



ADÈS ...BUT ALL SHALL BE WELL
RACHMANINOV PIANO CONCERTO No. 2
VAUGHAN WILLIAMS A PASTORAL SYMPHONY
SHOSTAKOVICH FESTIVE OVERTURE

THAMES YOUTH ORCHESTRA

9 JULY 2011 7.30PM
CADOGAN HALL



One of the most remarkable activities to have caught the public imagination in recent years has been the extraordinary 'Sistema' of youth orchestras in Venezuela. Providing over 350,000 Venezuelan children from the whole spectrum of socio-economic backgrounds with a sustained programme of music education of the highest quality, playing core classical repertoire, conducted at the top by musicians of the calibre of Dudamel, Rattle and Abbado, and all for free – this has rightly made front-page news in the UK and generated capacity audiences for every performance.

But what about celebrating youth music-making in our own country? The development of the Thames Youth Orchestra, since its foundation in 2005, is an outstanding example of what can happen when visionary state schools, government policy, and committed professional musicians work together. Supported by Tiffin School, a specialist Performing Arts College in Kingston, as a core community outreach activity, the orchestra's members now come from some eighteen local schools; the TYO fulfils an important provision in the artistic and educational life of the local community, and one that would be impossible for schools to provide on their own – namely, rehearsing and performing full-length programmes of demanding orchestral repertoire, often with newly-commissioned work. The orchestra enjoys a close relationship with the Royal Borough of Kingston Music Service, and we are looking forward to the next stage of the orchestra's life, in which it sits within the structure of the Borough's music provision, wherein the future members of the orchestra will be trained through a system of feeder instrumental ensembles.

This evening's concert showcases a phenomenal range of youth talent – in addition to the members of the orchestra themselves, young pianist Patrick Milne, a student at Tiffin School and RCM prizewinner, performs Rachmaninov's *Piano Concerto No 2* (his previous performance of this work in Kingston last April was astounding); Amelia Brown, a student at Tiffin Girls' School and member of the Thames Youth Choir, takes the important role of soprano soloist in the final movement of the Vaughan Williams symphony; while Robert Hawkins, a trumpeter in the orchestra and Head Boy of Tiffin School, illuminates Thomas Adès's *but all shall be well...* with some remarkable video art.

These are talented young people indeed – and the role of the TYO and associated Arts organisations must be to unlock similar talent in young people across our communities. Running such an ambitious programme does not come cheap, and we are looking to expand our base of supporters. Word of mouth is important, but equally important is money! So – if you would like to join us, either by joining the Friends of TYO or by sponsoring one of our players, as my wife and I and others have done, then do please turn to page 13 of this programme for more information about these important initiatives, and how to join.

Professor Peter Toyne CBE
Chairman

THAMES YOUTH ORCHESTRA

ANNA SELIG LEADER

SIMON FERRIS CONDUCTOR

9 JULY 2011 7.30PM

CADOGAN HALL SW1X 9DQ



SHOSTAKOVICH

FESTIVE OVERTURE

RACHMANINOV

PIANO CONCERTO No.2

PIANO: PATRICK MILNE

INTERVAL (20 MINUTES)

ADÈS

...BUT ALL SHALL BE WELL

VISUALS: ROBERT HAWKINS

VAUGHAN WILLIAMS

SYMPHONY No.3 'PASTORAL'

SOPRANO: AMELIA BROWN

DMITRI SHOSTAKOVICH (1906-1975)
FESTIVE OVERTURE IN A MAJOR OP. 96

In the months following the death of Stalin in 1953 and the composition of the immense and self-affirming Tenth Symphony, Shostakovich entered a period of relative compositional sluggishness, from which he emerged in a bolt of surprising energy. In response to a commission (at the beginning of November 1954) for a concert overture for a gathering at the Bolshoi, to be held in celebration of the 37th anniversary of the October Revolution, he was able to compose the *Festive Overture* in two days, the pages of manuscript being rushed to the theatre one at a time by special courier, with the ink (so the story goes) still wet.

The composition of occasional music for the Soviet state did not so much go against the grain for Shostakovich, as invoke his sense of musical irony, audible partly in the use made of the distinctly wry musical personalities of certain instruments – the clarinet, for instance, or the piccolo, or snare drum – capering here like subversive wise-cracking clowns from the *commedia dell'Arte*; and partly in the overall frame of the work: a *festive* overture, almost by definition, taps into the *carnevalesque*, or the *saturnalia*: modes which could be said to represent the theoretical or psycho-social heart of the revolution and which had, to a great extent, been lost (if it had ever been found) in the dark years of the war and of Stalin's rule.

