

extremely enthusiastic'.¹⁷ His only Beethoven piece, the Adagio of the 'Moonlight' Sonata, 'he played as an artist should'.¹⁸ It was remarkable how little Beethoven de Kontski actually performed, and how he preferred extracts, usually adagios, to complete works. The Chevalier was said not to practise: 'How then he continues his fingers at concert pitch is a marvel' continued the *Times* '... he is entirely without affectation'. Another Beethoven adagio appeared at his second recital on 9 October which the *Evening Post* found 'rather sombre'.¹⁹ But he brought his audience to a frenzy when he performed his 'Réveil du Lion'. 'This inspiring subject was described with such fire and energy as to provoke enthusiastic applause, and the pianist was compelled to come back to the piano, and was presented with a handsome cushion of red velvet adorned with his monogram'.²⁰ A Weber Moto Perpetuo 'aroused the audience to a great pitch of enthusiasm, whilst the Chevalier's Concert Valse also took immensely, a perfect storm of applause greeting the Chevalier as he rose from the piano'.²¹

At the third concert Robert Parker, replacing Alfred Hill, conducted the 'Réveil du Lion' with the Wellington Orchestral Society, the pianist playing 'with a power and grasp which had a marked effect on the players'.²² The 'enormous' audience at the Opera House was 'substantial proof that the greatest pianist who has ever visited New Zealand had been duly appreciated in Wellington'. The *Triad* summed up the extraordinary scene:

... the idea having got abroad in Wellington that an attempt had been made to boycott the old veteran, a very strong feeling of sympathy was roused, which manifested itself in a remarkable demonstration. On the closing night of his short season, the Opera House was packed from floor to ceiling and Mr Parker (whose popularity is, as a rule, with the few rather than with the many) was warmly received when he came on to conduct Weber's *Concertstück*, while on the appearance of the Chevalier himself, the huge audience broke into tumultuous applause, which was renewed again and again at each successive appearance. At the close of the concert, three rousing cheers were given for the hero of the evening ... The Chevalier's playing is remarkable for brilliance, rhythmic power, and a certain magnetic force which cannot well be described.²³

With such a reception the Chevalier could not help but announce a final farewell concert to take place later in October, which his agent described as 'A Grand Valedictory Ovation of Homage' when 'The venerable musician, decrepid with age, but fired with a youthful enthusiasm and the inspiration of genius, will appear before the musical public of the city for the last time'.²⁴

Warned perhaps by the incident with the Wellington Orchestral Society, the Chevalier did not attempt to play from under a blanket in Wellington as he had done at Auckland, where such a rendering of Schuloff's Galop de Concert was 'perhaps to the popular mind the most marvellous thing he did'.²⁵