

BBC Archive: Sir Henry Wood, Lady Jessie Wood and Dame Eva Turner reflect on the legacy of his Promenade Concerts

Lady Jessie Wood: But it very soon grew into quite a large public, for quite serious music. Just imagine the second year of the Promenade Concerts at Queen's Hall, he did *Scheherazade*. Well, just imagine that.

Sir Henry Wood: I feel I must take the credit for bringing orchestral music to the people at the price that the people could afford. Night after night this packed audience listened to all schools of orchestral music and I must say that it is the loveliest audience to make music to in the world.

Lady Jessie Wood: But each year, and you can look up the programmes you see, the BBC have got the whole lot in their archive somewhere about. And each year they improved and improved and improved. He introduced Tchaikovsky to this country you see. And he did the five Schoenberg pieces in 1913, don't forget that. And now when you do Schoenberg they think it's wonderful but it was done all those years ago and the Queen's Hall audience hissed him; he said never mind I shall do it again. And that was his spirit. You know when Henry walked on to the platform, Henry Wood didn't know Henry Wood. He walked on to the platform, it was natural. He bowed to the audience and he seemed to embrace them quietly and then Vaughan Williams's *Serenade to Music* which was performed at the Albert Hall when Rachmaninov came over, and that Vaughan Williams, he said: 'This is more than Vaughan Williams darling, it's more and more than Vaughan Williams could ever do, it's something that has come from heaven.'

Dame Eva Turner: I can remember that when we were doing the rehearsal with orchestra, suddenly in the main entrance Vaughan Williams entered, you know very thoughtfully with his hands clasped behind his back and listened to the rehearsal.