The musicologist Lev Nikolayevich Lebedinsky, who was apparently present during much of the breakneck composition, noted that during composition Shostakovich was able to smoke and drink tea, chat and joke continually without lifting his head from the manuscript, a manic performance in its own right that finds its counterpart in the skittering strings of the presto theme punctuated by rhythmic jabs on the brass, which in turn mirrors (or mocks) the furious *presto* portrait of Stalin in the Tenth Symphony.

This first theme proper follows a dense fanfare chorale which prefigures the shape of that theme, but not its burlesque impishness, clarinet and carolling wind launched over a propulsive, lilting rhythmic drive, giving way to galloping double-tongued brass; the second theme, a broad tune for cellos, plays out over the same relentlessly scuttling rhythm; and the whole culminates, first in an adept counterpointing of first and second themes, and then in a restatement of the opening brass fanfare.

SERGEI RACHMANINOV (1873-1943)
PIANO CONCERTO NO 2 IN C MINOR OP.18

- I *Moderato*
- II *Adagio sostenuto*
- III *Allegro scherzando*

Composition was always problematic for Rachmaninov, and the circumstances of the genesis of the second piano concerto were a particularly acute example of his sensitivity to the psycho-emotional conditions under which he worked.

The concerto emerged at the end of a period of three years in which he had composed precisely nothing (although he had continued to work as a performer and conductor), a direct result of the hostile reception to his first symphony, the first performance of which had been a fiasco, conducted by a Glazunov either incompetent or drunk; Rachmaninov himself had sat in the foyer with his fingers in his ears; and the grandees of Russian music assembled to hear the first symphonic essay of the young prodigy were aggressively hostile (César Cui described it in print as a 'programme symphony on the seven plagues of Egypt').

Rachmaninov emerged from the ensuing compositional void through the professional mediation of Dr. Nicolai Dahl, a hypnotherapist; (friends had previously arranged a meeting with the venerable Leo Tolstoy, whose own version of therapy, Rachmaninov later recalled, consisted in stroking his knee and telling him to work – "you must work; I work every day" – , and remarking, when Rachmaninov played a piece for him, "does anybody really need music like that?"). His sessions with Dr. Dahl (the present work's eventual dedicatee) were more helpful. While it seems that the doctor's informed conversation was as useful as his hypnotherapy (Rachmaninov had to intone, among other things, "you will begin your concerto.... it will be excellent"), the sessions nevertheless gradually restored his confidence; and when he visited his friend, the bass Chaliapin, in Italy in the summer of 1900 he was able to begin work, completing the concerto on his return to Moscow in August that year. He gave the first, well-received performance (of the second and third movements only) that December, and the first full performance the following year.

The work opens with a bell-like tolling which leads to the first theme group in which the piano, as



so often in this movement, is the accompanist; Rachmaninov was worried before the first performance that the entry of the piano, solo, at the outset of the second theme, would be taken by the audience as the beginning of the concerto proper. It is an arresting gesture, the piano's first essay into the *cantabile* line that lies at the heart of the concerto; but the scintillations of solo pianism, throughout the concerto as a whole, are frequently put at the service of the orchestral whole.

The second movement begins (after a brief chorale homage to Tchaikovsky's Fifth Symphony) with the piano again playing accompanist to flute and then clarinet, the roles reversed in due course; this dialogic relationship is then maintained through the more intense, minor key central passage. Much of the material from the movement is derived from an early work, *Romance*, written for the Skalon sisters, the youngest of whom had been an early infatuation. The variably accented piano line of the opening accompaniment, running at a slight rhythmic counterpoint to the solo instruments, is responsible, perhaps, for the faintly uneasy repose of the movement as a whole. The finale is also rooted in the *cantabile* Russian tradition, alternating a bravura first theme with a meditative but essentially affirmative second theme in variations which encompass brisk fugue, *nachtmusik*, maestoso augmentation, and other stylistic sorties, as though we are listening to a man trying out his compositional muscles after three years of atrophy, and being quietly delighted to find them not only in excellent functioning order, but better than he remembered.

