

From Microphone To Grease-Gun



GEORGE PANTAGES
"O Sole Mio" by moonlight

SINGING duets with Gloria Jean at the M-G-M studios, being seen and heard on a miniature film through a dime-in-the-slot machine, singing "O Sole Mio" by moonlight on the deck of a merchant ship in equatorial waters, these were some of the things that George Pantages, a twenty-one-year-old American tenor, told us about when we interviewed him recently. The war interrupted what he had hoped would be a career in the world of microphones and cameramen, and now he is a greaser on a merchant ship.

Pantages' parents are both Greek, but neither of them is musical. He left his home in Milwaukee, Wisconsin, at the age of 17 to seek his fortune in Los Angeles and Hollywood, having known for two years that he had a tenor voice that was likely to become a valuable asset—its range now is two octaves, from low C up to D sharp above the stave.

Singing light music at the Paris Inn Night Club in Los Angeles gave him enough to live on until he had made

connections with the film world, and eventually he got a contract with M-G-M to study acting and singing. He also sang in Mary Astor's "Hollywood Show-case," a radio guest artist programme, and with Abbott and Costello in the Orphan Theatre. With the Mills brothers he made miniature films, which play about three minutes on a screen about two inches by three inches, when a dime is put into a slot.

Mr. Pantages' voice is of an unusual type, and he can use it with ease at a high range. He specialises in the Italianate sort of song—"Funiculi Funicula," "O Sole Mio," "Santa Lucia," and excerpts from "Rigoletto."

Last December he was promised an audition for the Metropolitan Opera House, which was fixed for next July, on a long waiting-list. "Heaven knows where I'll be then, though," he said with a gesture of resignation.

While in New Zealand, Pantages sang to his countrymen in a U.S. hospital, and from the studio of 2YA last month.

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got through 85 broadcasts in 18 days. In 1940, Kaltenborn was appointed official news analyst for the National Broadcasting Company.

Beat the Berlin Censor

WILLIAM L. SHIRER, whose voice is familiar to thousands of Americans saying, "This is Berlin calling!" first went to Europe on a cattle-boat. He then got a job in Paris with the *Chicago Tribune*, and within a year, was on the European staff of that paper. After his marriage in 1931, he went to India and saw a great deal of Gandhi, whom he once described as "the greatest man of our times."

In 1937, Shirer became Continental representative of the Columbia Broadcasting system at Vienna and Berlin, and played a part in developing the new technique. Though his script was censored, and he spoke with a German censor at his elbow, he got a lot of points across to the American listeners by subtle inflexions, and so on, that the censor could not understand. The diary he kept during this period published as *Berlin Diary* in 1941, was a best seller.

Also by Cattle Boat

JOHN GUNTHER is yet another who made his first trip to Europe on a cattle boat. Born in Chicago in 1901, Gunther showed early signs of his interest in the world—at 10 he had written 200 pages of an encyclopaedia. He got a job on the *Chicago Daily News*, walked out, and sailed to Europe. Calling at the *Daily News* office in London for his mail, he was invited by a kind editor to report for work. Subsequently, he found himself "covering the Continent" from Vienna, and in 1935, he went to London (still working for the *Daily News*). By this time, he was a frequent contributor to *The Nation*, *Esquire*, *Harpers*, the *Atlantic Monthly* and the *Saturday Evening Post*. It was in 1935 that he made his reputation with *Inside Europe*, "out of the conviction that Europe is the prisoner of three men." In 1939 his *Inside Asia* was published, and he began his first broadcast-

SPORTS BRAINS TRUST

SPORTS Brains Trust, which will answer soldiers' questions and wrangle over matters of tactics in football, boxing, racing, athletics, soccer, hockey, golf, or any game that New Zealanders play, is one of the latest ventures of the Army Education and Welfare Service. It has already begun its consultations with groups of soldiers at their posts, and interest grows rapidly.

The Listener went to see Sergeant W. McCarthy (formerly "Mac" of 2YD)



Spencer Digby photograph
SERGT. W. MCCARTHY
Another job for "Mac" of 2YD

who will be the Question-Master at these "in-the-flesh" quiz sessions, and found him sorting out huge piles of old recordings of sporting broadcasts, important races, and game commentaries of all kinds. In a room surrounded with pictures of boxers in aggressive attitudes or mountainous wrestlers wearing studded trophy belts, and shelves of Turf Registers and sports books of every kind, this walking compendium told us how he plans to keep the Sports Brains Trust interesting and lively.

Mark Nicholls, the famous All Black, and Jim Parker, both an All Black and a champion sprinter, will probably be permanent members of the Trust, and "Mac" hopes to co-opt such authorities as Johnny Summers, veteran boxer of the early years of this century, D. J. Guiney, a racing judge, L. A. Tracy, the runner, and so on. Additional experts will be taken on as questions for them make their presence necessary.

A minimum of time will be spent on questions of mere statistical fact—who was it that won the so-and-so in such-and-such a year?—idle questions that would waste the time of real experts. Instead it is intended to make the utmost use of their insight into the deeper problems of their sports.

Sgt. McCarthy even has some questions in mind that he wants to ask for himself, but we leave the experts in the dark in the meantime, since it is proposed that all questions should be answered without preparation.

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