

The Week's RECORDS

NEWS that Richard Crooks, the American tenor, is due to open a concert season in Auckland about the middle of May will be welcomed by many who know his art so well from his records. In his first tour of the Dominion he made thousands of fresh friends and supporters, and his lengthy list of records is being more eagerly scanned than ever.

Richard Crooks is a native of New Jersey and began singing as a boy soprano in a church choir in his own city, where he remained between the ages of nine and fourteen. His choirmaster, Sydney Bourne, urged him to go into music as a profession and was at great pains to lay, for him, the necessary foundation in study. He went to New York, where he continued in church choirs, perfecting his knowledge of oratorio, then, with early maturity, went into the larger field of concert work.

In his records, Richard Crooks has kept to popular paths. His grand opera items are not numerous, but in ballads, musical comedy and sacred items there are sufficient discs to keep the average turntable spinning.

Two great favourites are "Castles in the Air," from Paul Lincke's "Frau Luna," and the "Waltz Song" from "A Waltz Dream," by Strauss (HMV DA1323). While the heavy sales of this record decided its popularity a fair time ago, it is pleasing to think that this is not the only Richard Crooks record that is in constant demand. Of the hundred-and-odd items that stand to his credit in the catalogue, there is not a single one that would really disappoint.

Best Sellers

Though nothing like so long a list of records stands to the credit of Jeannette MacDonald and Nelson Eddy, as does to Richard Crooks, the screen stars are best sellers in every sense of the word. Naturally their duets, "Ah! Sweet Mystery of Life," from Victor Herbert's "Naughty Marietta," and "Indian Love Call," from Friml's "Rose Marie" (HMV DA1537), maintain something of a lead, but the soprano's "Italian Street Song" and "Merry Widow" items hold their own.

Nelson Eddy's solo items from "Rose Marie" and "Naughty Marietta" in particular are always in strong demand, and he is gaining many new friends with his more recent ballad creations, which are sympathetically sung.

Included in Nelson Eddy's latest records are two discs which contain four numbers from the film, "The Girl of the Golden West," the music of which is by Siegmund Romberg, the brilliant Hungarian composer of "The Desert Song," "The New Moon," and other stage and screen successes packed with love music. The songs released by HMV are "Soldiers of Fortune" and "Who are We to Say?" (HMV DA1633), and "Sunup to Sundown" and "Senorita" (HMV DA1632).

Romberg's method of composing is modern, to say the least of it. When an idea for a melody comes to him, he goes to his organ and roughly works it out. If he makes any notes, they are in a shorthand all his own. Next, he calls his musical secretary, Miss Madeline Lupher, and says, "Please take a tune." She jots down her "notes" as he runs over his new inspiration, then goes to the piano across the room and plays the melody back to him. When, after several re-playings, Romberg is finally satisfied, the melody is written down in finished form and filed away.

PERSONALITIES ON THE AIR

ALTHOUGH composers and prime donne have taken their names from cities and towns such as Palestrina, Offenbach, Melba from Melbourne, Albani from Albany, and so on, there cannot be many examples of towns taking their names from prime donne. One example of this is the American town of Lilypons, in the State of Maryland, named after one of the most charming and loveliest French singers ever to grace the opera stage and the silver screen. She was born in Cannes, and began her musical life as a pianist, but upon the discovery of her voice definitely and finally decided that singing was to be her career. She has a voice of lovely quality and extraordinary range, singing the high F of the Mad Scene from "Lucia" with ease and beauty of tone. She is probably the first to do it in performance since the time of Donizetti.

1YA listeners will hear Lily Pons, soprano, on Sunday afternoon, February 26.

