

# PERSONALITIES

## of the week

### EX-PRISON CAMP.

THE three dozen men of the Don Cossack Russian Male Choir and their leader, Serge Jaroff, are former officers of the Russian Imperial Army. Their history as a singing unit dates back to the prison camp of Tschenlengir, near Constantinople, where they were sent with the rest of the White Army after the defeat of General Wrangel. With their transport to Sofia, Bulgaria, they formed for a time the choir in the Russian Orthodox Church. The Don Cossacks made their concert debut in Vienna in 1923. Since then they have sung nearly three thousand concerts in all parts of the world. The Don Cossacks travel on "Nansen Passes," issued by the League of Nations to men without a country. Their performances, under their diminutive leader, are unforgettable to New Zealanders.

### BACH SPECIALIST.

GEORGE THALBEN BALL, the present organist of the Temple Church, London, was born in Sydney, New South Wales, on June 18, 1896. He is a brilliant pianist as well as an organist of distinction. He brought a new fame to the old church through his excellent recordings of the boy soprano, Ernest Lough, and the Temple Church Choir. Mr. Ball specialises in

Bach, and he continued for a time the Bach recitals at St. Ann's, Soho, after the death of Dr. E. H. Thorne. He has been president of the London Society of Organists, a member of the council, and examiner for the Royal College of Organists, as well as examiner for the Associated Board, and a professor at the Royal College of Music, London. He has earned additional fame as a B.B.C. broadcasting organist.

### AN IRISH JONES.

FEW light music recordings are more generally popular than those of Tom Jones and the Grand Hotel Orchestra, Eastbourne. As a violinist, Tom Jones has had a brilliant career, following an equally brilliant student-ship. He was born in Birmingham in 1902, and his parents are Irish, not

being practically turned down, the committee received an ultimatum from Sir Henry, who won.

### VIOLINIST FACTORIES.

EVERY year the great violinist factories of Europe, such as the Auer factory or the Seviak factory, turned out at least one perfect specimen. He—or very occasionally she—is always faultless. Double-stopping to him is as simple as ABC, his harmonics are as clear as the open string, his scale passages run as easily and swiftly as on a pianola, his bowing arm and wrist have all the suppleness of a willow. Preferably his first name ends in —cha or —scha, but this is not essential. Such an one is Toscha Seidel, and not the least admirable of these comets to burst into the musical atmosphere after the war. Born in Odessa thirty-five years ago Seidel, for four years a pupil under the late Professor Leopold Auer, reaches perfection in technique, has excellent tone and his records are a joy to hear.

### BRICKS AND BACH

IN an atmosphere of suspense created by the intermittent battering of a rioting mob on the Auckland Town Hall doors, and the cheering and hooting from the adjoining main hall, Gordon Bryan, the brilliant English pianist once enthralled a large audience on a memorable occasion in 1932 in the Auckland Town Hall Concert Chamber. There cannot be many pianists who have ever given a recital under those extremely trying conditions. The programme was to have opened with three chorale preludes by Bach, but showers of bricks all round the hall decided the soloist to venture the more robust "Joyous" Sonata of Haydn. The audience, on venturing forth after the recital, faced a howling mob and no one will ever forget their experience.

### A LIVING MASTER.

THE theorists who maintain that it is bad for an artist to be healthy and to be assured of food and shelter must find Glazounov difficult to account for. He is one of the comparatively few composers who have never had to struggle either for a livelihood or for recognition. To him has befallen a rare experience; during his life time he has become a historical figure a part of musical history, and has been numbered among the musical saints. It must not be inferred from this that he is obsolete and belongs entirely to the past. No; his music has simply been canonized and permanently added to the musical history of Russia, and perhaps of the world. He still lives, a kind of Russian Brahms, gifted with the technique of composition, with a titanic mastery which seems to have been born with him.

## 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.

TOSCA SEIDEL, violinist, in records from 1YA, Sunday, March 17.

G. THALBEN BALL, organist, from 2YA, Sunday, March 17 and 1YA, Tuesday, March 19.

HORACE STEVENS, bass, from 3YA, Sunday, March 17.

TOM JONES, dance band leader from 3YA, FRIDAY, March 22.

DON COSSACKS MALE CHOIR, from 3YA, Saturday, March 23.

GORDON BRYAN, pianist, from 2FC, Thursday, March 21.

ALEXANDER GLAZOUNOV, Composer and conductor, from 2YA, Thursday, March 21.



Welsh. His grandfather had such a large family that they were able to form a complete orchestra amongst themselves, and enjoyed quite a reputation in the Midlands. His father made him learn the violin, and took the slipper to him until he practised regularly. He is a bad golfer (self-confessed), but a good swimmer. He says he prefers drawing in pencil to playing the violin (as far as practising goes, at any rate). Most listeners prefer his fiddling.

### FINEST "ELIJAH."

RECOGNISED as the finest "Elijah" now before the public, and an incomparable "Wotan" in Wagner's "Valkyrie," Horace Stevens, native of Windsor, Melbourne, joined All Saints' Church choir, East St. Kilda, when he was seven. He sang in the choir of St. Paul's Cathedral, Melbourne, as boy soloist for six years, and at 21, was appointed lay clerk. For many years he was a prominent dentist and lecturer, and in the field of sport he was a champion sculler and oarsman. After war service Mr. Stevens studied under Sir Henry Wood, and sang the part of Elijah at Manchester under that conductor. Sir Henry's nomination of Mr. Stevens for the title role of the oratorio