INTERVAL (20 minutes)



THOMAS ADÈS (B. 1971)
...BUT ALL SHALL BE WELL
OP.10 FOR ORCHESTRA (1993)

Raymond Adès (1915-1993), the dedicatee of ...but all shall be well was the composer's grandfather. He lived at Oxshott for fifty years and was for many years a magistrate at Walton-on-Thames.

...but all shall be well was composed for the 150th anniversary of the Cambridge Music Society and was premiered by the society orchestra conducted by Stephen Cleobury in Ely Cathedral in 1994. It was Adès's first piece for full, not to say large, orchestra (it is scored for triple woodwind, six horns, and a very full percussion complement).

The title is a quotation from the fourteenth century mystic Julian of Norwich, filtered through

T.S. Eliot's *Little Gidding*, the last of the *Four Quartets*: 'Sin is Behovely, but/All shall be well, and/All manner of things shall be well'. That the composer should quote a modernist poet quoting a fourteenth century mystic is a typical constructive strategy: Adès's music is highly allusive (there are references in this short piece to Britten's *A Midsummer Night's Dream* and Liszt's *Consolations*); it is music which derives its form from a sort of cultural trigonometry, a knowledge of precisely where and how it is situated.

Adès has referred to the piece as a consolation. Consolation is at once an inarticulately emotional or cathartic event and a philosophical and discursive practice; we turn to music not only for solace, in other words, but also for clarity, and if the two are not always naturally co-existent, the tension between them is generative rather than obstructive.

What is generated, then, by this large orchestra in a short span of time (roughly 10 minutes) is a complex and multiplanar object predicated on one simple idea – a rising and falling theme for clarinet and then strings. This theme slouches out from a rhythmically centreless introductory passage of tintinnabulation alternating with proleptic fragments (both motivic and textural) of the theme itself; it lies at the root not just of sequential and vertical cells of music, but of music that is temporally displaced; if time signatures in music are analogues to ticking clocks, then what we have here is a multi-temporal construct, a sort of Bergsonian cathedral of sound, where we can hear, simultaneously insofar as that is possible, different rates of motion, ideas in the music which seem to have a pace and purpose of their own.

The rising and falling motif is not morphologically immune to the complex interactions taking place around it; it takes on a keening quality, starts to swoop in *portamenti* as if getting into the swing, trying out attitudes; the cells or passages of music (which surround and intersperse this central thematic idea like an encroaching jungle of strange indifferent percussive pops, whirrs and rattles, skittering and slithering strings, bits of brass chorale) are subtly cross-linked in *sotto voce* statement and response, and what is ultimately built up is the sense of a complex musical topology which is rational without being either discursive or rhetorical. The work culminates in a transcendent final chord with a high major third hovering above it, as the stepwise incantatory motif is finally stilled.

RALPH VAUGHAN WILLIAMS (1872 – 1958) SYMPHONY NO. 3 'PASTORAL'

- I *Molto moderato*
- II *Lento moderato*
- III *Moderato pesante*
- IV *Lento*

By his own belated admission (in a letter to his second wife, Ursula, in 1939) Vaughan Williams wrote *A Pastoral Symphony* in response to his experience in the Great War. He had enlisted in 1914 at the age of 41 as a private in the Royal Army Medical Corps and served most of the conflict as a wagon orderly in France and on the Salonika front (being transferred to the Artillery on his return to France late in the war).

The symphony that emerged from the horror and loss of those years is more than an elegiac outpouring (although it is also, clearly, that): it is a work of formal grieving – understood as an act of memory that makes the experience and nature of loss intelligible – realised in the pastoral idiom.

It is the act of remembering that makes sense of that link (between grieving and pastoral). In part, of course, the remembering relates to the remembrance of the dead; but it also dwells upon (and is largely generated from) the experience of remembering itself in the midst of war: the way in which certain experiences could become metonyms for a life that stood outside the bloodshed and the bombing, and which made it, if not bearable, then not all-encompassing.

Some of those remembered experiences are translated into the detailed fabric of the symphony – the memory, for instance, of a bugler practising the Last Post that is reinvented as the natural trumpet solo of the second movement; or the memory of a distant singing farm girl that becomes the wordless soprano solo of the last movement.

