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STANDING ON THE EDGE OF THE FISCAL CLIFF, ASOLO REPERTORY THEATRE ASKS

"HOW MUCH MONEY DOES ONE PERSON REALLY NEED?"

...AFTER ALL, YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU

Peter Amster Directs Asolo Repertory Theatre's 2013 Rep Season Opener

About Love, Income Taxes, and Finding The Secret to Happiness

(SARASOTA, December 27, 2012) — Asolo Repertory Theatre is proud to present *You Can't Take It With You*, the hilarious 1937 Pulitzer Prize-winning play by George S. Kaufman and Moss Hart. Written as an antidote to the nation's troubles during The Great Depression, this story is as relevant and necessary today as it was then, considering the financial conundrum our government faces over the impending "fiscal cliff." Despite advances in healthcare, this show holds that laughter is still the best medicine.

You Can't Take It With You opens the 2013 repertory season on Friday, January 4 with an 8 p.m. curtain. Opening night will be preceded by two preview performances on Jan. 2 and 3 at 8 p.m. Peter Amster, now entering his fifth season with Asolo Rep, directs the show, which runs through April 20. "I've been wanting to direct *You Can't Take It With You* for a very long time. I think it's one of the great American comedies," said Amster.

You Can't Take It With You focuses on the lives of the eccentric Vanderhof-Sycamore clan, three generations of artists and anarchists living under the same roof. This oddball extended family bases their existence on the notion that the best way to be happy is "just to go ahead and live, and not pay any attention to the world."

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They spend their time writing plays, making firecrackers, studying ballet, collecting snakes, printing handbills, and mastering the xylophone. Dinner on most any given night includes cornflakes and homemade candy. When their youngest daughter, the more traditional Alice, falls in love with Tony Kirby, the son of a tightly-wound Wall Street banker, the two families meet and the values of the slightly crazy clan are called into question. Can someone like Alice marry someone like Tony? Will love triumph over money?

“To prepare, I listened to the music of the late 1930’s,” said Amster. “I always find that in popular music one can hear the rhythms, the concerns, and the strategies of a moment in time. Just the title of some on those tunes --- ‘Pennies from Heaven,’ ‘Whistle While You Work,’ ‘They Can’t Take That Away from Me’ --- suggest looking past the problems of the Depression to see life’s true riches: our family, our friends, and the joy of simple tasks and pastimes.”

“Peter Amster is the perfect person to direct the show. His comic sensibilities and timing are spot on, and his handling of the emotional material is masterful,” said Michael Donald Edwards, Producing Artistic Director for Asolo Repertory Theatre. “This is the second show we are producing within the framework of The American Character Project. It picks up where we left off with *1776*. Now that we’ve won our independence and established that as Americans, we are entitled to life, liberty, and happiness --- we must ask, what defines happiness? Is it finding true love and following one’s own bliss, or is it making a lot of money and doing what others expect of you?”

For the production at Asolo Rep, Amster will be supported by a creative team made up of familiar faces. Jeff Dean designs the set --- the same designer that worked with Amster on his first show with Asolo Rep, *This Wonderful Life*. Virgil C. Johnson is responsible for the amazing period costumes. He previously did costumes for *The Perfume Shop*, *Deathtrap*, and *Fallen Angels* --- a trio of shows also directed by Amster for Asolo Rep. “Having Virgil as a creative partner enables me to better visualize who these characters are,” said Amster. Resident artist Michelle Hart is responsible for the hair, wig, and make-up design. Aaron Muhl is the lighting designer. “One of the biggest challenges in working on this piece is the fireworks explosion,” remarked Amster. The responsibility for that task falls on Matthew Parker, Sound Designer.

Kaufman & Hart’s powers of perception and attention to the world around them make this delightful, character-driven comedy the best-loved and most well-known play in their canon. According to theatre scholar W. David Sievers, it is “Kaufman and Hart’s great essay on integrity and fulfillment.”

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You Can't Take It With You is a heartwarming, feel-good story for audiences of all ages, an American stage classic. *You Can't Take It With You* was a smash hit from the moment it opened on Broadway. It ran for 837 performances, spawned four road companies that toured concurrently, and with the 1938 debut of Frank Capra's film version starring James Stewart, became the first play ever to run on Broadway while simultaneously being adapted into a feature film. The movie was awarded the Oscar for Best Film in 1938.

Peggy Roeder makes her return to Asolo Rep as Penny Sycamore, the daft but well-intentioned matriarch of the Vanderhof-Sycamore clan. Roeder is familiar to Sarasota audiences as Mrs. Higgins from last season's production of *My Fair Lady*. Gail Rastorfer (Mrs. Kirby) and Tyla Abercrombie (Rheba) are new to Asolo Rep, and will also have roles in this season's upcoming production of *The Heidi Chronicles*. Members of the Asolo Repertory Theatre company and the third-year class of the FSU/Asolo Conservatory for Actor Training round out the cast. Notable are David S. Howard as lovable, tax-dodging Grandpa Vanderhof, Lindsay Tornquist as Essie Campbell, the wannabe ballerina that dances more like a duck than a swan, Eric Hissom as Essie's imported Russian ballet instructor, and Carolyn Michel, 22 year-veteran of the Asolo stage, as the Grand Duchess Olga Katrina. An interesting note: Michel performed the role of Essie in *You Can't Take It With You* at Asolo Rep in 1985 --- her first role with the theatre.

