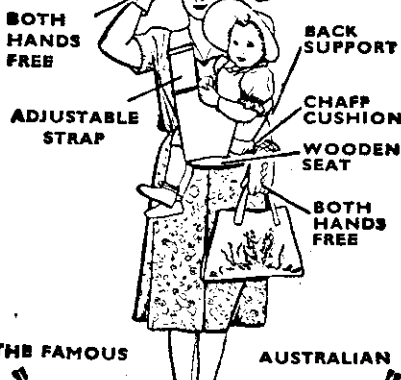


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JOAN HAMMOND TOUR THIS MONTH

Sports Champion Who Became Prima Donna

JOAN HAMMOND, the famous Australian dramatic soprano, who is due to arrive in New Zealand on Friday, October 11, will, we understand, be starting her tour in her own birthplace. *The Listener* takes a special interest in Miss Hammond's birthplace, and our latest advice from her agent in Australia, which tells us she was born in Christchurch, raises again the question, "When is a New Zealander a New Zealander?"

Our own curiosity dates from a few months ago when we printed a photograph of Miss Hammond among *People in the Programmes*. On that occasion, a note from one member of our staff to another described her as "a former Ch. golfer." The abbreviation is commonly used in newspapers for Champion; but it found its way into *The Listener* as "former Christchurch golfer." Recriminations followed, and hair was torn. We hoped no one would notice and force us to admit our slip, so we said nothing. Next we heard that an Australian paper had said she was New Zealand-born. Then, the other day, advance publicity material came to the NZBS from Miss Hammond's concert agent, stating plainly that she was born in New Zealand. A cable was sent, asking if this was certain, and if so, in what town? The reply told us it was Christchurch. In the meantime it had happened by chance that the NZBS had decided to place Miss Hammond's first recital and broadcast in Christchurch. It is therefore no longer embarrassing for us to admit our own error, nor proper to withhold from our readers a good office joke.

Joan Hammond has a reputation today of being the greatest British dramatic soprano. Many of her magnificent recordings of familiar operatic arias are well-known to New Zealand listeners already, and in Britain she has sung in concerts under the leading conductors at Queen's Hall and the Albert Hall, and has been a star of the Carl Rosa Opera Company.

She was brought up in Australia, and says she has been singing for as long as she can remember, appearing first at school concerts in Sydney, and winning the school singing prize every year. She was also the leading violinist in the school. When she left school, Joan Hammond went straight to the N.S.W. Conservatorium of Music, taking the violin as her primary study, and singing only secondarily. Later

JOAN HAMMOND'S CONCERTS

CHRISTCHURCH (Civic Theatre)
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 15.
DUNEDIN (His Majesty's)
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 17.
WELLINGTON (Town Hall)
SATURDAY, OCTOBER 19.
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 22.
AUCKLAND (Town Hall)
TUESDAY, OCTOBER 29.
THURSDAY, OCTOBER 31.

this was reversed. For four years she played in the Philharmonic and Conservatorium Orchestras, and her debut as a singer was made at an Orchestral concert in Sydney in May, 1931. Soon after that, radio listeners became familiar with her voice.

All-round Excellence

She sang small parts and understudied in the Imperial Grand Opera Company in 1932, and toured with it. But all this time, golf played a big part in her life, and she was known as a golfer in Australia and New Zealand. She was a member of the first Australian representative team sent overseas by the Ladies' Golf Union. By 1935 she had been representing her State and Australia for five years, and had been for three years on the lowest handicap reached by a woman in Australia.

At the same time, she was working also as a journalist, and seems to have had a busy working day. She started

Below: JOAN HAMMOND as Marguerite in Gounod's "Faust." Right: RAYMOND LAMBERT, who will be accompanist to Joan Hammond on her New Zealand tour

as an "observer" on the staff of a paper in 1932, then began writing on sport for the *Sydney Mail* and *Sydney Morning Herald*, and later for the *Daily Telegraph*. Although golf was her special subject, Miss Hammond covered many other sports. Her day was completely filled by her singing practice, participation in sport, and writing for morning papers during the evenings. She also excelled in hockey, tennis, squash, and netball, and had won several swimming championships.

In the middle of it all, singing was her chief joy and her ambition. Her opportunity to advance it came when Lady Gowrie (now the Countess of Gowrie) wife of the then Governor-General, heard her sing. Lady Gowrie heard her at the Queen Victoria Club in Sydney in 1936, and asked that Miss Hammond be presented to her. An invitation to Government House followed, and there Miss Hammond met the con-

(continued on next page)

