

and the Orchestra was showered with praise. None of this is reflected in the Minute Book. No press cuttings were pasted in, as the Secretary did later with a highly critical report from the *Triad*. In the first meeting after the Beethoven concert all the minutes reveal is a discussion of the programme for the next concert and a decision to ask the Christchurch Society for the loan of band parts for *William Tell*. By now the Society had 114 subscribers. Average attendance at rehearsals of the forty-three strong orchestra was 27.5, which suggested 'an opening for considerable improvement'.¹⁰ The bank balance showed a credit of 17/4d but the subscription concerts for the next year were reduced to three. Alfred Hill was re-elected.

At the Annual General Meeting in 1894 the credit balance remained small but over £30 was due for outstanding subscriptions. Alfred Hill earns a 'hearty vote of thanks' for his 'very able services during the year'. He was still having difficulty convincing the Committee they should include a symphony in each concert. In 1894 conductor and orchestra toyed with the idea of performing Beethoven's Symphony No.3, the *Eroica*, but finally abandoned it. The continuing difficulties between conductor and orchestra remained beneath the surface, but with the first performance of Alfred Hill's choral work *Time's Great Monotone* in October 1894, part of Robert Parker's second New Zealand Music Festival, they emerged to public view. The work was strongly criticised by the Wellington press for its lack of rehearsal. Alfred Hill wrote to say it had been prepared in strained circumstances. The *Triad* took up the matter:

There should be in Wellington an orchestral society second to none in the colony. This not being the case, we venture to give reasons which have much to do with the shortcomings of the Wellington society. We predict that unless some changes are effected the society will lose its importance as a musical body, and its reputation will degenerate into insignificance. The constant bickerings between the members and their conductor, the want of sympathy with one another, and lack of loyalty to their head, generally tend to disintegration. The cause of the dissatisfaction is really the fault of the committee, who place before their band, music to which they can never do justice with the amount of time available for rehearsal, consequently the members are disappointed and become discontented, finding it tedious to be continually repeating a passage presenting difficulties which would take months to overcome even with daily practice. Members are not always willing to attend rehearsals when there is any real work to be done. In many instances some come to only the last one or two preceding the concert. No wonder a conductor becomes exasperated when members absent themselves from practice, and when they do attend, grumble because they are kept constantly at work. The society meets once a week, and has a practice of about two hours in which to work up a lengthy programme. Would it not be advantageous to the society for the members to make the most of their time when they are together, instead of suggesting that there should be an interval of five minutes? . . .

We recommend the members of the Wellington Orchestral Society to lay these trifles aside and try to assist their conductor instead of throwing obstacles in his way. . . .¹¹