Other remembered experiences remain more generalised: for example the memory, as expressed years later to his wife Ursula of '[going] up night after night with the ambulance wagon at Écoivres ... up a steep hill and there was a wonderful Corot-like landscape in the sunset'. It is as though the middle-aged Vaughan Williams in the midst of war was able to fashion a psychological lightning rod from an aesthetic construct (in this case, the work of Corot). In the same way, years later, the pastoral idiom is an

aesthetic that structures the emotional response, renders it both intelligible and available.

The pastoral idiom of course necessarily excludes certain modes of feeling – its greatest tensions tend to be elegiac rather than, say, tragic, or violent, and are subsumed, by definition as it were, within a natural economy (as is Beethoven's storm, for instance). Similarly, pastoral is not a rhetorical dynamic; the usual expectations of a symphony – that it structure an argument of musical and in particular harmonic contrasts – are treated as secondary.

Not that there is no tension in the symphony, or that it is not built on contrasts: that, for instance, between tonal and modal harmonics and melodic implications, which is characteristic of Vaughan Williams's folk-derived idioms in general. The opening of the first movement, for instance, generates tension between apparently simple modal lines: the implications of the step-wise oscillation of flutes and bassoons leads to a harmonic ambiguity, if not outright bitonality – an ambiguity echoed, moreover, in the rhythmic hesitancy which emerges from the apparently simple juxtaposition of a steady (but charged) quaver movement and dotted four note melodic fragment (on double basses and harp); so that solo violin makes its entry at a deeply unstable moment.

Forward impetus, in both the first movement and the symphony as a whole, is in fact rarely untrammelled, even in Vaughan Williams's judgement "the mood of this symphony is almost entirely quiet and contemplative". The themes of the first movement are in essence repetitive fragments or scraps of ideas which return

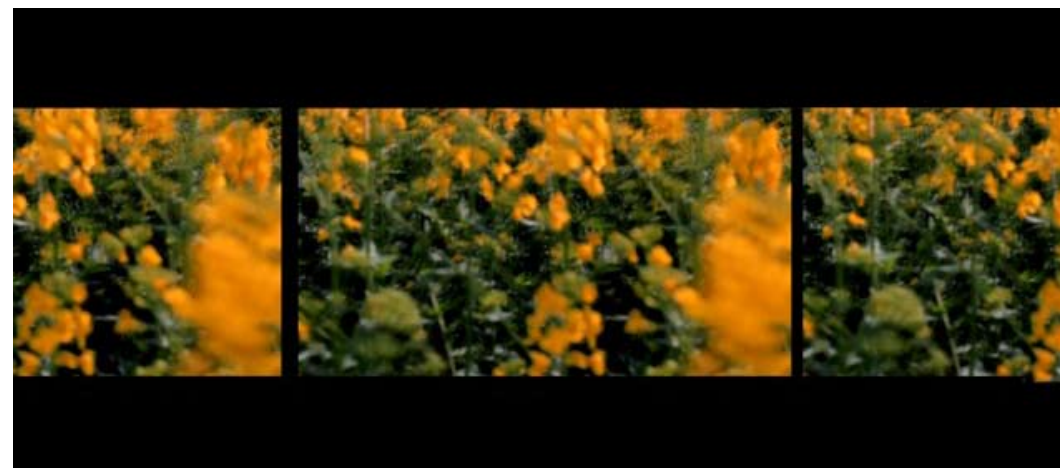
relentlessly to their own starting points, sherds of folk-like themes like the ghost voices of the shires. There is no rest, as such, only a greater or lesser urgency, and no little menace.

The natural trumpet solo lodged in the centre of the second movement is a memory of a bugler practising the Last Post, itself the antonym of fanfare and martial zeal. It is nested in themes derived from the quaver movement of the opening to the symphony, as though this act of explicit and meditative memorialisation had managed to dislodge a specific memory.

Vaughan Williams called the third movement a great slow dance. If so it is a sort of stomping Breughel peasant's dance reminiscent of Mahler's Ländler scherzos, laced with robust fanfare and chorale. An impish fugal scurrying trio concludes this essay in tragic joviality.