ENGLISH OPERATIC SOPRANO

A dramatic soprano with a fine stage presence and a comprehensive practical knowledge of opera, Mrs. F. Plowden-Wardlaw has appeared in solo roles in Gilbert and Sullivan productions in England, where she was associated with various musical organisations. In the Wellington production of Mascagni's "Cavalleria Rusticana" at St. James Theatre in 1935, Mrs. Plow-



MRS. PLOWDEN-WARDLAW.—Wellington's loss.

den-Wardlaw appeared as Santuzza on three occasions. When she left Wellington she was greatly missed in social and musical circles, but Wellington's loss turned out to be Christchurch's gain, for, in the words of the old nursery rhyme, "there shall be music wherever she goes."

3YA listeners will hear Mrs. F. Plowden-Wardlaw, soprano, on Friday, March 3.

ASTONISHED THE PROFESSORS

Now in his sixty-fifth year, Fritz Kreisler was born the son of a distinguished physician and musical amateur. He was a healthy and sane boy, full of life, who at first thought nothing of his natural powers and who would rather be a tram conductor than a violinist. At the age of 10, young Fritz won the first prize at the Vienna Con-

servatorium; and in his twelfth year astonished the professors at the Conservatoire in Paris by winning the "Prix de Rome," an unprecedented occurrence. As a boy prodigy he toured with the great pianist Rosenthal, but later returned home to Austria to enter other fields. Four years later he devoted his entire energies to violin playing, until to-day he stands in a class by himself.

Fritz Kreisler, violinist, will be heard from 2YA on Thursday, March 2.

Confessions Of People You Know

CLEMENT G. WILLIAMS.

Australian baritone who toured New Zealand in December and January under contract to the NBS, this week gives his impressions for "Record" readers:

My eyes are: Green-grey.

My hair is: Dark brown.

Favourite colour for clothes: Blue.

My lucky day is: Wednesday.

My favourite play is: "The Silver Fox."

In my friends I look for the qualities of loyalty, warmth, friendliness and kindness.

My favourite motto is: Vital tradunt lampada.

My pet aversion is: Boloney.

I could happily spend the rest of my life: Anywhere with my wife and six best friends.

My favourite screen star is: Myrna Loy.

What has pleased me most about New Zealand: The kindness and warmth of its people.

What has disappointed me most: The plain girls of New Zealand, with the exception of Dunedin, and lack of smartness in dressing.

CONDUCTOR AND COMPOSER

Like numerous others who have reached lofty positions in the realm of music, Leo Blech was allowed to become a musician only after numerous conflicts under the parental roof. Born at Aix-la-Chapelle, Germany, in 1871, Blech was educated for business, but soon showed his musical bent. Extraordinary talents rapidly advanced him to the position of second conductor of the opera house of his native city, then to first conductor, then to conductor of the German Opera in Prague, and finally to the Royal Opera at Berlin. Meanwhile, he has also gained fame as a composer, having written several operas and numerous symphonic works and tone-poems for orchestra.

3YA listeners will hear the London Symphony Orchestra, under the conductorship of Dr. Leo Blech on Wednesday, March 1.

ATTRACTIVE IRISH SONGSTRESS

At the age of 17, Pat Hyde created something of a radio sensation in relay of variety from Middlesborough. Only a little over 20, she is one of the most attractive vocalists one is ever likely to meet, or hear, and she's Irish—and personally charming. She has been featured with Charlie Kunz at the Casani Club, and with Preagar at Romano's. She has her own band—Pat Hyde and

her swing music, and not content with carving a big name for herself in syncopated vocalism, she is also an accomplished accordion player.

2YA listeners will hear Pat Hyde, swing vocalist, in a recorded feature, "Singers On Parade," on Friday, March 3.

TOWN SEXTON'S SON

Beniamino Gigli is of Italian birth and training, and by right of those things is fitted to carry on the great traditions of the art of bel canto. He was born at Recanti, in Italy, on March 20, 1890. His musical studies began in childhood. His father was sexton of the largest church in his native town, and for 10 years the boy sang in its choir, soon rising to be chief soloist. Like the English chorister, Master Ernest Lough, in later years, Master Gigli attracted



BENIAMINO GIGLI.—Attracted crowds to church.

crowds to church to hear him. He was sent to the Conservatorium at Rome, where he studied under Rosati, and his operatic debut was made at Rovigo, in 1914, in "La Gioconda." His success was instant. He soon became one of the most celebrated Italian tenors of the day.

