

THEATER REVIEWS

Play offers strong performances

"YOU CAN'T TAKE IT WITH YOU"
Starring John D. McNally
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY CARRIE PHILLIPS
THE GAMECOCK

This weekend, Longstreet Theatre was bursting with laughter, fireworks and politics. "You Can't Take It With You," Theatre South Carolina's second offering this season, is a hilarious spectacle of a play and offers students a wonderful escape from this world of term papers.

Set in 1936, "You Can't Take It With You" is the story of a family whose eccentricities are beyond eccentricity. Paul and Penny Sycamore live with their daughters Essi and Alice; Essi's husband; Grandpa Martin Vanderhof; Mr. DePinna; the maid and her husband; two snakes; and a basement full of fireworks. They live quietly and innocently until the IRS man comes to visit and announces that Grandpa owes 24 years of back taxes. Add this to Alice's engagement to a wealthy Wall-Street heir, and the Sycamore house becomes a ground for debate on communism, patriotism and living life to the fullest. John D. McNally plays Grandpa as a quietly contented man who loves commencements, snakes and his family. He wraps his character's eccentricities into a pleasingly convincing portrayal; he puts the audience at ease in this world, and adds the touch of sanity that makes the play believable.



From left, Margo Regan, John D. McNally and Richard Jennings in "You Can't Take It With You."
PHOTO SPECIAL TO THE GAMECOCK

As his daughter, Penny, Margo Regan looks slightly out of place whenever she is on stage with McNally and Richard Jennings, who plays her husband, Paul. Jennings, like McNally, is part of the Actors' Equity union, and is worth the money the company paid for him.

Alice, played by April Kresken, and her fiancé, Tony Kirby Jr., played by Scott Bellot, are the images of "normalcy" in the play, and are therefore slightly dull roles. Both actors, however, play their parts to the fullest, breathing fresh air into them and making them enjoyable to watch.

The standout role in the play is Essi, played by Moriah McCarthy. McCarthy is a freshman, but you'd never know it to watch her; as the wannabe-ballerina/candy maker, she adds depth and movement to every scene.

Rounding out the cast, Eric Hoffmann as Kolenkhov is robust in voice and appearance, with a dead-on accent and hilarious stage presence. Anita Ashley plays a great drunk as Ms. Wellington,

and Erica Toboloski's Olga is over-the-top and funny (and her blintzes look delicious). Sara Thomas as Rheba, the maid, and Maxwell Highsmith as her husband, Donald, round out the ethnicity of the play and are wonderful, even though, in this version, their roles have been cut down to those of minor characters. R.I.G. Hughes and Barbara Lowrance Hughes are perfectly stuffy as the Wall-Street tycoon and his wife.

Director Robert E. Leonard has the play running smoothly from start to finish. His direction and Jim Hunter's scenic design make this play suit the stage and obviously make the stage easy for the actors. The scenic design effectively transports the audience. Yousif Mohamed and Eric Rouse's lighting and technical design work together to create a fitting atmosphere and great fireworks. "You Can't Take It With You" runs until Nov. 24 at Longstreet Theatre.

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Clapton

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

strumentation and solos that make these songs work so well.

One of the more interesting tracks is Clapton's personal version of "Over the Rainbow." The British virtuoso puts other arrangements of the song to shame; his jazzy version makes a musical cliché sound original and captivating.

While the new material is the

least exciting part of the album, it moves well and is a nice change of pace among the rest of the tracks. "My Father's Eyes" and the modern-jazz-sounding "Reptile" sound fresh and are well executed. "Change the World," from the 1996 film "Phenomenon," plays at a slightly awkward, faster tempo, but still feels enough like the original version to entertain.

But it's the classics that make this album what it is. The dark "Cocaine," hopeless "Layla," somber "Tears in Heaven" and ro-

mantic "Wonderful Tonight" are just as great as ever. But the signature "Bell Bottom Blues" is truly amazing, and its soulful sound makes it the album's standout.

Clapton has not been nearly as productive in recent years, but with "One More Car, One More Rider," the living legend makes it known that he's as amazing a musician as ever. This is one ride you should not miss.

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'Barefoot' doesn't disappoint



"BAREFOOT IN THE PARK"
Starring Corrie Bratter
★★★★ out of ☆☆☆☆

BY ELEANOR SIBAL
THE GAMECOCK

The first Neil Simon play I ever saw, "Rumors," was a student-produced delight. From this experience, I immediately assumed that Simon had a unique gift for developing exciting characters and simple yet thoughtful plots in the space of one room. Dare he impress me again?

This time, it was "Barefoot in the Park" by Workshop Theatre. With a cozy set and an experienced, animated group of actors, the production was as pleasing and entertaining as I hoped it would be.

The plot is simple enough: A young couple establishes a new home in the form of a small Greenwich Village apartment, complete with a hole in the sky-

light, a kooky neighbor and an exhausting trip up five flights of stairs to get there. Along for the ride is an overbearing yet well-meaning mother (aren't they all?), who clings to her newlywed daughter and conceals her criticisms.