The wordless soprano of the finale emerges in the wake of an ominous drum roll, and it is as though that lone and centred, modally-inflected voice were the source of all that preceded it; now it seems, for the first time, the music is sure of its direction. The soprano line is followed by a broad theme that for the first time in the symphony flows rather than wheels. The tensions when they emerge are now explicit and are resolved: there is a sense of formal emotional closure, and with the soprano, when she returns underneath sustained high violins at the end of the movement, we approach the opposite of ambiguity – a moment of transcendent certainty, as though the whole symphony had collapsed to a single dimensionless point.

Programme notes © John Ferris, 2011





NOTES ON VIDEO ...but all shall be well

CREATING MOVING IMAGE TO ACCOMPANY ADÈS' 'CONSOLATION' FOR ORCHESTRA

ROBERT HAWKINS

*Time present and time past
Are both perhaps present in time future,
And time future contained in time past.
If all time is eternally present
All time is unredeemable.*

*From Burnt Norton,
Eliot's Four Quartets*

The opportunity to work on such a grand scale, literally and artistically, with a fascinating composition and a full orchestra is not one that regularly meets an 18 year old aspiring artist, and perhaps for good reason. The relationship between film and music is a difficult one to handle, and despite the increasing popularity of the medium in performance and composition I think it will only become more polluted and the experience more challenging for both artists and audiences in the future. Simply, we are becoming more and more accustomed to music functioning as backing to film and image – in television, cinema and advertising – and yet in the concert hall, the music (especially a pre-

existing composition) requires an equality of focus; something I have tried very hard to create.

The greatest challenge of this project has been to judge this relationship correctly: not to make a film to which the music is a mere soundtrack, whilst creating a separate work with its own interest and ambition. Adès' work is a fascinating challenge for a video artist – despite a title and poetic allusion that promises much in terms of narrative, it is, the composer claims, the least programmatic of all his works. Instead, it aims to create an aural landscape, gradually drawing the listener into an intimate world. Film innately functions on a narrative basis, finding a halfway between the 'temporal urgency of music and the material certainty of painting'¹. My solution was to turn to Eliot's *Four Quartets* – the composition's namesake – where permanence, the divine, the eternal and the redemptive quality alluded to by Adès all exist within time, rather than outside it. The opening bars, then, were to me the everyday progression of time: sinful, earthly; analogous to ticking clocks, into which we are offered glimpses of the eternal as 'proleptic fragments' of orchestration, before we are plunged headlong into a new temporal world, existing within a single instant of time.

Visually, the film inhabits a very watery world. Water as a subject is, to me, endlessly compelling and poetic, offering the figurative and the



abstract; it is ever changeable and analogous in many ways to both the temporal and the spiritual. Thus, the world above, the reflection and distortion on the changing surfaces, and the foreign submerged worlds below became equivalent visually for the levels of meaning in the music.

The film works in three sections. The first creates the analogy between water and the temporal, with droplets into a thick, monochrome, woodland pool illustrating sin and time as a genesis for both the music and film in a primordial liquid. Into this landscape, colour gradually emerges, before visuals sink with the music's chromatic descent into a single moment of colour.

Within the second section, the Wagnerian unending melody is reflected in colourful searches for beauty. The elements broadly present in the first section are explored at greater length – the canopy above the pool literally shifts in and out of focus as melodic ideas do the same; a hallucinogenic field of colour (alluding to Viola's work with *Nine Inch Nails*) is also distorted as if reflected in Eliot's 'watery mirror' which returns with the tintinnabulation theme, hunting for solidity and focus. Finally, an undulating sea – a disturbed transformation of the initial glassy pool – is temporally manipulated, inspired by a section of Rosner and Adès' collaborative *In Seven Days* (itself a key inspiration for the project as a whole).

The concluding section is perhaps the most varied and dynamic musically; 'consolation' is, I think, as it is for Eliot, hard-won, and not unfought for. The reeling melodic anguish and tumultuous falling and rising heavy brass inspired a churning, crashing sea; the divided, Britten-like orchestration of melody with a larger echoing forceful accompaniment seemed well illustrated by churning deep and foaming spray. I also wanted to portray extreme violence and threatening menace, providing compositionally energised frames to tower over the orchestra in the hall. Finally, a spiralling orchestral chromatic descent is accompanied by a submersion both of our view point and of a faceless figure – representing us, the viewers – at a moment of genuine peril, drowning in the single moment we have been exploring. Resolution, when it finally comes, seemed to suggest rising bubbles, ascension back to the surface, and a comforting retraction of all the previous visual gestures. Drawing again from the Eliot, the final redemption is found within the opening sinful image.

