbrook Playhouse and has been seen in numerous productions here at Civic Theatre.

**JEFFREY DRUCKER** (*Set Designer/Scenic Artist/Technical Director/Special Effects*) last appeared this summer in *The Music Man* as a Gaylord Ravenal Imposter. This is Jeff's second set design for us, the first being the critically acclaimed set for *Da*. He also did the special effects for *Blithe Spirit*. As technical director, Jeff has worked on *Annie, Mame, The Music Man, Blithe Spirit* and others. He would like to acknowledge the FORCE (Okay, Anna?).

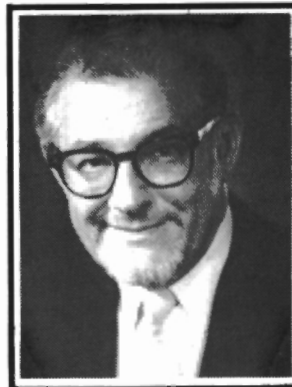
**MITCHELL J. DRUCKER** (*Lighting Designer/Master Electrician*) has just finished designing lights for RTC's operas, *The Little Sweep* and *La Serva Padrona*. Mitch made his debut with us this summer in *The Music Man*. Although Mitchell's first love is design, he has been away from it for four years, and is now making his triumphant return. Mitch is Jeff's brother; and vice-versa. IWALYL.

**JENNIFER STRANIERE** (*Costumer*) has costumed many productions for Staten Island Civic Theatre and for other Island groups. She received a Reggie award for her costume design of *A Magic Flute* for RTC. Jennifer recently directed *Anything Goes* and *The Music Man* for Civic Theatre.

Information in "Who's Who in the Cast" is provided by Staten Island Civic Theatre. Where opinions are expressed, they are those of the players, not necessarily those of SHOWTIME.

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President

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Williamson Theatre  
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## What's Ahead

Wait Until Dark

*A thriller directed by Russell Bonanno*  
Opens in January

Passion

*A drama directed by Paul Guest Smith*  
Opens in March

**A Chorus Line (if available) or Cabaret**  
Opens in April

Luv

*A comedy directed by John Gatti*  
Opens in May

**The Shadow Box**

*A drama directed by Jim Hazard*  
Opens July 5

**Funny Girl**

*A musical directed by Jennifer Straniere*  
Opens July 25

## CAST



Cast Photos  
By Jack Allen Belle



### THE FAMILY



### THE VISITORS

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## STAFF FOR "YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU"

Director ..... Michael Tennenbaum  
Stage Manager..... Ellen R. Mitchell  
Assistant Director..... Jean E. Mahlmann  
Assistant Stage Managers ..... Rita Conlon  
Maureen Knudson  
Set Designer ..... Jeff Drucker  
Lighting Designer ..... Mitchell J. Drucker  
Costume Designer..... Jennifer Straniere  
Hair Designer..... Gary Brennan  
Portrait by..... Cynthia Kallan  
Master Electrician..... Mitchell J. Drucker  
Technical Director ..... Jeff Drucker  
Dance Consultant ..... Miriam Taaffe  
Stage Crew ..... Stuart Pilkington  
Rita Conlon, Jeff Drucker  
Lighting Crew ..... Robby O'Leary, Maureen Knudson  
Construction Crew ..... Irene Carducci, Renee Eith  
Maureen Knudson, Ellen Mitchell  
Jeff Drucker, Mitchell Drucker  
Iris Tandeynick, Stuart Pilkington  
Prop Master ..... Joseph Scott  
Seamstress ..... Peggy Cuddihy  
Program/ Flyer Artwork..... Ken Frye  
Box Office ..... Paul Smith  
Mailing ..... SERVE (Senior Citizens)  
Membership and Patrons..... Janet Gans  
House Management ..... Jerry Nadal

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**OPENING NIGHT ..... NOVEMBER 22, 1985**

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### CREDITS

Dart equipment courtesy of Mugs Away Tavern; xylophone provided by the Curtis High School Performing Arts Department; costumes courtesy of The Costume Collection and Jennifer's Costume Attic. Civic Theatre extends its thanks to "The Force."

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### WARNING

**FIRE NOTICE: The exit indicated by a sign nearest to the seat you occupy is the shortest route to street. In the event of fire or other emergency, please do not run — WALK TO THAT EXIT.**

Thoughtless persons annoy patrons and endanger the safety of others by lighting matches or smoking in prohibited areas during the performances and intermissions. This violates a New York City ordinance and is punishable by law.

Joseph E. Spinnato — FIRE COMMISSIONER

