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NEWS OF BROADCASTERS ON AND OFF THE RECORD



Spencer Digby photograph

TO have your first lessons at the age of eight is for a pianist no unusual thing. For the Australian, William Davis (above), who was in New Zealand recently with *Thanks for the Memory*, it was the start of a training which turned him into a first-rate pianist—his talent even survived 14 years in

PIANIST the Air Force. "It was hard to get enough practice in playing during the war," he admits, "but I suppose the odd times I played for the boys in the islands kept me limbered up."

Mr. Davis, two of whose recorded programmes have been heard from several stations—others will be broadcast later—became a scholarship pupil of the Sydney teacher Alexander Sverjensky, when he was twenty. At that time, he recalls, he was a fellow student of

Richard Farrell. Before the war he was already doing broadcasting, concert and theatrical work, but that came to an end when he joined the Royal Australian Air Force in 1941. Mr. Davis served in the Pacific and after the war was engaged in aerial mapping. Later, as an intelligence officer in the R.A.F., he saw service in England and Germany.

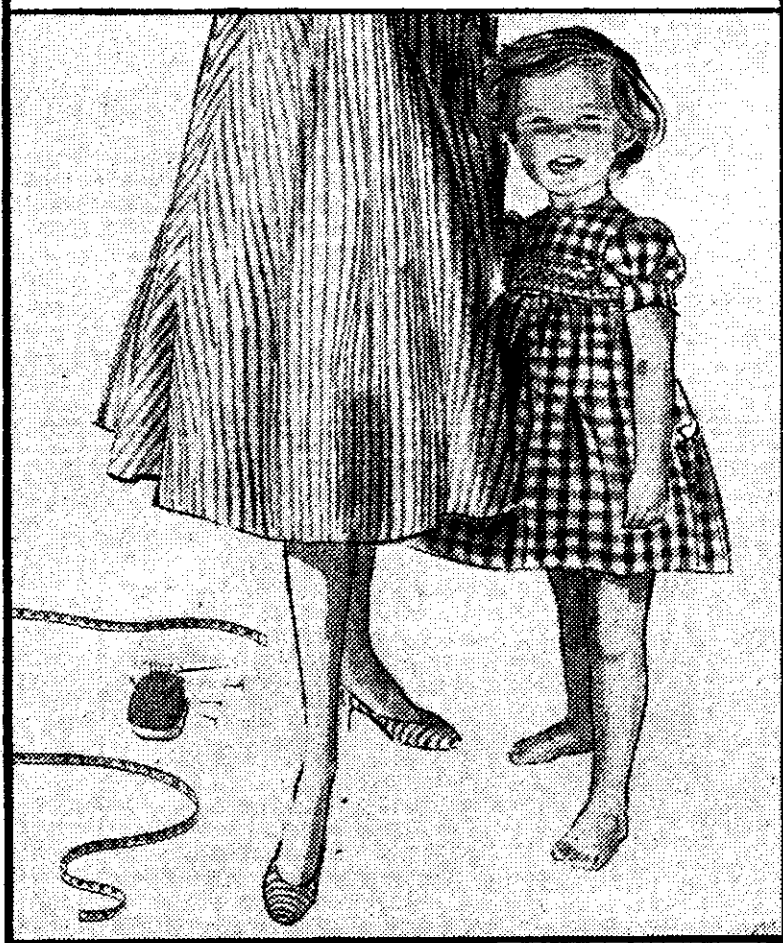
When, a year or two ago, Mr. Davis found "the call of music" becoming more insistent, he decided to leave the Air Force and became a civilian again in February last year, shortly before his tour of New Zealand with the Italian Opera group. Since then he has given all his time to music as an ABC accompanist and in various free-lance and theatrical activities. He has also played piano works under Sir Bernard Heinze and Alfred Hill. "I studied chamber music under Alfred Hill," he told us, "and my love of it, and any understanding I have of it, is due to his tuition. He is a wonderful man. I would say he was primarily responsible for the development of the string players in the Sydney Symphony Orchestra."

When we asked Mr. Davis how he was bearing up on this his second tour of New Zealand, he said he had seen the country only in winter, and added: "But I will say that the hospitality of the people makes up for the coldness of the climate."

★
A BULGARIAN radio writer recently walked into the BBC publicity department in London and asked if he could watch the Goons at work on the script for one of their shows, writes
(continued on next page)

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NZBS GARDEN EXPERTS—4

WHEN we asked Joseph Passmore, the garden expert heard from 4YA on Tuesday nights, whether he finds running a garden session keeps him "on the ball" horticulturally speaking, he replied without hesitation: "I certainly do—there is always something to find even in one's own garden." After six and a half years of answering listeners' questions, Mr. Passmore still insists that he's no more than a "home gardener." "This has been a life-long hobby," he says. "We garden for pleasure only." His garden is home size, too—a quarter acre. All this no doubt helps Mr. Passmore to see things from the home gardener's point of view, though the impressive number of new introductions he is able to try out even in the restricted space he has shows that he is no ordinary gardener. Plants he will be trying out this season were sent from England, where he has visited a number of nurseries. And, of course, for all his modesty he has the qualifications of an expert—including a Fellowship of the Royal New Zealand Institute of Horticulture—and he has won many gardening awards.

Mr. Passmore has no trouble answering listeners' questions from Dunedin or other parts of the country. "I don't always know the answer," he says, "but I have an excellent library and many



JOSEPH PASSMORE

good gardening friends, and I keep myself up-to-date by reading New Zealand and overseas gardening literature." However, people who want plants identified still often send incomplete information—a point which Mr. Passmore mentioned in a note about him on this page last year. Questions, he thinks, should all be sent through 4YA, not asked in the street or by telephone. Inquirers who make a more direct approach are all the harder to deal with since horticulture is not Mr. Passmore's full-time work.