

**A  
Name  
to  
Remember..**



*Jantzen*

The Sergeant-Major roars and rants—

**BANTS**

13.5c

until his voice is soothed with BANTS.

**THROAT JUBES**

ALL CHEMISTS, 1/1

Stacey Bros. Ltd., 385 Khyber Pass, Auckland.

## A SINGER OF EIGHTY PLUS

**W**HEN we asked him his age Edwin Hill, elder brother of Alfred Hill, said he didn't mind admitting to us that he was over 80, but asked us not to publish the exact figure. He is going to sing from 1YA on Saturday evening, November 10 (two of the songs have not been heard yet in New Zealand—one by Alfred Hill and one by Mirrie Hill, Alfred's wife) and he called at the Auckland office of *The Listener* at our request to tell us something about himself.

We greeted his statement of his age with polite but slightly incredulous looks. "You don't believe it?" he asked triumphantly. "I can't believe it myself. As a matter of fact I had to look in the family Bible before I came down to make sure. There it is in black and white, no getting away from it. Wonderful, isn't it?"

Mr. Hill can look back on his singing career over a period of about 70 years—he won his first silver cup at the first Auckland competitions when he was 13 years old. During this period he has sung in all the competitions in the main cities and has taken part in scores, possibly hundreds, of public performances including grand opera and oratorios and in national music festivals both here and in Australia.

And yet in all these years Mr. Hill has had no formal tuition. He says, however, that he never missed listening to a visiting singer, attending closely to learn all he could. Moreover, he belonged to a musical family. His father, Charles Hill, was a violinist of ability; he, believed, Mr. Hill told us, that a musical family was a happy family: so there they were, the seven of them, mother and father and five children, all busily making music. It has been the same with Mr. Hill's own family; his sons and daughters are all musical, but he could not persuade his sons to sing in public.

We asked Mr. Hill about his performance in the Melbourne Centennial Exhibition, (1888-89).

"It came about in a funny way," he said. "I'd been singing in a lot of operas and oratorios and my voice was tired; I had a sore throat, so I went to a specialist in Wellington. He treated me for weeks, 25 guineas, and I was no better. So my father said to me, 'Ted, you'd better go off for a holiday. Go off and take a trip.' Well, I had a bit of money saved up, so I went to Melbourne. I decided to see a specialist there. By that time I had convinced myself I had cancer of the throat: no hope, career over, never sing again. Oh, I was thoroughly down in the dumps. The specialist looked down my throat and laughed. 'Why, Mr. Hill,' he said, 'you've got a beautiful throat, a great big round open throat; good heavens, I wish I had a throat like that!' One guinea. All imagination, d'you see? And I went down Collins Street walking on air, about as high as this I was walking, a new man!" He held his hand up shoulder high and laughed to remember his relief.

### One of the Proudest Moments

"So then I had an appointment with Frederick Cowan, conductor of the Centennial Orchestra, and he gave me an

audition. I sang "My Queen"—that was the song I sang at the Wellington Industrial Exhibition in 1885—and Mr. Cowan engaged me to sing the next Saturday night in the Mendelssohn concert—less than a week away and I had never seen the songs ("The First Violet" and "On the Wings of Song"). I bought the songs at a music shop, but they were set too high for me. I walked up Collins Street worrying about having them transposed and the shortness of the time and so on, when I saw a man walking up to his boot-tops in the running water in the gutter—that's what they do in Melbourne to cool the streets in summer—"Goodness me, Mr. King," I said, "what on earth are you doing walking in the gutter?" It was Mr. King from Wellington—he always arranged my music for me at home. "Why," he said, "if it isn't Mr. Hill! I'm just cooling my feet, that's all." So we got together and the next day he brought me my songs arranged for me and I could practise them. I sang them



EDWIN HILL

at the concert, had a good encore, too. And when I had finished the whole orchestra applauded. One of the proudest moments of my life, I can tell you."

Mr. Hill showed us some clippings. In one he was described as a business man and a bowler.

"Oh, the bowling was good. Of course I'm an expert bowler. Look here!" He pulled out his watch and showed us a blue and gold medal. "Now that's not just champion, it's champion of champions! You beat your own club and then you beat all the other clubs, d'you see?"

All sorts of amusing and interesting tags and tails of memories were attached to Mr. Hill's conversation.

"You'd be surprised to see what some singers eat before they sing," Mr. Hill told us. And we were surprised to hear. It seems they take anything from a glass of clear water with nothing in it to a whacking big bag of mixed sandwiches or one whole raw onion.

### Let Them Sound Their Consonants

"I do wish," Mr. Hill said as he was leaving, "I could find some young lady to sing duets with me; I don't care how old she is or how pretty she is, as long as she can sing, and sing the words as well as the notes. If only they would

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