

PERSONALITIES

CARO MIO "BEN"

THE many successes of Ben Davies, the veteran Welsh tenor, have never affected the simple kindness of his good heart, and many a younger artist has cause to remember his encouragement and help. He has a jovial sense of humour, too, and a rich fund of good stories, some of them at his own expense. And one may chaff him even about his singing. Meeting him one day in the train, as he returned from

of the week

a game of golf with William Mollison, the actor, a friend asked him how the game had gone. Not very well it seemed, and he chuckled as he replied: "It's a good job Ben Davies can sing better than he can play golf." This led the tenor to recount many jests against himself. It is no wonder that to countless friends in many lands he is affectionately known by a little pun on the name of Giordano's song, as "Caro Mio Ben."

EAST IN MUSIC

WHEN a lad of eleven plays his first pianoforte sonata in public, the wise old maids of the village decide that he will become either a conceited, disolute and decadent artist within a decade or two or else carry his name to fame. So they sniff or clap accordingly. The clappers won in the case of Albert Ketelbey, and sure enough he has written some of the most widely-known descriptive music in recent years. How often in the days of silent pictures was there an oriental scene without the pianist drumming out either "In a Persian Market" or "In a Chinese Temple Garden"? The pictures these two compositions conjure up are clean-cut and easy to interpret, so people with the smallest amount of music in their make-up are able to enjoy these numbers. Along with "In a Monastery Garden" they have become decidedly hackneyed, of course, but even now there is always somebody ready to listen to them. His less known compositions are perhaps his best.

HARPING JAZZ

DESCRIBED by Sir Frederic H. Cowen, in his comic musical dictionary as "an instrument that is always breaking its upper strings at most inopportune moments with a noise like the report of a pistol," the harp has been Mario Lorenzi's chosen instrument since he was four. He says that he was the first harpist to play jazz on this most graceful instrument of the "Higher Spheres." That was ten years ago, when broadcasting discovered him doing harp solos with Jay Whidden's band. He has broadcast regularly ever since, and receives hundreds of letters from listeners. "Some of them ask me if I play the harp with my finger nails or with something on the end of my fingers," he says, "while others want to know if I play from music or by ear. I never know whether to take that query as a compliment or not."

EYELASH CATCH

WILHELM BACKHAUS, the famous pianist, relates an amusing experience he had some years ago. He had been giving a recital at the Albert Hall, and had allowed himself only just enough time to get from there to the station to catch the boat train for Cologne, where he was playing the next

day. "But," he said, "on coming out of the Albert Hall, there was a procession of 10,000 strong, which formed such a dense barrier that it was impossible for my cab to get through. Luckily, a policeman came to the rescue and elbowed a way through for me, and by breaking the speed limit, I just managed to catch the train by an eyelash, as it was moving out of the station. But although I caught the train, my luggage did not, and I arrived in Cologne a bare hour before the concert started, with only the clothes I stood up in. This was a terrible predicament, for on the Continent it would be an unfor-givable thing to appear on the platform in anything but strict evening attire. However, I got to the concert hall and explained the situation, and one of the directors offered, most nobly, to lend me his clothes. I quickly got into the proffered trousers, but alas! the coat would not fit anywhere! Suddenly a bright idea struck the director, and he ordered all the orchestral players to walk past me and offer their coats for inspection. Never could I have imagined that I was so difficult to fit, for I tried on one after the other, with most ludicrous results. However, the very last coat available was not too hopeless, so the situation was saved."

JOHN SEES VISIONS

JOHN MOREL after broadcasting, once wrote: "As I sang there in the studio I visualised the wide, round world, and with a half-conscious prayer sent my voice up and out and away through those walls opposite me, ever on and on. . . then came my 'big audience' chance at the 'Prom.' The magnetic draw from the hearts of those genuine music-lovers! As they cheered and called 'Morel, Morel!' my heart went out and was thumping ecstatically somewhere in front of my eyes. . . After that night things poured in on me and my 'phone was going all day long. . . I sang at an International Celebrity Concert. . . I had five months in 'The Damask Rose.' At my next broadcast there will be the same prayer and the same yearning, and I shall see the great world stretching before me to encompass with my voice—a great privilege and a great miracle."

HIKING SONGSTERS

ALICE MOXON and Stuart Robertson, those charming singers, are great walkers. Alice is Yorkshire born (hailing from Bradford), and though she has lived for twelve years in London, she still doesn't feel at home there. When she and Stuart were first married they always took walking tours, for their holidays and liked nothing better. They also did a large number of walks in Buckinghamshire and Hertfordshire, and Alice felt there, if not as much at home as on her beloved moors and heights, that at least the

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.

PROFESSOR ALGIE, in a talk on the Versailles Treaty from IYA on Thursday, January 31.

HARRY DAVIDSON, in numbers with the Commodore Grand Orchestra from IYA on Thursday, January 31.

JOHN MOREL, in recordings from 2YA on Thursday, January 31.

MARIO LORENZI, in recordings from 3YA on Saturday, February 2.

GREGORY IVANOFF, in violin solos from 4YA on Tuesday, January 29.

YVONNE ARNAUD, in recordings on the piano from IYA on Monday, January 28.

ALBERT W. KETELBEY'S Concert Orchestra in recordings from IYA on Tuesday, January 29.

BEN DAVIES, in recordings from IYA on Monday, January 28.

WILHELM BACKHAUS, in recordings from 3YA on Friday, February 1.

LESLIE HUTCHINSON, in recordings from 4YA on Tuesday, January 29.

STUART ROBERTSON, in recordings from IYA on Friday, February 1, and Saturday, February 2.