4YA listeners will hear Beniamino Gigli, tenor, on Sunday, February 26.

UNSOLVED LITERARY MYSTERY

After two centuries, the problem of Esther Johnson—the "Stella" for whose bright eyes Swift penned his fascinating "Journal"—still remains one of the most intriguing mysteries of literature. He taught her to read when she was a little girl of eight and he a lumbering, calf-like young man. She saw him as a poor and insignificant parson exhorting his entire congregation—his clerk—in the words: "Dearly beloved Roger, the Scripture moveth you and me in sundry places. . . ." She later saw him pulling the strings of the most wonderful puppet-show in the world—London politics; and he took her (this dark-haired witty daughter of an upper servant) behind the scenes, and for four years he wrote her a budget of gossip, sprinkled with delicious baby-talk, that would make any modern journal's fortune. Why didn't Swift marry her? Or did he? There are two problems that will keep the printing press busy for many a hundred years to come.

4YA listeners will hear Professor T. D. Adams in a reading from Swift's "Gulliver's Travels" on Friday, March 3.

PEOPLE who attempt to pass the car ahead without being sure of enough room and time to make it, destroy the pleasure of driving for themselves and others.



PRIZES of one shilling each will be awarded for the best announcers' slips heard by listeners, but entrants must be fair to announcers by leaving words in their right context. Address letters to "Pepperpot," c/o. "Radio Record," Box 1680, Wellington. Payments are made at the end of each month.

DOCTOR, during Marina's session, Monday, February 13, 10.5 a.m.: "Now I'll just run through this sulphur and acid."

NOT WELCOMED.

ANNOUNCER, 4ZM, Radio Church of the Helping Hand, 4.55 p.m., Sunday, February 5: "I am sorry to hear that you are far from well, and that you enjoy our session."

ONE METHOD.

AUNT DAISY, 1ZB, 9.7 a.m., February 8: "During my present campaign I've gone through dry-cleaners on several occasions."

FOUNDATION.

ANNOUNCER, 1ZB, 4.46 p.m., February 7 (advertising milk): "Let's build a nation—yes, a nation built on milk!"

OR RAIL?

UNCLE SCRIM, "Man in the Street" session, 8.12 p.m. recent Sunday: "The rail-car is the most modern means of transport on land or road."

HEIGHT?

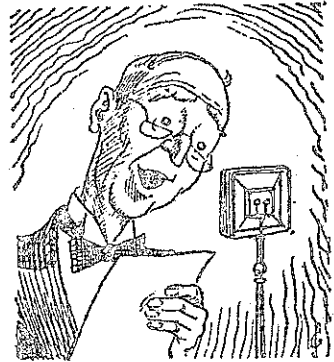
AUNT DAISY, 1ZB, giving a description of a factory at Newmarket, February 6: "With long windows reaching from the roof to ceiling."

FANTASY.

"THE BIRD MAN," 2ZB children's session, 5.17 p.m., February 7: " . . . he sits on an overhanging bough of a river. . . ."

PROBABLY WAS.

ANNOUNCER, 2ZB, Sunday, February 5: "It's near enough to



NEW METHOD.

MARGARET, 1YA, February 11.5 a.m.: "Put your heart in the treatment of your feet."

DOUBLE EVENT.

GORDON HUTTER, Ellerslie race course, 2.30 p.m., January 28 (giving riders for fifth race): "Gay Movie, R. E. Horne. There's no rider up for Gold Wings—I think Horne is going to ride them both."

STRANGE CURE.

ANNOUNCER, 2ZB, February 1, advertising face cream: "Just rub it on and it will varnish the freckles for ever."

