

the  STENTORIAN

VOLUME XXVIII, ISSUE 3

NORTH CAROLINA SCHOOL OF SCIENCE AND MATHEMATICS

OCTOBER-NOVEMBER 2016

# Outlandish Family Takes the Stage in *You Can't Take it With You*

By ELIZABETH BEYER

"And so the beautiful princess came into the palace, kissed her mother, and her father, and her grandfather... And what do you think? They turned into the Sycamore family! Surprised?"

During the weekend of Oct. 22, a group of talented NCSSM students came together to perform the fall drama production, *You Can't Take It With You*.

This play from the 1930's centers around an outlandish family, the Sycamores, each with their own quirks, creating a captivating comedy that reflected the hard work of its cast.

The quote above came from Alice Sycamore, the odd one out in a family of "riffraff." Clearly the only "normal" one in the group, she works at a stock company, where she meets Tony, her boss's son and vice president of the company.

Alice loves her family and she loves Tony, but marriage is nearly out of the question. She can't see a way that her family would ever get along with Tony's, a scenario that is finally put to test when an unexpected dinner between the two families occurs.

Senior Claire Amon played Alice. For her, Alice was a challenge to portray because Alice contrasts sharply with characters in her previous acting experiences.



*You Can't Take It With You* actors rehearse before their performances.

ELIZABETH BEYER

In two of NCSSM's productions last school year, Amon felt she could relate to her characters on some level.

"I really wanted Alice," Amon said, "Because I wanted something that was going to be a challenge." With her complete professionalism and lack of quirks, Alice represented an opportunity for Amon to stretch her professional range.

To get in touch with Alice as a character, Amon tried to break down the play scene-by-scene, constantly thinking about Alice's actions.

There was a guided free range for the cast members to

interpret their characters, giving Amon the flexibility to focus in on who Alice is. Amon even used a softer, higher tone when she "was Alice."

The love for theatre "runs in the family" with Amon's junior brother, Aman Singh. He plays the grandpa, the oldest member of the eccentric family. The grandpa's quirks include collecting stamps and snakes as well as attending college commencement ceremonies although he despises them.

Besides embodying these oddities, Singh also had to portray the body language of an aged man without being overdramatic.

"I tend to make things bigger than they need to be-- bigger in the sense of overacting-- and it loses the honesty of the scene," Singh said, "I'm really trying not to do that... to make the play as honest as possible." Singh, a passionate actor, had to tailor his actions to not detract from the story. Singh's character is a symbol of the play's theme. For most of his life, the grandpa was very concerned with success.

He had an office job and worked hard though he did not enjoy it. One day, he quit his job and never looked back, proclaiming that he would no longer do anything he didn't enjoy. This sets the stage for the

views of his family, and in the end, the grandpa converts Tony's father to the idea that you really can't take everything with you.

Student director Sarah Grade hopes the audience took this moral with them. It wraps the happy ending up neatly with the added enjoyment of the "fun-to-watch" comedy. As a period play, Grade had to work with the cast to make much of the humor accessible to a modern audience.

"We've added a lot of subtle things that aren't in the script," Grade mentioned. Very little was removed from the script, but some of the presentation of humor in the play was altered, to keep the dramaticism funny for a younger audience.

Beyond these small changes, NCSSM's production of *You Can't Take It With You* stayed very true to the original. Actors were clad in suits and dresses from the '30's complete with period makeup. Grade and the other student directors helped the characters to understand who they were in the '30s, giving them new life.

Whether it was their first performance or one of many, those involved with the play loved the experience and friends they made bringing a beautiful and bizarre story to life.

## Fall Fine Arts Concert a Wish Come True

By JULIA WANG

On Sunday, Oct. 16, NCSSM chorale, orchestra, and wind ensemble presented a magnificent showcase of Disney music. The three ensembles have practiced diligently during the weeks leading up to the concert, and their hard work and time sacrifice certainly paid off. NCSSM's very own a capella group, the Unichords, also presented two fantastic songs.

The following pieces were performed:

Chorale: "Peze Kafé" (Haitian folk song), "Simple Gifts" arr. Stephen Lee, "Someday My Prince Will Come" (Snow White), "This is Halloween" (The Nightmare Before Christmas), "Reflection" (Mulan), "A Whole New World" (Aladdin), "Ave Maria" (Fantasia), "Wish Upon a Star" (Pinocchio)  
Unichords: "You Da One"



The NCSSM Orchestra rehearses before the October 16 Fine Arts concert.

JULIA WANG

by Rihanna and "Under the Sea" (The Little Mermaid)

Wind Ensemble: "Galop" (Fantasia), "Disney Movie Magic" (medley from various Disney movies) arr. James Christensen, "The Incredibles" (medley), "Mary

Poppins" (medley), "Alice and Wonderland" (highlights), "Wish Upon a Star" (Pinocchio).

Orchestra: "Disney Classics" (medley from various Disney movies) arr. Charles Sayre, "A Day at Disneyland" (medley from various Disney movies)

arr. Michael Story, "Pirates of the Caribbean: At World's End", "The Sorcerer's Apprentice" (Fantasia), "A Night on Bald Mountain" (Fantasia), "Ave Maria" (Fantasia), "Wish Upon a Star" (Pinocchio)

The concert commenced and

concluded with the same song "Wish Upon a Star" from the movie *Pinocchio* to emphasize the theme of the day: If you truly believe, any wish you make will come true.

NCSSM Fine Arts consists of nearly 200 students who take precious time out of their weekly schedules to rehearse ensemble and practice on their own. Directors Scott Laird, Philip Riggs, and Dave Stuntz have contributed enormous amounts of time and energy to make this program a success. Also, special thanks to Scott Hill, the choral accompanist, and all generous sponsors.

After the fall concert, parents sponsored a potluck celebration for the performers and audience right outside the auditorium.