

NEWS OF BROADCASTERS, ON AND OFF THE RECORD,

By *Swarf*

he had been used for Nazi experiments and had been deliberately infected with T.B.

In the December, 1950, issue of the magazine *Musical America* there appeared a review of the film *The Joseph Schmidt Story*. The following extract may be of interest: "*The Joseph Schmidt Story* based somewhat loosely on the life of the diminutive tenor, is interesting chiefly from a historical standpoint. The film, made by Richard Oswald in Venice in 1933, was banned by the Nazis after a year's run, because both Schmidt and Oswald were Jews, and the negative and all prints but one were destroyed. This one was saved by a Gestapo officer, Captain Heinz Zimmermann, whose servant stole it and was captured at the Swiss border when he tried to escape. Years later, the United States Army of Occupation recovered the film and returned it to Oswald, who brought it to Hollywood. Schmidt, persecuted through Germany and France, died in a Swiss internment camp.

"According to several accounts," says "Lisetta," "he had a very engaging and generous personality, and according to his friend was an ideal person, and remained quite unspoiled by his success. Certainly he was very kind indeed to an unknown schoolgirl in far-away New Zealand."

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THE late James Agate said of Peter Ustinov that he is "probably the greatest master of stagecraft now writing in Britain." Ustinov has written plays and films. Offstage he is noted as a mimic, and can turn with ease from

an aspiring American MASTER OF STAGECRAFT seeker after culture to a monosyllabic Russian, a Lithuanian refugee, a Scandinavian scene-shifter, or "my uncle, the Arab." All this he puts down to what he calls his "mongrel blood." He feels very strongly that this is just what is needed to break down artificial barriers of frontier throughout the world, and he thinks that ardent



BBC photograph

PETER USTINOV
Pioneer of a race

nationalistic patriotism has outlived its usefulness. A mongrel race, he says, will eventually be the salvation of Europe. Putting forward his claim to be one of its first members, he mentions his Russian grandfather giving up the life of a country gentleman and cavalry officer, becoming a Protestant, adopting the nationality of Wurtemberg and settling down via Italy, in Jaffa after marrying a German girl. His maternal grandfather, son of a Venetian mother, was court architect to the Czar. His grandmother ran a caviar fishery and "found time to give birth to eight children between board meetings." His mother, a painter, has a French name. "With such a riotous background," he asks, "how could I ever explain to the inquisitive from what race I come and in what language I think?" His own place of birth was London, and his wife is Irish. Station 2YA's *International Showtime* at 7.30 p.m. on Wednesday, July 29, will present, among other people, Peter Ustinov.

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THIS Saturday, June 27, at 9.15 p.m., listeners to *Lookout: A New Zealand Commentary on International Affairs* (all YA and YZ stations) will hear Fergus Murray, of Christchurch.

Mr. Murray, an old LOOKOUT MAN boy, of Christchurch Boys' High School, was Assistant Master at St. An-



FERGUS MURRAY
International outlook

drew's College from 1924 to 1928, and in 1929 he went on an extensive tour of Britain and Europe, making a particular study of France. In 1930 he became Assistant Master at Christchurch Boys' High School, and for the last four years he has been Senior History Master. I'm told that off duty he likes nothing better than puffing his pipe and concrete-mixing. He says that the complete rest from thinking when making a six, two and one mix appeals to him enormously.

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LISTENERS who like choral music should tune to 2XN Nelson on Saturday, July 4, at 8.0 p.m., for the Third Annual Provincial Choirs' Festival organised in Nelson by the Regional Council of Adult Education, Victoria University College. The festival was conceived as a means of giving small choirs an oppor-



RALPH LILLY

tunity to sing in massed and part items which they could not attempt with their small numbers. Some of the choirs are nearly 200 miles apart, but unanimity has been secured by the help of voluntary instructors who have visited them all. There is no spirit of competition among these choirs; it is simply the joy of singing that brings them together. Choirs taking part are: Richmond Musical Society, Nelson College Evening School, Nelson Male Voice Choir, Nelson Singers, Motueka Women's Institute, Motueka District High School, and choirs from Collingwood, Takaka, Ngatimoti, The Hills, Upper Moutere and Brightwater. Five conductors and five accompanists take part, and for items by the massed choirs the School of Music organ will be used. As July 4 is the date of the Festival, "Reuben Ranzo," from *Fantasia on American Folk Songs*, by Richard Donovan, has been included in the programme. The director is Ralph Lilly, of Nelson, and the annotations are by Myfanwy Cook, a well-known broadcaster, and the wife of W. C. Cook, Nelson Tutor in Adult Education. Mr. Cook, who was business manager for the last two festivals, is on leave with the Coronation Contingent.

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RADIO actors who imitate birds, railway trains and perhaps half a dozen film stars are often described as "versatile." Bransby Williams, now 82 years old, who recently made a return to the

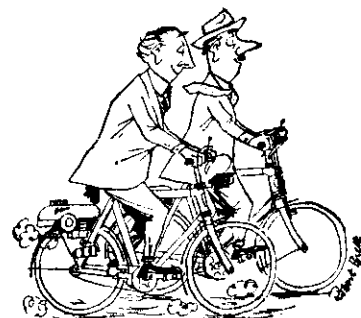
BRANSBY WILLIAMS thought nothing of impersonating 35 different characters in a one-man, show lasting two hours, and rounding off with impromptu impressions of popular stars named by the audience. Williams, who visited New Zealand in the 1920's as headliner in a Celebrity Vaudeville Company, has recently recovered from an illness, and the effects of what he calls a "horrible winter." I can remember him freezing on the stage of the Theatre Royal while playing a season during a Christchurch winter, and the solicitude of his wife who stood in the wings with his heavy winter overcoat at the ready. Bransby Williams is still active. He paints water colours and has written a play and his autobiography. Older theatre-goers may recall his monologue, "A Cowboy's Description of Hamlet," which made a great hit when he recited it during a tour of the United States 30 years ago.

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"BLUE TANGO" "I'M YOURS"
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