The bride, already contemplating divorce after six days of marriage, sets her mother up with the neighbor upstairs in hopes of severing maternal ties. This situation creates great comedy and fun.

Ashlee Putnam, as Corrie Bratter, performs convincingly enough as the quirky young bride with a penchant for fun. Her tone of voice instantly strikes the audience: She sounds like an overpolite hostess, even when kissed deeply by her husband. Her tone never changes, and it is an ironic antithesis of her amusing character; she sounds uptight, yet she likes to have a good time.

On the other hand, Chip Stubbs, who plays Paul Bratter, is definitely the play's lowlight. Although his character is a stuffed shirt, a little more zest could have helped at some moments. Though Putnam has an affected tone that works, Stubbs speaks with no inflection. And when he tries to vary his voice, his speech seems unnatural.

The other two main performances are comic gems that keep the laughs coming. Jim DeFelice (Victor Velasco) and

Gail Cook (Corrie's mother, Mrs. Banks) play polar opposites and are equally appealing characters. DeFelice plays the off-kilter upstairs neighbor with all the outlandishness the part calls for.

As for Cook, it is easy to tell she is the most experienced and professional of the entire cast. She naturally delivers her lines and convincingly plays that kind of mother everyone hates to love.

On the side, it is essential to note Neville Bennett, who plays a telephone repair man, as an integral and impressive side character. Even though he is not on stage for most of the play, he as well is an entertaining and humorous personality.

Neil Simon is a highly successful playwright, and his plays are produced in Broadway and local theaters. His plays are popular because they are hilarious and people relate to his characters. Workshop Theatre has smartly chosen a fun comedy to produce this season. I have been pleased and delighted once again.

"Barefoot in the Park" will play until Nov. 26. Shows begin at 8 p.m., with 3 p.m. matinees on Sundays.

The shows cost \$11 for seniors, students and military and \$13 for adults. Tickets are available at Workshop Theatre's box office at 1136 Bull St. or by calling 799-6551.

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PHOTO BY PETER MOUNTAIN/KRT CAMPUS

Ginny Weasley, played by Bonnie Wright, and Harry Potter, played by Daniel Radcliffe, star in "Harry Potter and the Chamber of Secrets."

Response

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

ally gripped the country — everyone loves the fantastical stories. Parents look forward to reading the books as bedtime stories for their children.

Some religious parents, however, are opposed to the Harry Potter series because of the Bible's stance against witchcraft and magic.

But nothing seems to stop the series's magical appeal. First-year liberal arts student Chuck Boyle had much to say about Potter: "I think it's cool because it revolves around little-kid immature stuff, but that the subject matter being so versatile, it appeals to people on all levels."

Boyle said that when his younger sister handed him a copy of the book, he refused to take it and said it was stupid. But after watching the first film, Boyle quickly changed his mind; now, he says he is eager to read the next book.

"It's something new and different," Boyle said. "It is awesome for our society to be able

to get away from things such as Eminem and his '8 Mile' hoopla."

Eminem's film finished second to Potter's this weekend. "8 Mile" grossed an estimated \$21.3 million Friday through Sunday, almost \$7.5 million less than the Potter film earned its first day.

Bill Vollono, a first-year international business student, said, "The Harry Potter movies are pretty impressive, but there is going to be some major competition with the 'Lord of the Rings' films."

Vollono said, laughing, that he thinks Potter "looks like a toss dork with those glasses, but he is a stud with the magic tricks."

"My feelings are mixed," he said.

Even college professors enjoy Harry Potter. Journalism professor Sandra Hughes said she really likes the first book.

Fans wait eagerly to read about Harry's fifth year at Hogwarts. But for now, seeing the new film should suffice.

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"The Harry Potter movies are pretty impressive, but there is going to be some major competition with the 'Lord of the Rings' films."

BILL VOLLONO
FIRST-YEAR INTERNATIONAL BUSINESS STUDENT

Review

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

and Emma Watson as Hermione Granger, also in their prepubescent years, support him well and provide much of the film's comic relief. They show promise and are well on their way to lengthy acting careers.

The plot, which many thought would be sketchy because it is based on a children's story, keeps viewers involved and intrigued. Each part of the plot builds on what has happened in the past, and even if viewers miss a key twist, it is usually explained later in dialogue.

Though some might hesitate to see this Harry Potter installment because they haven't seen the first, that's not necessarily a prerequisite. But "Chamber" builds on the plot of the "The Sorcerer's Stone," and many of the plot lines mean more if viewers are already involved with the characters from encountering them in the first movie. Seeing "The Sorcerer's Stone" might add to viewers' enjoyment of the story, but is not needed to understand the plot of "Chamber."

If Warner Brothers continues to pay the way for more movies of this caliber, it won't take magic for each sequel to top the last.

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