

# Production provides experience

**"You Can't Take it With You" offered a chance for freshmen to gain theatre experience**

BY ANNA GRACE  
Staff Reporter

The most recent performance of the Truman State Theatre Department has given freshmen a chance to shine under the spotlight.

The department presented George S. Kaufmann and Moss Hart's play "You Can't Take It With You" Nov. 7 through 10 at 8 p.m. in the James G. Severns Theatre in Ophelia Parrish with free admission. The cast consisted of 19 cast members, six of whom were freshmen.

Director Rob Rybkowski said he served as technical director and set designer.

"One of the things I think is important in the department is that we do try to get as many people on stage as possible, give them opportunities, and not to see the same old faces over and over and over again," Rybkowski said.

He said he kept this in the back of his mind as he cast the production and tried to get new faces. The large cast was a good thing, as it allowed for more actors to get up on the stage, he said.

"There were several freshmen that were just 'wow,'" Rybkowski said. "We're in good shape if we have this person for the next four years."

Senior stage manager Mandy Schultz said the show started five or six weeks ago with auditions after the last main stage show closed. Rehearsals were Sunday through Thursday from 7 p.m. to 8



Submitted Photo  
Junior Liz Tuxbury performs a scene from "You Can't Take it With You." The play gave younger students the opportunity to perform.

p.m. each night. Schultz said many of the actors and actresses are not theatre majors, and during auditions the question of majors is not even asked.

"Everyone does really well and I feel like we have a really strong sense of en-

semble and community which is so wonderful," said senior actress Paige Hackworth. "In such a big cast I feel like that can get lost but I feel like everyone clicks really well together."

Freshmen Adam Hunn and Jeni Steele

both learned about "You Can't Take It With You" during Truman Week at the majors day activity when all of the year's productions were revealed. Hunn heard more about it during the first main stage show that he was a part of. He said he had read the show before and liked the script so he decided to audition.

Steele had been cast in the show in her hometown and was recast as the same character, which she said provided the challenge of creating a whole new character with the same role. She also liked Rybkowski and wanted to be in his show, she said.

"I really think that the upperclassmen are a huge help to us as freshmen," Hunn said. "They really take us under their wing, guide us in how to be very professional in rehearsal and in our just personal acting."

Hunn said the theater faculty also are helpful for young actors. They helped guide the cast, he said, and encouraged them to continue improving. The faculty also acted as technicians working behind the scenes, he said.

Steele said she also appreciated the work of both Rybkowski and assistant professor of theatre, Dominique Glaros.

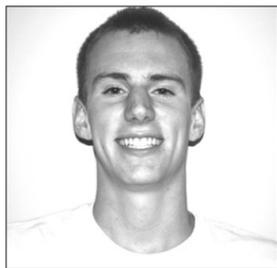
"Big experiences are just adjusting to the professional style of theatre," Steele said, explaining that her prior experiences had been in more relaxed settings.

Both freshmen were excited for the show to start, they said.

Hunn and Steele both said their experience was worth recommending to others.

"Go for it," Steele said. "People here are wanting you to grow, not just become part of the show, but also gain experience."

## Reality should not be sugar-coated



BY JOHN BROOKS  
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Sometimes I look around and I wonder if anyone else sees what I see. I see a lot of things. I see a lot of suffering. I see a lot of heartache. And no one seems to care.

In my hometown, there were a fair amount of homeless people. Not a lot, but a decent amount. There was one exit off I-70 where they often sat, begging for change with cardboard signs. I took that exit every day on my way home from school, and I watched lines of cars drive past these people and ignore them. It is so easy to do this, to ignore those in need. It's become the norm to ignore, and no one seems to care. Actively trying to help people is looked down upon. I can't remember the last time I saw someone give a ride to a hitchhiker. And I'm no better: I make excuses about how they might get my car dirty or they're probably trying to get to Kansas City and that's not where I'm headed.

Where does this mentality of not caring about people come from? Is it because we don't know them? It's much easier to dismiss the problems of others because they aren't close to us.

It's easy to disassociate from people by saying things like "family first," to create walls between ourselves and others that make it so much easier to drive past that homeless person and never even look at them.