*What we call the beginning is often the end
And to make an end is to make the beginning.*

From *Little Gidding*,
Eliot's *Four Quartets*

¹ Bill Viola



BIOGRAPHIES

PATRICK MILNE piano

Patrick is at Tiffin School and for the last seven years has been studying piano, guitar and composition at the Royal College of Music Junior Department, where he won the Teresa Carreno Competition for pianists and the Gordon Turner Competition for instrumentalists, and was runner up in the Peter Morrison Concerto Competition, the Angela Bull and the Joan Weller Composition Competitions.

He has performed at Wigmore Hall, the Venezuelan Embassy's Bolivar Hall, with violinist David Garrett at the Royal Albert Hall and Ronnie Scott's, and has appeared in a TV advertisement for Steinway pianos. He has collaborated with choreographers from the Royal Ballet School, whose students have performed two of his compositions. He has also accompanied professional singers at concerts and has performed piano concertos with the Thames Youth Orchestra, including Ravel *G major* and *Rhapsody in Blue* on tour in Spain.

SIMON FERRIS conductor

Simon Ferris, founder director of the Thames Youth Orchestra, read music and was organ scholar at King's College London. As an undergraduate he pursued additional instrumental and musicianship studies with Bernard Oram at the Guildhall School of Music and Drama and, after graduation, received composition tuition and encouragement from the composer and John Ireland pupil, Geoffrey Bush. A skilled and experienced jazz pianist, Simon's wide-ranging professional career now embraces an array of genres and disciplines, as performer, composer (published by ABRSM), arranger, writer (with programme note credits for, among others the Maggini Quartet and the Hanover Band), conductor and teacher, with duties including preparing children's choirs for the Royal Opera House, Covent Garden. Simon is currently Musician in Residence at Tiffin School, and Musician in Residence at Tiffin Girls' School, Kingston upon Thames, where in addition to his composing and performing duties he also teaches harmony.

THAMES YOUTH ORCHESTRA

Thames Youth Orchestra was founded in 2005 and is based in South West London. TYO now has a permanent staff of nine professional musicians and comprises more than seventy young players drawn from seventeen local schools. Its ethos is defined by a challenging, adventurous approach to programming, which combines well-established large-scale orchestral favourites with twentieth century rarities and new commissions. TYO has featured in a BBC TV children's programme and performs annually at London's Cadogan Hall.

Recent concerts have included performances of Tchaikovsky's *Symphony No. 4* and Bernstein's *Symphonic Dances* from *West Side Story*. The orchestra tours annually – recent destinations including Spain and the Czech Republic – with a tour of Croatia planned for August. TYO's forthcoming concerts include Satie's *Parade* and Respighi's *La Boutique Fantasque* in All Saints' Church, Kingston on 16 July.

More information about Thames Youth Orchestra can be found at www.thamesyouthorchestra.co.uk

THAMES YOUTH ORCHESTRA

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Thames Youth Orchestra

**Simon Ferris,
conductor**

**All Saints
Kingston
16th July
2011**

7.30 pm

**Satie
*Parade***

**Poulenc
*Les Biches***

Respighi

La Boutique Fantasque



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THE FRIENDS OF THE THAMES YOUTH ORCHESTRA

The purpose of the Friends' Association is to provide financial support to the orchestra to help offset the significant expenses of running a full-scale symphonic ensemble. These costs include music, venue and instrument hire, staffing, performing rights, publicity, transport, maintaining a web presence, catering – the list goes on.

CURRENT MEMBERS:

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The cost of membership of the friends' scheme is £15 per annum for an individual subscription, £25 for family membership and £40 for corporate members. The benefits include reduced ticket prices for concerts and events and members' names listed in concert programmes.

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For more details, or to apply for membership, please contact Friends Coordinator, Louise Carpenter: lkcarpenter@hotmail.com

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Hilda Clarke, Vanessa Ward, Tiffin School, Tiffin Girls' School and the Tiffin Foundation

Hani Madanat, Eve Everett and Coombe Residential

Annie Rushton for programme design

Georgina Feary, Hugo Fagandini and Thom Andrewes

Elizabeth Jarrett

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Hannah Calascione for the kind loan of a swimming pool

All photography in this programme by Robert Hawkins

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