

PERSONALITIES

of the week

STRENUOUS FOR SZIGETI

FOR the average novelist a three months' lecture tour in America is an event; he will spend years recuperating from it and talking about it. But musicians are all over the world all the time. Joseph Szigeti on his last long tour swore he would never do again what he had to do in New Zealand for example. His rushing round was tremendously strenuous as his initial broadcast through the Board's station started many centres clamouring for recitals. On his way home during his 55 minutes' stay at Honolulu he gave a recital. At Tokio he broadcast the first violin recital given from the new model studio. He found Shanghai full of refugees and menaced with an epidemic. In Peiping he had to rehearse in the Grand Hotel kitchen and he just missed an earthquake at Los Angeles.

MEACHERN STORIES

MALCOLM McEACHERN, basso, or "Mr. Flotsam" of the prosperous concert known as "Flotsam and Jetsam," is a real tale spinner. Here are a few:—It is said that even the highest executives at the B.B.C. get exasperated with each other at times. Two of them were on inspection patrol recent-

ly. One said: "Is that a cigarette butt on the floor there?" The other said: "It is, smoke it if you like; I won't look." A radio star, seeing rows of fresh cod lying on a fishmonger's slab, their eyes glassy and their mouths wide open, exclaimed—"Heavens! that reminds me. I've got to broadcast at St. George's Hall!" Here's the American version of "Pop Goes the Weasel": "Half a pound of radio rice, no matter what the cost be; mix it up and make it nice. Bing goes the Crosby!"

A GREAT "NORMA"

BORN of Italian parents who had emigrated to America, Rosa Ponselle first won fame as a vaudeville artist, but before she was twenty-two she had made her operatic debut in Verdi's "The Force of Destiny," in which she appeared with Caruso. Her success was instantaneous, and since then her singing of such roles as "La Gioconda," "Norma," and "Aida," has been the outstanding sensation of the Metropolitan Opera House, New York. She has a voice of exceptionally wide range and of exquisite warmth. Her technique is phenomenal, and she is the first singer since Lillie Lehmann to cope successfully with the tremendous difficulties of the title role in Bellini's "Norma." This opera is laid in ancient Britain in Druidic times.

"MARVELLOUS MYRA"

FEW artists, British or European, could carry off the honours of an evening devoted to classical music with better right and with more distinction than the London-born pianist, Myra Hess. Making her debut at Queen's Hall under Sir Thomas Beecham in 1907, from that moment it was recognised that a very fine pianist, though as yet little more than a girl, had definitely arrived. The early critics were right, she quickly took her place as a master pianist both in England and abroad—particularly in America where she is sure of a great welcome every time she appears. Myra Hess is a pupil of the renowned Tobias Matthay, who has more really brilliant pianists to his credit than any other living teacher at Home or elsewhere.

THE WORLD'S BEST

ASKED to name the two quartets which, more than any others, have contributed to the modern revival of interest in chamber-music, one would unhesitatingly pick out the Flonzaley and the Lener. The first-named alas, is now disbanded. At its institution, the four players vowed never to appear as soloists nor to have any truck with performances other than those of the Flonzaley Quartet itself. Its existence was made possible, in this utilitarian world, by the patronage of Edouard de Coppet. The quartet's name is taken from its generous patron's Swiss chalet

on Lake Geneva. Founded in 1903, the quartet devoted its entire talents and energies for no less than a quarter of a century to the perfection of playing of chamber music.

UP FROM NOTHING

ONE little nigger boy, left all alone, the bailiffs took the tent he slept in, and then there was none." This was the fate of a juvenile dancer in America who danced for next to nothing in a circus and woke one morning to find the tent that housed him had been borne away by the broker's men. Riding on the train buffers four hundred miles, he at long last dropped off the train to meet in a wayside saloon one who was to be his partner in vaudeville in after life. Scott conspired with the barman, Whalley, and the result was a descent upon New York (per rail truck without paying, of course). The fame they sought in America came not, but in Portsmouth, England, the great day dawned when their value was really discerned and their name was made.

A YOUNG MAESTRO

BARELY emerged from his child prodigy days, Yehudi Menuhin is already considered one of the foremost violinists of our time. At two his preference for the violin became manifest, at 3 he was given a toy violin which he smashed because it didn't sound right and at 4 he began lessons on a real violin under Louis Persinger. At 7 he appeared in his first important concert with the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. A year later he played at the Metropolitan Opera House, and, following that event, was taken abroad by his parents for further study in Paris with the celebrated Roumanian violinist Enesco. Upon his return he set the musical world agog by his playing of the Beethoven violin concerts with the New York Symphony Orchestra. In the years that followed Yehudi became the toast of the musical world. He is now 18.

WE are right because we are successful.—*Dr. Goebbels.*

I OFTEN wonder whether broadcasting... and the motor-car have really been good things.—*The Bishop of Chelmsford.*

I LIKE to see greyhounds racing, and, particularly leaping over hurdles, but going for a long walk with a greyhound seems to me an experience as little to be sought after as going for a long walk with the club bore.—*Mr. Robert Lynd.*

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.

JOSEF SZIGETI, in recorded violin solos from 3YA on Friday, January 25.

MALCOLM McEACHERN, bass soloist, in recordings from 3YA, Wednesday, January 23.

ROSA PONSELLE, recording soprano, from 2YA, Sunday, January 27.

MYRA HESS, famous English pianist, from 2YA on Sunday, January 27.

FLONZALEY QUARTET, in recorded chamber music numbers from 4YA on Friday, January 25.

SCOTT AND WHALLEY, in recorded comedy items, 4YA, Saturday, January 26.

YEHUDI MENUHIN, violin prodigy, in recordings from 1YX, Sunday, January 20.