

PERSONALITIES

of the week

A MUSICAL CREDO.

FRED HARTLEY'S views on playing dance tunes "straight" are interesting. He says: "My policy is that I always try to select the most attractive tunes I can find. If they happen to be dance tunes, that does not affect me one way or the other. Some of the popular dance numbers, provided their appeal is in the tune and not in the rhythm, are much preferable to a great deal of the conventional "tea-time" music. I believe that I was one of the first to play dance tunes with a "straight" combination, and I was certainly the first to borrow the dance bands' idea of utilising a vocal chorus. In this way I have modernised the old-fashioned quintet and revived it.

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.

ERNST VON DOHNANYI, in recorded pianoforte items from 1YA, Tuesday, January 8.

MAJOR GEORGE MILLER, conducting the Band of H.M. Grenadier Guards in recordings, 2YA, Friday, January 11.

APOLLO GRANFORTE, famous operatic baritone, from 2YA, Sunday, January 13.

PRO ARTE QUARTET, during the chamber music programme from 3YA on Monday, January 7.

FRITZ KRIESLER, world-famous violinist, in recorded solos from 4YA, January 7 and 9, and from 1YA, January 8.

FRED HARTLEY, conducting recorded orchestral numbers from 1YA on Wednesday, January 9, and from 2YA on Saturday, January 12.

ALFRED PICCAVER, famous recording tenor, in solos from 1YA, Sunday, January 13.

TEETOTALLER

ALFRED PICCAVER, for all his foreign sounding name, is an Englishman born, being a native of Lincolnshire, where his family has been known for generations. It is believed that his is the only family of that name in England. He is 46, and for nearly 20 years he was leading tenor in the Vienna State Opera, resigning in 1931. He is a lifelong teetotaler and non-smoker, and except for occasional brief visits to London he has done all his singing abroad. He is anxious to see the world and may some day look in on us here in New Zealand. Meanwhile we hear his splendid records over the radio.

WITH HUMOUR

ERNST VON DOHNANYI was only 20 years old when he made his first appearance as a concert pianist, stepping at once into the very front rank of exponents. A year later, having won laurels in all the principal music centres of Germany and Austria-Hungary, he appeared with no less success in London, and in 1899 in the United States. As a composer he is known by his fresh and attractive music for his own instrument. Although making comparatively little use of actual folk tunes, most of his music is strongly characteristic of his native Hungary; it is all distinguished not only by very able craftsmanship but by a genuine gift of invention, flavoured with a happy sense of laughter. Dohnanyi's music has been steadily gaining wider recognition for a good many years.

ONCE A SHOEMAKER

APOLLO GRANFORTE is one of the most brilliant operatic baritones of the day. He is a native of Italy, but when he was 18 years of age he became dissatisfied and emigrated to South America. Here he worked with his brother as a shoemaker, but he was aided by a rich and friendly stranger who had heard him singing the "canzone" of his native land. Granforte studied hard and was always excessively critical of his own singing. After the war was over he resumed his singing studies, and he has sung with great success throughout Italy. His tour with the brilliant company of stars which the late Dame Nellie Melba organised in Australia enhanced his already enviable reputation. No one who met him personally will ever forget his ready friendliness and desire to please.

A VERSATILE VIRTUOSO

HOW much Kreisler has done to enrich the repertoire of the modern solo violinist must long ago have been abundantly clear to listeners from the

frequency with which his name appears as composer or arranger of violin pieces. His career has been an astonishing one. At seven he made his first concert appearance, the same year he entered the Vienna Conservatoire when only half the minimum age fixed for admission. At 10 he was the youngest ever to win the gold medal for violin playing. Two years later he walked off with the first Prix de Rome of the Paris Conservatoire against 40 adult competitors. After successful concert tours he gave up music for a time, studying medicine and painting, and in the end he became a cavalry officer. In fact, Kreisler is one of those fortunate ones who would make a success of almost anything he undertook.

PRIDE OF BRUSSELS

BRUSSELS is very rightly proud of that fine team of artists, the Pro Arte String Quartet, each a distinguished solo player and teacher of his instrument. The personnel is: Alphonse Onnou, violin, Laurent Halleux, violin, Germain Prevost, viola, and Marcel Maas, cello. It has remained unchanged for some years, and constant rehearsal and performance together has made this one of the world's quartets whose complete sympathy of ideals and understanding of one another produces ensemble playing as nearly perfect as this generation has heard. Their repertoire includes practically all the best music which has ever been composed for the string quartet, though for some years they have devoted much of their time and gifts to the propagation of the newest music.

CHOIRBOY—CONDUCTOR

MAJOR GEORGE MILLER, musical director of H.M. Grenadier Guards Band, began his musical career as a chorister at St. George's Chapel, Windsor, at the age of eight. He is the fourth generation of his family to serve in the army, who have served under six British Sovereigns, from George the Third to George the Fifth. He soon became boy soloist, singing at all the Royal marriages and other State functions for seven years. So excellent and sweet was his voice that he was chosen to sing Mendelssohn's "I Waited for the Lord" with Madame Albani. When his voice broke young George was sent to Germany for three years for music study. Having made up his mind to follow in the steps of his forebears and become a bandmaster, he enlisted in the Sixtieth Rifles. He has conducted the bands of the Thirty-second Regiment, Royal Artillery and the First Life Guards.