It's part of something that as a whole makes me uncomfortable with society: the predilection toward actions and speech centered around making our lives more comfortable while ignoring the realities of the world around us. What does that mean? It means we're obsessed with being comfortable. Seeing someone clad in dirty, stinking, rotten rags reminds us that not everyone is comfortable. Maybe that's why we grip the steering wheel and change the radio and flinch and look away. It's so much easier to live in a world where the realities of poverty and hunger don't exist. Maybe that's why we pretend they don't.

We want to be comfortable not only in what we see, but also in what we say. I continually am amazed by the human capacity for discussion of anything but the challenging topics. No matter where I go, people in my social class and up are far more interested in the weather than in the suffering of their fellow man and woman. I guess I just don't understand how it's so easy for people to ignore. I feel like I'm the only one who sees these things or actually wants to talk about things that matter rather than trivial material.

It's seen as impolite. Sometimes when I'm talking to people I struggle to be polite, not because I don't understand how to, but because I don't understand why I should. I spend so much time saying nothing — and

sometimes in situations when I'm supposed to be polite and proper it bothers me that this is what we are concerned with: politeness instead of reality.

Are there people out there who work the system, who use others' compassion when they aren't truly in need? Sure. Does the possibility of a few cheats mean we shouldn't try to help? No. I suppose that's just my perspective, my reaction, but I wish it were something people talked about more. I wish I saw more people who saw the homeless guy on the side of the road as themselves, barring a few twists and turns in life. I wish I didn't live in a society that actively frowns on dealing with the things that matter and rejects being real for properness.

Whether or not we realize it, there are people all around us who are suffering. Some are easier to see than others, like the homeless people trying to catch a ride or get some spare change. Some are not so easy to see. But when we put barriers between ourselves and others, when we pretend the problems of our lives don't exist, we step over the boundary between simply ignoring others' suffering to actively participating in it ourselves.

No one can do everything, and I'm not suggesting something extreme, like we should all quit our jobs and spend all day giving homeless people rides. I think we have the power to better the lives of the people around us, and when we get caught up in silly little everyday things that don't matter we ignore the big ones. And yet, for some reason, it seems like I'm the only one who thinks these things. When did we stop caring?

## Optimism is under-valued



Editor reflects on the importance of a positive attitude

BY JOHN O'BRIEN  
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This past summer, I had the pleasure of working at a summer camp in Michigan. While the experience overall was great, one event in particular still stands out to me as the best and worst night of camp: the night a bug became lodged in my ear.

Now, you might be wondering how that could end up being a good experience. Good question.

However, while lying on the medical bed in the health center as a roomful of college biology majors working on health staff continued to poke, prod and stab my ear with assorted items found around the building in an attempt to "rescue" the bug from my ear, I realized it often is the embarrassing, painful or generally bad experiences in life that are the most fun to remember.

Yes, there was a bug stuck in my ear for five hours. Yes, it was alive, flapping and getting angrier with every murder attempted on it. And yes, it took a trip to the emergency room to remove it. But

hey, now I have a story about the time I named the bug in my ear "Edward Cullen" and my friend attempted to suck the bug out of my ear (I apologize for that visual).

Far too often, we tend to discount any negative experience and focus on what went wrong. But how often do we look at the bright side of whatever awful experience that might be? In a world plagued by negativity and an overall "whiny" aura, it is important to stay positive and have a sense of humor, which is something I realized as I laid on the ground staring up at the sky after tripping up the stairs my senior year of high school, my friend standing over me laughing all the while.

Recently, I've begun to keep track of every time I complain, whine or just think negatively. Each time I make an unpleasant comment, I make a small check mark on my hand and attempt to see the brighter side of whatever small problem I probably was rambling about.

During 2011, when I was pulled over by a police officer and continued to spurt out fragments of sentences ending with a pathetic "I love cops" as my friend sat next to me trying not to laugh, I was terrified and embarrassed. But with my handy dandy new catchphrase, "yolo" or "you only live once," I've come to realize that fretting about something like that will only ruin my mood and add more negativity into my life.

Once you learn to laugh at yourself and work to turn even the most negative situations around, you'll be sailing in the right direction. So turn that frown upside down, Debbie Downer, because there is a bright side to things, even getting a bug stuck in your ear.



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