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## COURIER'S CURRENT CINEMA COMMENTS

By JOHN SPRINGER

### "Broadway"—A-2

Usually when you say that such and such a movie has "nostalgic appeal," you refer to a picture like "My Gal Sal" or others which deal with that period. Yet to a later generation -- that generation whose memories extend back not much further than the days of Prohibition, the days when bootleggers and hi-jackers made up "cave society," when killings were frequent and frequently unsolved, and when everyone was whistling new hit tunes like "I'm Just Wild About Harry" and "Sweet Georgia Brown" -- "nostalgia" is the word to describe the appeal of "Broadway." Originally a hit melodrama on the stage and screen the melodramatic elements of "Broadway" are pretty dated by now after dozens of imitative pictures in the last few years.

But Universal cleverly fixes that by placing emphasis not on the story itself but on the memories of a certain phase of life in that period. The atmosphere of the period is realistically depicted, excepting in the case of the make-up and costumes of the women which are strictly 1942. Iris Adrian is the minor role of a chorine, is the only member of the cast who attempts to make up and dress like women did in those days.

The picture is brought up to date by introducing a forward in which George Raft, playing George Raft, arrives in New York, takes a walk down Broadway (and the Broadway of the picture with all lights flashing is a memory itself) and begins to reminisce about the days on this very street, when he was just starting out as hooper in the defunct Paradise Night Club. His reminiscences bring in the story of the original play.

It's well handled and Raft never an actor is plausible as a hooper named George Raft, taking part in a striking dance sequence in addition to the straight melodramatics. Pat O'Brien and Broderick Crawford are completely convincing as a detective and a racketeer respectively. Marjorie Rambeau scores particularly as the warm-hearted night club singer a character modeled on Texas Guinan, while Janet Blair and Anne Gwynne do well enough as two of the dancing girls and S. Z. Sakall stands out in support.

### "Fingers At the Window"—A-2

The day we saw "Fingers at the Window," somebody hissed the first appearance of Lew Ayres. The lone hiss was immediately drowned out by a chorus of indignant "shushes" and there was no more of that. It's too bad, though, that Ayres' first appearance since his unfortunate publicity is not more successful. In "Fingers at the Window" he plays a ham actor and it's difficult to differentiate between Ayres' performance and his character role. It's pretty ordinary mystery fare with a rather novel idea ruined by tedious plotting and unreal dialogue and situations.

### "The Wife Takes a Flyer"—B

"The Wife Takes a Flyer" is one of those pictures that tries too hard to be funny. Obvious comedy of the type that teeters between farce and out-and-out slapstick in which every line, every situation is relentlessly milked for the last drop by Director Richard Wallace and his company. The story is a tiresome affair about a young RAF pilot who hides out in a Dutch home in which a Nazi officer is billeted. To avoid detection, the pilot pretends to be the mentally unbalanced husband of the lady of the house.

She is Joan Bennett, at her most attractive but still not much of a comedienne. Franchot Tone is a little happier in his assignment, but the prize plum of the picture is the role of the strutting Nazi, played with all stops out by Allyn Joslyn. It's a violently exaggerated performance but Joslyn makes it funny enough for the most part, particularly in the sequences in which he becomes bored with the repetitious "Heil Hitler!" and the dinner at which he tries to explain why there is no caviar.

### "My Favorite Spy"—A-2

After Bob Hope and Madeleine Carroll finished with it, the spy plot for comedians was pretty well through. One can't imagine another comedian beating that spontaneous piece and, Kay Kyser, who tries, doesn't even come close. Kyser, himself, is as self-conscious about this business of being an actor as ever, but Harold Lloyd, in his production capacity, sees to it

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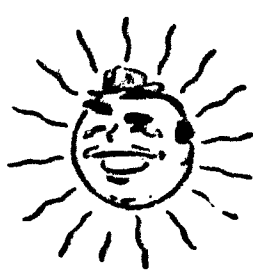
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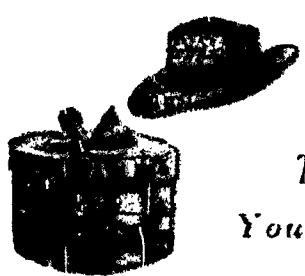
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