

# PERSONALITIES

## of the week

### "MUSICAL MEASLES"

IT is difficult when listening to the records of Horowitz to realise he is not some Herculean giant of a fellow, but a very slim young man of 30. His manner is quiet and retiring, though his face reveals a lively energy and enthusiasm. It is not until he sits down at the piano and begins to perform astonishing feats that you are soon in hearty agreement with the dictum of Rachmaninoff, who said: "Until I heard Horowitz I did not realise the possibilities of the piano." He is still expanding and developing, succumbing to attacks of what Albert Coates calls "musical measles"; meaning that he indulges in spasms of hero-worship during which he becomes particularly fond of the works of a particular composer.

### A KITE-FLYER

EDWARD O'HENRY was once a store boy in a mineral water factory. Now he can afford his own shamrock-stamped notepaper. He has a strange hobby, kite-flying. His other

pastimes are tennis, travelling and playing every kind of organ he can find. If he comes to New Zealand he will find some fearful and wonderful instruments between Auckland and Dunedin, whose respective town halls, by the way, house modern instruments of much tonal beauty and considerable grandeur. One church organ at least in the northern city has a history—it was once at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, but even the late Queen Victoria would not have recognised it when, on a warm Sunday morning, the old organist, becoming drowsy, fell forward on the keyboard during the sermon.

### CHANGE OF INSTRUMENTS

NOT so very many years ago a little Hungarian child appeared as an infant prodigy at a charity concert given at Budapest. She was aged six, and had gained extraordinary facility as a pianist, whilst her sister was a budding violinist. Two years later the elder sister had so far progressed that it was decided she should study with a famous master. When this master happened by chance to catch sight of the little pianist's hands he was struck by their extraordinary shape, and immediately stated that she ought to be taught the violin. He was so emphatic that it was agreed that the elder sister should give her one month's lessons as an experiment. The results were quite startling. The young prodigy's name was Yelly d'Aranyi.

### SMILING IRISH EYES

BEHIND the smiling Irish-blue eyes of Walton O'Donnell is the serious intent of the thoughtful musician, and he has a clear-cut conception of his position in the musical scheme of things as leader of the B.B.C. Military Band: "I regard myself," he says, "as a bridge between the public which does not like symphonic music and the public which does. I use the instrument the former enjoys—the military band—to present, in an attractive and easily digestible form, the form of music hitherto the monopoly of the educated music-lover. The result has been highly gratifying. Millions of people are able to appreciate and enjoy symphony concerts, having been imperceptibly trained by the military band, who would have refused even to listen to them ten years ago. I do not play military band music. I play military band arrangements of orchestral music."

### EVELYN'S AMBITION

EVELYN SCOTNEY, the brilliant Australian soprano, had more ambition when young to make gramo-

phone records than to do concert singing. Her beginning was most romantic. Living hundreds of miles away from the cities, in the Australian bush, the only amusement was the gramophone. Miss Scotney says: "At night, after the 'jackeroos' (young boundary riders) returned to the camp, we would sit by the big camp fires with the gorgeous scent of the burning gums, and play records for hours. We had parcels of records sent to us from the city, which took weeks, often months, to arrive. Sometimes they were lost altogether if the pack horses were drowned in the floods, and their riders had to swim for their lives. On such occasions we used to form ourselves into a concert party, and when I sang they used to say that one day they would be listening to me on the records."

### BUSINESS-LIKE PAPA

MARIO DE PIETRO, mandoline player, was born in Naples, though he has lived in England for the last fourteen years, and is now a naturalised Englishman. At the age of seven he began to study the violin, but Signor de Pietro, senior, being a well-known manufacturer of "fretted" instruments, persuaded his son to transfer his gifts to the mandoline. This was no doubt good for the family business. He was a famous virtuoso of the mandolin at the age of nine, and acclaimed by the Italian Press following his first concert. He began a successful career on the English music-hall stage, following upon orthodox recitals at such places as the Wigmorc Hall. He now plays the tenor banjo also, and has his own tango band at the New Princes Restaurant.

### "FRAE EDINBORO' TOON"

ROY HENDERSON, baritone, who hails from Edinburgh, tells a rather good story against himself of singing at a choral concert after which he felt particularly pleased with his own performance. After the concert the conductor came up to him and Mr. Henderson expected the usual thanks and congratulations: "What do you think of our choir?" asked the conductor. "Splendid," replied the singer. "It is, isn't it!" the conductor exclaimed, "if you had croaked out in your solos, we had four basses ready to take over from you." On another occasion he attended a service in a strange church. After the service the organist's wife, who had been sitting behind him, pressed him to join the choir. When he said he had never sung in a church choir before she said she was sure she could persuade her husband to overlook the fact.

## WHAT NAME, PLEASE?

THE names given below are those of men and women who are featured in the coming programmes from the New Zealand national stations or of radio performers who have been featured in the news during the week. On these pages are paragraphs relating to the activities of the persons mentioned in this column.

EVELYN SCOTNEY, in recordings from 1YA on Monday, December 31.

WALTER O'DONNELL, in special B.B.C. recordings from 2YA on Friday, January 4.

YELLY D'ARANYI, in recordings from 3YA on New Year's Day.

VLADIMIR HOROWITZ, in recordings from 3YA on Thursday, January 3.

MARIO DE PIETRO, in recordings from 4YA on Monday, December 31.

EDWARD O'HENRY, in recordings from 4YA on Wednesday, January 2.

ROY HENDERSON, in recordings from 3YA on Friday, January 4.