CAST in order of appearance

PEGGY ROEDER*	Penny Sycamore
LINDSAY TORNQUIST	Essie Carmichael
TYLA ABERCRUMBIE*	Rheba
DAVID BREITBARTH*	Paul Sycamore
FRANCISCO RODRIGUEZ	Mr. De Pinna
JOSEPH McGRANAGHAN	Ed Carmichael
CHRISTOPHER WYNN	Donald
DAVID S. HOWARD*	Martin Vanderhof
BRITTANY PROIA+	Alice Sycamore
JESSE DORNAN+	Mr. Wilbur C. Henderson
BRENDAN RAGAN	Tony Kirby
ERIC HISSOM*	Boris Kolenkhov
KELLY CAMPBELL	Gay Wellington

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DOUGLAS JONES*	Mr. Kirby
GAIL RASTORFER*	Mrs. Kirby
MARK KONRAD	Head Justice Man
JACOB COOPER	J Man #2
ZAK WILSON	J Man #3
CAROLYN MICHEL*	The Grand Duchess Olga Katrina

*members of Actors' Equity Association, the Union of Professional Actors in the United States
+appears courtesy of Actors' Equity Association

TICKETS

Ticket prices for all performances range between \$20 to \$72. Tickets can be purchased at the Asolo Repertory Theatre Box Office in person or by calling 800.361.8388 or 941.351.8000. Tickets can also be purchased online at www.asolorep.org. The Asolo Repertory Theatre and Box Office are located in the FSU Performing Arts Center adjacent to the John and Mable Ringling Museum of Art at 5555 N. Tamiami Trail, Sarasota, FL 34243. Parking is free.

Asolo Repertory Theatre Winter 2013 Box Office Hours:

Monday: 10a.m.-4p.m.
Tues.-Sat.: 10a.m.-8p.m.
Sunday: 10a.m.-2p.m.

SCHEDULED PERFORMANCES

Jan. 2, 8 p.m. - Preview #1	Feb. 28, 2 p.m.
Jan. 3, 8 p.m. - Preview #2	March 6, 8 p.m.
Jan. 4, 8 p.m. - Opening Night	March 8, 8 p.m.
Jan. 5, 8 p.m.	March 16, 8 p.m.
Jan. 12, 8 p.m.	March 20, 2 p.m.
Jan. 22, 7:30 p.m.	March 21, 8 p.m.
Jan 26, 2 p.m.	March 23, 2 p.m.
Jan. 27, 2 p.m.	March 30, 2 p.m.
Jan. 30, 8 p.m.	April 4, 2 p.m.
Feb. 5, 7:30 p.m.	April 7, 2 p.m. April 10, 8 p.m.
Feb. 7, 2 p.m.	April 10, 8 p.m.
Feb. 10, 2 p.m. - Meet the Actors	April 11, 8 p.m.
Feb. 13, 2 p.m.	April 16, 7:30 p.m.
Feb. 20, 2 p.m.	April 19, 8 p.m.
Feb. 22, 8 p.m.	April 20, 2 p.m. - Closing Night

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SPECIAL PUBLIC PROGRAMMING FOR *YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU*

Asolo Rep plans two special performances of *You Can't Take It With You* with additional entertainment and educational programming tied to the show. Tickets for any of these programs may be purchased through the box office.

Inside Asolo Rep

January 30, 2013

11 a.m. - 12 noon in the Cook Theatre

Get a glimpse of what goes on behind the curtain with this special event featuring director Peter Amster and other creative artists from the production. Tickets are \$5 for the panel discussion only (and free for Guild Members and Donors).

Meet the Actors

February 10, 2013

Audience members will have the opportunity to interact with the cast during a moderated talkback immediately following the 2 p.m. matinee.

Tuesday Talkbacks

January 22, February 5, and April 16, 2013

The audience is invited to join a cast and a creative team member for a moderated talkback on the mezzanine immediately following the 7:30 p.m. performance.

SPONSORS

Asolo Repertory Theatre is able to bring *You Can't Take It With You* to the stage because of the generosity of our corporate sponsors and individual supporters. Corporate sponsors for *You Can't Take It With You* are BB&T, Sarasota Bay Club, Plumbing Today, Morton's Gourmet Market & Catering, ABC7, and The Observer Group. Season sponsors are Florida State University, Gulf Coast Community Foundation, Comcast, Designing Women Boutique, Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, The Shubert Foundation, and The Woman's Exchange, Inc. Paid for in part by Sarasota County Tourist Development Tax revenues. Sponsored in part by the State of Florida, Department of State, Division of Cultural Affairs, the Florida Council on Arts and Culture.

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