

PERSONALITIES

of the week

WANDA THE WAG

WANDA LANDOWSKA is not only one of the greatest players the harpsichord has ever had—she is accepted as an authority on all its history and tradition, is a musicologist and specialist in the literature, and has an unquenchable humour. She tells humorous stories of her experiences in an inimitable manner, one of which concerns a concert at which she played works of, consummate beauty by Bach, Handel, Purcell and Frescobaldi, when a brave provincial composer who afterwards sent her his compositions—and what compositions!—went up to congratulate her. He seemed sincerely moved. "How beautiful it is, how beautiful it is," he repeated. "Wouldn't you really say, Madam, that those men had foreseen us?" Madame's reply is not on record.

TICKET-TAKER TO STAR

ALEXANDER KIPNIS, baritone, has had a career widely different from that of the ordinary artist. Born in dire poverty in Russia, it was not until the age of 16 that he ever saw or heard a piano. And then music

took possession of his soul. After some time he obtained employment with a small operatic company, but apparently in any capacity other than that of singer—for he was in turn a ticket-taker, a wardrobe man, wig man and actor. It was long before the management entrusted him with a singing part. Later he joined the conservatoire in Warsaw and thence passed on to Berlin to study under Grenchbach for four years. On the outbreak of war Kipnis was arrested, but he has since become a great favourite with Berlin audiences lar.

ACTOR-COMPOSER.

IT is a great thrill to find **Nat. D. Ayer**, the composer, on the records in some of his successes of the last twenty-one years. Nat. originally came into prominence by his associa-

Morris and Swinburne, also poems, plays, essays, etc. His recreation is country life.

A SPANISH TENOR

BORN at Zaragoza in Spain, **Miguel Fleta**, the operatic tenor, is now 38 years old. His musical education was received in his native country and Italy. He made his debut at 22 at the Verdi Theatre, Trieste, as *Prodo* in the opera "Francesca Da Rimini" by Zandonai, under the direction of the composer. Afterwards he sang during the same season in "Aida." Dating from that time his career has brought him the applause of many cities. At the Real Theatre, Madrid, he gave his whole repertoire with his usual great success, and was chosen by Zandonai, the Italian composer, to create the role of Romeo in his new opera "Romeo and Juliet" (*Giulietta e Romeo*), in which he achieved an outstanding success. His debut at the early age of 25, in "Tosca," at the Metropolitan, New York was a red-letter event.

THIRTY YEARS' SERVICE

WHEN Theodore Thomas passed into the void at the beginning of 1905, his life's work well under way, but far from completion, he left a heritage of stunning magnitude to **Frederick Stock**, his successor as conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. For Thomas was not only idolised, but by the authority of his personality and position, enabled him to resort on occasion to dictatorial measures. Stock, on the other hand, had just risen from the rank of a viola player to that of assistant conductor, and now saw himself confronted with a problem which might have daunted even a man of greater practical experience and equal determination. How well Stock proved equal to his task is reflected in his masterful handling of the orchestra, the records of which prove a delight to many radio listeners and gramophiles.

THE CLASSIC "HAMLET"

IF Goethe or Coleridge had seen Sir Johnston Forbes-Robertson in the role of 'Hamlet,' they wouldn't have written criticisms on the play," says Hesketh Pearson, "they would simply have said, 'Go and see Forbes-Robertson.' People who have been lucky enough to see him, but who still prefer the romantic 'tours de force' and stage pauses of other actors, should continue or commence to patronise melodrama and musical comedy. It is just possible they may appreciate the rest of Shakespeare's plays, the majority of which are romantic melodramas or poetic musical comedies, but they certainly can't appreciate 'Hamlet.' They have still to be modernised, and still

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.

MIGUEL FLETA, tenor, 2YA Sunday, July 7.

NAT. D. AYER, actor-composer, 1YA, Tuesday, July 9.

ALEXANDER BRAILOWSKY, pianist, 3YA, Wednesday, July 10.

FREDERICK STOCK, conductor, Chicago Symphony Orchestra, 3YA, Wednesday, July 10.

SIR JOHN FORBES-ROBERTSON, actor in Shakespearean recital, 4YA, Sunday, July 7.

JOHN DRINKWATER, playwright, actor and poet, reading his own poems, 1YA, Monday, July 8.

WANDA LANDOWSKA, harpsichordist, 1YA, Sunday, July 7, July 13.

ALEXANDER KIPNIS, bass, 1YA, Sunday, July 7.



tion with **J. W. Bratton** in the score of "The Newly-Weds and Their Baby," which made a hit in 1909. He first became known in England by his composition of several popular songs, among which may be noted "You're My Baby" and "Oh! You Beautiful Doll." He contributed numbers to the scores of several revues from 1914 onwards, among which was "So Long, Lucy." Ayer composed "The Bing Boys Are Here" and other revues in 1916, and "The Bing Boys on Broadway" two years later. He is a successful actor also, and has appeared in a number of his own works.

POET-PLAYWRIGHT.

BORN at Leytonstone, Essex, just fifty-three years ago, **John Drinkwater** has achieved three-fold success as dramatic author, actor and poet. Following his education at the Oxford High School, he had twelve years in the world of insurance before he accepted the greatest risk of his life and joined forces with **Sir Barry Jackson**, the founder and director of the Birmingham Repertory Company, who produced Drinkwater's play "Abraham Lincoln" in 1919. The poet was co-founder of the Pilgrim Players in 1907, which subsequently became the Birmingham Repertory Players. In 1907 he made his first appearance on the stage, as Charity in "The Interlude of Youth." **John Drinkwater** has written critical studies of both