

might have appeared a mere Victorian curio. Both oral and written presentations included relevant historical and musical anecdotes. An interview with Hill, recorded by Thomson in the late 1950s, provided further personal and historical context.⁴⁸

John Button reviewed the concert for the *Dominion*, and a review by John M. Thomson appeared in *Music in New Zealand*.⁴⁹ Both pointed out the historical significance of the occasion, and given this, the relevance of the choice of programme. Both writers emphasised the content of the programme rather than the performance itself. Button described *Hinemoa* as 'the least distinguished music on the programme; a curious mish-mash of Sullivan, Mendelssohn and Meyerbeer, set to some of the most banal words imaginable'. Thomson noted that *Hinemoa* 'encapsulated the weaknesses rather than the strengths of the composer's style, one which, instead of developing, remained virtually unchanged for the rest of his life'.

It is important to note that such remarks tell at best an incomplete story. Neither writer emphasised the extent to which *Hinemoa*'s audience has changed in the near-hundred years since its first performance. Gauging from contemporary commentary, *Hinemoa*'s first audience was large and popular — perhaps the closest analogy is with the audiences which recently assembled to hear Kiri Te Kanawa sing in the Auckland Domain. The audience for modern 'indoor' symphony concerts, however, tends to be smaller, and may come expecting to consume 'high' culture. The initial response to the work suggests that *Hinemoa* may have been experienced in relation to 'popular' genres such as melodrama, or the light operas of Gilbert and Sullivan. A modern audience accustomed to 'higher' symphonic genres may indeed find the work derivative or banal. Yet these judgements provide answers to unprofitable questions. The initial 'popular' context and audience for *Hinemoa* has gone; perhaps it is inappropriate to judge the work according to conventions belonging to another genre.

VI

The significance of *Hinemoa* as an important work in a relatively 'thin' pākehā music history can be gauged by the effort expended to save the score for posterity. In 1987, Allans Music had sent Hill's autograph manuscript to the New Zealand Symphony Orchestra 'on perusal'.⁵⁰ Mended with sellotape and beginning to disintegrate, the composer's score had been sent as a working conductor's score.⁵¹ Composer Ashley Heenan approached Allans to make the original full score available to the National Archive as part of the 1990 Special Events. 'As a 1990 commemorative project the New Zealand Composers' Federation had proposed to record an anthology of recorded New Zealand music covering one hundred and fifty years. One part of the project was to record Alf's *Hinemoa*'.⁵² In exchange, the Composers' Foundation of New Zealand offered to arrange for a newly-copied full score.⁵³ On 28 February 1989, Allans Music offered the manuscript to the National Archive on permanent loan.⁵⁴ 'The Composer's Foundation paid for its restoration — removal of sellotape etc.'⁵⁵