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The Courier Covers THE NEW MOVIES By John Springer

Notes on a New York Week New York dimmed out! It's hard to conceive; it's harder to accept when you see it. Not that it's so dark really—it's still as bright as any other city at night. But that's just the trouble. It might be any city at all. Times Square might just as well be Yonge Street in Toronto, or Wisconsin Avenue in Milwaukee, or Main and Clinton right here in Rochester. No winding ribbon of news in lights... no Wrigley's sign... no electric light dancers... no spectacular marquee displays. But the same crowds swarm the streets. The same rush of cabs hits the theater section at show time. The same blare of noises heard only on Broadway assaults your ears. It's a little more difficult to see it but, over the first shock, New York is still New York.

A few hours after I saw Nancy Carroll in "Woman Accused" at a revival theater off Broadway, I met Nancy Carroll herself. She was going to appear on a Theater Wing radio broadcast with Helen Menken, Lanny Ross, Constance Collier, Radis Harris and others and thought I might enjoy sitting in on the rehearsal. So we met and sat around talking while we waited for the rehearsal to begin. And here's a funny thing. The 1942 Nancy Carroll is fresher and lovelier than the Carroll I had seen a few hours before in a movie made several years ago. That amazing hair is still the color of

a copper penny just off the mint. Her eyes—remember when Ethel Barrymore wished that her dressing room could be decorated in blue, the exact color of Nancy Carroll's eyes—those eyes are as large and luminous as ever. But I'd better stop this. I could get maudlin about Nancy Carroll if I let myself go as faithful readers of this column will testify. Suffice to say that this Miss Carroll is a very special person indeed.

She had seen "Woman Accused" herself the day before and was amazed to see how well it stands up. It almost gives her courage to do another picture, although she swore after finishing her last two, "There Goes My Heart" and "That Certain Age," that she'd never make another movie. There may be another Broadway show in the offing, too, if present plans go through and quite possibly a few engagements in stock this summer. But, though right at present she hasn't accepted any movie offers and isn't doing any stage work, she is far from idle. "You'd be surprised how busy you can keep in New York," she tells you.

At the same broadcast rehearsal, stately Constance Collier, one of our finest actresses, told the story about the young soldier in the Stage Door Canteen, who recognized her from the movies and asked her for a dance. She pointed out the young and beautiful girls but the sailor persisted. "Listen, lady, it's you I want" for my partner and if you will dance just one dance with me, the first four Japs I bring back are yours." Miss Collier was highly complimented.

Adrienne Ames is still as busy as she can be with her radio, television and war work. Like Nancy Carroll, Adrienne had a chance to see one of her old pictures when it was revived on Broadway last week, but she didn't take it. The display of stills outside showing Adrienne as the slinkiest of vampires, frightened her off. "It was ghastly," she says. She does run into her pictures on a cigarette advertisement—just about everywhere she goes. "Just think, John," she exclaims, "I couldn't value the publicity coverage of that picture—yet they pay me good money for it." Adrienne was thrilled with the performance of Canada Lee in "Native Son" and when the show was here, I told Canada about it. She says he called to thank her in New York and she has arranged for him to make a guest appearance on her program.

Adrienne and Helen Twelvetrees, who were guest stars on my radio program within a week of one another, now both have programs of their own and I was a guest at them within a day of one another last week. Sat in on Helen's program with her young son, Jack, who is a tow-headed, miniature replica of his pretty mother. Jack currently is a two-gun man but I couldn't figure out whether the guns were cap or water pistols.

"Blithe Spirit" is Broadway's best comedy—Noel Coward's sophisticated and delightful ghost story, adroitly played by Clifton Webb, Peggy Wood, Leonora Corbett and, particularly by Mildred Natwick. You remember Miss Natwick's bit in that remarkable film, "Long Voyage Home." She was the waterfront drab who served as pathetic, reluctant lure when John Wayne was to be shanghaied. Remember how she ordered, "A drop o' gin with a beer chaser," and, extending a dainty finger, added a genteel "if you please." In "Blithe Spirit," she plays the bicycle riding spinster medium and gives such a matchless performance that you cannot think of anyone else in the part. Miss Natwick mentions wistfully that she'd like to do it in movies when it is made, but she rather fears there are too many excellent Hollywood character actresses who would be as acceptable. I conceded Beulah Bondi—after all, I'd concede Beulah Bondi the role of "Peter Pan" if she wanted to play it—but I wouldn't consider anyone else for a minute.

(To Be Continued Next Week) John Springer reminisces about the Nancy Carroll-Cary Grant drama, "The Woman Accused" on Your Movie Memory over WSAJ, Monday morning at 10.

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