

Stage

1 May 1952

## THE QUESTORS

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

On April 26, at their theatre in Mattock-lane, Ealing, the Questors presented a revival of the play by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, "You Can't Take It With You."

How gratifying it is at a time when so many gloomy plays seem to be the vogue that this glorious romp, which while emphasising the dignity of human nature pokes an over-organised civilisation heartily in the ribs, can still be seen, carrying with it the same wise philosophy that made it such a success in pre-war years! Old Vanderhof and his large family are real people, not merely caricatures, although many of their activities are more farcical than factual. Shrewdness, affability, and strong individualism are clearly conveyed by Francis W. Smith as Martin Vanderhof. Rosemary Purkis as his daughter, and Joan Bate as his granddaughter Essie show most clearly the whimsy of the family. Jennifer Osgard as Alice and John Vernon as Tony Kirby conduct their love affair with a tinge of sadness underlying their apparent gaiety, and Mabel Copperwheat and Alan Fuller provide an effective contrast to the Vanderhof eccentricities. The part of Kolenkhov is one of the best in the play where comedy is concerned, and Reginald Hamlyn extracts the maximum of humour from it. The play is produced by Wilfrid Sharp.

26 APR 1952

GAZETTE, SATURDAY

## Famous American comedy

### QUESTORS IN "YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU"

The fifth production of the current Questors' season opens at their theatre in Mattock-lane to-night. The play is the famous American comedy, "You can't take it with you," by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, and the run will continue until Wednesday week, May 7, on which night there will be the customary special performance in aid of the Building Fund, for which no free members' tickets are available. As the demand for seats for this most popular play has been very heavy, members who have not already done so are advised to make their applications at once if disappointment is to be avoided.

#### Chinese Paintings

Among the more unusual gifts in response to the Questors' appeal have been two Chinese paintings, which have been offered for sale to members. One of these paintings, kindly given by the artist, Miss Chien-Ying Chang, has recently been sold for £15. It is understood that the other has also been earmarked by a prospective buyer.

Monetary donations continue to arrive, and the Questors Club gratefully acknowledges the following, received since the last published list:

£12 13s. 3d. from the H.M.V. Players, who arranged collections during their recent production at the Questors.

£5 5s. from the Talisman Theatre, Kenilworth, who generously sent the entire income from the opening performance of one of their recent productions.

£3 3s. from Mr. Bernard Stanton; £1 from Mr. R. Bolt. Miss K. Hammond, Miss W. T. Hooper, and from the Hogg Robinson and Capel Cure Drama Group, and half-a-guinea from Mrs. F.R. Wright.

Anonymous donations during the period aggregate £15 2s., bringing the total cash in hand to £4,545, to which can be added offers of interest-free loans up to £810. An important announcement concerning the purchase of the theatre is expected very shortly, as it is understood that the completion date has now been fixed.

In the meantime further donations will be welcomed by the Treasurer, the Questors Appeal, the Questors Theatre, Mattock-lane, Ealing W.5. They will all be acknowledged both personally and through these columns.



Middlex County Times  
3 March 1952

## PLEASANTLY DAFT HOME AS PLAY SETTING

### *Questors' production of "You can't take it with you"*

**L**AST Saturday the fifth production of the current Questors' season was presented at their theatre in Mattock-lane. The play was "You can't take it with you," by Moss Hart and George S. Kaufman, and the run continues until Wednesday next, May 7.

The pleasantly daft home of Martin Vanderhof is a haven of happiness in which everybody does exactly as he pleases. Nobody does anything he doesn't want to; and no one is ever surprised or dismayed by anything. Life simply rolls on with gay abandon in this Utopian oasis, where all behaviour is fashioned only by a commendable determination to be carefree.

It would be impossible to detail the crazy plot or the mad array of incidents and hobbies. It is sufficient to mention that snakes are kept in the living-room, where Essie, Vanderhof's grand-daughter, dances, under instruction from a ridiculous Russian, to the dual accompaniment of her husband's xylophone and her mother's typewriter. This machine, delivered to the house by mistake some eight years previously, started Penelope on her "career" as a dramatist. At about the same time Mr. De Pinna first visited the house, where he has stayed ever since, helping Penny's husband to make fireworks in the cellar.

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### Family varieties

Into this hilarious and happy household Alice, the most conventional member of the family, brings Tony Kirby, her boss's son. They become engaged, and his parents are invited to dinner; but Tony brings them on the wrong night, just at the peak of the Vanderhof family varieties. Mr. and Mrs. Kirby are obviously embarrassed, being confronted with an atmosphere of happiness, such as they have forgotten how to understand.

The following day, the engagement broken, Tony returns to make amends. Alice is adamant that it won't work. Then Mr. Kirby comes to take Tony home; but, eventually after Mr. Vanderhof has explained to him his belief that the pursuit of money brings no happiness, he is converted to the Vanderhof way of life and everything ends happily round the table, dinner being cooked by a visiting Russian Grand Duchess.

But the details are less important than the atmosphere they create. The pursuit of happiness is futile; but the pursuit of other things, especially money, may easily create unhappiness. There is more joy in doing what you like than in wasting your life doing something you don't like; making a fortune you never have time to use. This is the philosophy of the amateur; and the amateur of life is, by definition, a happy man.

But again, the philosophy in this play is less important than its entertainment value, which is considerable. And the Questors acquit themselves admirably in putting over the hilarious comedy. They succeed in the hard job of making the crazy family very lovable

**Joy in Living**



### Joy in Living

Francis W. Smith's *Martin Vanderhof* is a delightful study of utter contentment, and his family, played by Rosemary Purkis (Penny), Joan Bate (Essie), Harry Ives (Paul, Penny's husband), and Anthony Holloway (Ed, Essie's husband) all establish their joy in living. Jennifer Osgood makes Alice both charming and well-balanced between her love for her family and for Tony (John Vernon); Reginald Hamlyn makes the most of the Russian dancing master; David Lorraine's Mr. De Pinna is pleasantly at home without being quite "one of the family"; and Alan Fuller and Mabel Copperwheat make Mr. and Mrs. Kirby nicely uncomfortable in their strange predicament!

Joyce Bass and Edmund Scrivener make a fine coloured pair (the cook and her boy friend), and other parts are played by Arthur S. King, Betty Walker, Eric Kirby, Ned Gethings, and Betty Ogden. George Benn has designed a fine set, appropriately cluttered up with assorted oddments and, at the same time, cleverly devised to leave sufficient space for the manifold and excited movement. Wilfrid Sharp has produced with a seemingly combination of pace, thesis, perspicacity and creation.

The result is enjoyable entertainment, can be unhesitatingly recommended to anyone who wishes to exercise his lungs with hours of laughter.

PAUL BE