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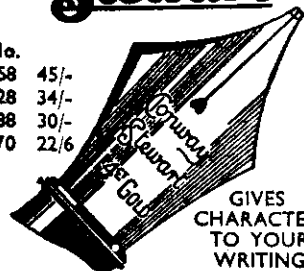
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**E. C. HARRISON** (Kingsland, Auckland) writes: "Would you kindly publish information concerning our old friend 'Officer' Crosby, and his photograph?"

Marshall Crosby, one of Australia's best known and loved stage and radio



**MARSHALL CROSBY**  
Stage, films and radio

characters, died last month. He had taken part in a great many ABC plays and his most recent radio role was as Josh Roberts in *Blue Hills*. Born in South Australia, Marshall Crosby started off as a telegraph operator, but after winning an Eisteddfod he turned to the stage and appeared in vaudeville as a baritone. He worked with all the main theatrical companies and his partnership with George Wallace, for *Fullers' Vaudeville Circuit*, lasted nearly 20 years. During that period he visited New Zealand many times. When the talkies came he took an announcing job with Station 2SM, and later appeared in several films; his first, *His Royal Highness*, with George Wallace in 1930, was followed by *Eureka Stockade*, *The Overlanders* and *Kangaroo*. Crosby was a past president of Australian Actors' Equity and vice-governor of the Actors' Benevolent Fund.

My last recollection of him was years ago when he stood with great dignity at the stage door of the old Opera House (now St. James' Theatre) in Christchurch, saying sonorously to a group of stage-struck adolescents: "Ah, I presume you wish to meet some of the actors."

★

**REGINALD DEAR** (Otorohanga) writes: "In your issue of January 11, Sergeant H. C. Stephens has given some information about David De Groot. Some of this information appears to be a little off the

**MORE ABOUT  
DE GROOT** beaten track, I myself joined the staff of the Piccadilly Hotel on

September 12, 1912. De Groot's orchestra was there then, and conducted by himself. It continued at the hotel until 1927, when the hotel was sold and came under new management. He did have other engagements with cinemas at the same time. He also helped to finance and produce in 1927 *The Gipsy Princess*, which had a short run owing to the very hot summer of that year. It seemed the thing to do at that time to dine at the Piccadilly Restaurant and

# Open Microphone

listen to De Groot's orchestra. He himself would always play a solo. When he got up to play, the noise and all conversation would cease, so that you could hear a pin drop. I am not a musician myself, but I always think he was the best violinist I have heard. His favourite was "The Swan," played solo on muted strings. To hear him play it was a joy never to be forgotten."

★

**THE Shepherd's Bush Empire**, a famous old London music hall, has closed its doors for the last time as a variety theatre, and has now become an additional studio for BBC television. This fine old theatre, a relic of Edwardian London,

**BBC TAKES OVER** has been altered to suit the latest entertainment medium. Shepherd's Bush Empire was built by Sir Oswald Stoll in 1903 as one of a chain of luxury music halls that inaugurated the then revolutionary policy of twice-nightly performances. It opened with an all-star variety programme headed by Fred Karno's company—with whom Charlie Chaplin appeared in his early days—and in its 50 years has given its patrons revue, musical comedy, drama, pantomime, circus and ice shows, silent films and talkies. Among famous artists who appeared on the Empire's stage were Dan Leno, Albert Chevalier, Lily Langtry, Wilkie Bard, Harry Tate, Marie Lloyd, George (now Sir George) Robey, Will Hay, Billy Bennett, Nervo and Knox, the Houston Sisters, Elsie and Doris Waters, Gracie Fields and Cicely Courtneidge. When the curtain went down on the last variety performance the manager, who had been there for 24 years, found it hard to finish his farewell speech.

★

"We up here have become very interested in the Winkler Quartet, and have most of the available records of this group," writes **WINKLER QUARTET** "J.G.H." (Lake Tekapo). "However, we have been able to find out almost nothing about it and would be pleased if you could."

Very little information is available here about this combination, save that

it is Swiss and that it specialises in presenting Swiss folk songs. Of these, the best known is "The Fisherman of Bodensee," also performed under the title "Willow, Will You Weep for Me?" The Winkler Quartet—there is also the Winkler Trio—is headed by Franz Winkler, and its presentations are along the lines of the recordings of Will Glahe.

★

**BASIL HENRIQUES**, social worker, who, with his wife, visited New Zealand in 1948, is one of the best-known men in London, particularly its East End, which was where Stephen Black went to interview him for *Personal Call*, a series of programmes broadcast in the BBC's *London Calling*



**BASIL HENRIQUES**  
He was ill at ease

*Asia* programme. Henriques, a magistrate who has been working in the East London Juvenile Court since 1926, is a Jew who was brought up in great luxury in the West End. He went to a public school and all his friends had the same happy and wealthy background. He was persuaded to visit Bermondsey, then one of London's worst slums. He felt ill at



**ELAINE MALBIN**, American lyric soprano, taking part in a BBC television programme. Miss Malbin, who is only 23, is of Russian origin and was born in Brooklyn. She has sung in public since she was 14, and is the youngest member of the New York City Opera Company. She made such a hit with her first television appearance in Britain that she returned a month later to play "Monica" in a television production of Gian-Carlo Menotti's opera "The Medium."



BBC photograph

