

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS, ON AND OFF THE RECORD.

By *Swarf*

SOMETHING TO SING ABOUT

ONE night during the First World War Horatio Nicholls, composer, was standing near his anti-aircraft gun listening for the drone of Gothas. "There came to me a vision of a country road flooded with sunshine, of flowers in fair fields and of roses," he says. "The last vision brought to my memory a lyric about a rose, which my friend Morton David had sent me to set to music. With this memory came the melody as the shells began to crash. The moment the drone of the last Gocha had died away and our last shell had been fired, I drew out my notebook and hastily jotted down the bars of the refrain that was ringing through my head." That's how the song "The Heart of a Rose" was born.



Benno Moiseiwitsch

of La Boheme took place in Paris. Bjorling was invited to sing the principal tenor role. Following more triumphs he was engaged by the Metropolitan Opera—the youngest artist ever to receive a guest contract there. He made his debut at Covent Garden in 1930. His hobbies are billiards and movies, and he sails boats, loves fishing, reading and tennis. He is said still to be nervous before a performance.

Benno Moiseiwitsch was born at Odessa, Russia, in 1890. His education was begun at the Imperial Musical Academy at Odessa, under Professor D. Klomoff, and he won the Rubinstein Stipendiary Prize at the age of nine, later going to Vienna to study under Leschetizky. His debut was made at the Town Hall, Reading, England, in 1908, and he first appeared in London the following year. Moiseiwitsch has made several tours in the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand and the Far East. The story is told that once when he was at his home practising a Tchaikovsky concerto a maid who had been away, recognised the famous theme. "It is so nice to hear the master playing again," she remarked to Mrs. Moiseiwitsch. "I have always liked that tune, although I have never heard the words."

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TWO correspondents, Robert Walton (Auckland) and "Torch Fan" (Invercargill), ask for information about Sidney Torch. One also inquires about Frank Chacksfield.

Sidney Torch studied the piano as a child and got his first job in a theatre at £3 a week. In 1937 he was a pianist at the Broadway Cinema, Stratford, England. There was an organ there—and he would practise on it when

nobody was about. This brought him a reprimand but also a job as assistant organist when the talkies arrived and the orchestra went out. He has been described as having an "agreeable, nonsense-about-it air; but his apparent nonchalance and very real sense of humour mask the feelings of a sensitive composer." He claims that his best-known work is the tune to which Kenneth Horne and Richard Murdoch sang their doggerel in *Much-B-in-the-M*. His friends prefer to remind you that Sidney Torch composed "Shooting Star," which was judged to be the best piece of light music of its year. In a remarkably short time he became famous as a conductor, composer and arranger. He is a Londoner and on the right side of 50. He is six feet one, and married to a former BBC producer, Elizabeth Tyson.

Frank Chacksfield is a young English band leader who has become a great success in America with two of his recordings, "Limelight" (over 200,000 copies sold) and "Ebb Tide." Chacksfield started playing the organ when he was 14 in an English village church. These days he conducts BBC light music programmes, and composes music for films. His "Ebb Tide" opens with the cry of sea birds and the sound of waves washing on a beach.

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WHEN the duo pianists Ivor Moreton and Dave Kaye were in Wellington in 1949 they told me that their pianist colleague, Charlie Kunz, had been having serious trouble with his hands. Latest news of FOR CHARLIE Kunz, who has been a radio favourite for 20 years, is that he has been in hospital undergoing a complicated plastic operation. Treatment on his right hand has been entirely successful.



BBC photograph

THE BBC's popular parlour game "Twenty Questions" has now been running intermittently for six years, and the team and its irascible and sometimes explosive question-master are still firm favourites with listeners. The team of four (left to right in our photograph above) consists of Jack Train, Joy Adamson, Anona Winn, and Richard Dimbleby, and they face the question-master Gilbert Harding, with the producer of the programme and his secretary on either side of him. Most of the team were already famous broadcasters in their own right before the advent of "Twenty Questions." Train, as Colonel Chinstrap, Tommy Handley's unremittingly bibulous colleague, was a member of the cast of "ITMA." Joy Adamson was an experienced stage actress, Anona Winn a singer, and Dimbleby a war correspondent. Harding, too, is famous for his part in many other programmes. Finding the objects becomes progressively harder for the harassed producer, Mike Meehan, who, whenever he has thought of something he considers startlingly original, is faced by a secretary who says, "We've had that one!"

FOR "Baton" (Waimate): Cyril Stapleton, leader of the BBC Show Band, has been associated with several well-known orchestras. He played in Henry Hall's Band in the first programme to go on the air from Broadcasting House.

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MOUNTAINEERING, sketching and writing verse are among the hobbies of the BBC's Wynford Vaughan Thomas, who is one of the commentators on the Royal Tour. His favourite place for indulgence in his



pastimes is Skye, where, with a friend, he sleeps under canvas and cooks his own meals. Our photograph shows him with Queen Salote, of Tonga.

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