**Titian Press Release Appendix**

Titian was probably born between 1485 and 1490 in the little town of Pieve di Cadore, about 130 kilometres north of Venice. His artistic talent seems to have been spotted early on, because at the age of nine he was sent to Venice to learn the painter’s trade. Titian trained in the workshop of Gentile and Giovanni Bellini, the city’s leading masters at the time. His most talented fellow pupil, Giorgione, died in 1510 and when the elderly Giovanni Bellini himself passed away six years later, Titian was left as the undisputed star of Venetian painting. He received prestigious commissions and made his name with works like the imposing panel, almost seven metres tall, of the *Assumption of the Virgin* (1515–19), which he painted for the high altar of the Franciscan church of Santa Maria Gloriosa dei Frari. A little over a hundred years later, Titian’s *Assunta* was a key source of inspiration for Rubens’s treatment of the same theme in Antwerp cathedral.

Titian pursued a dazzling career and was also employed at various aristocratic courts in Italy. He caught the eye of Emperor Charles V, who made him his court painter in 1530 and raised him to the nobility. By the time Titian died on 27 August 1576 – well into his eighties but active virtually until the end – he could look back over a career stretching back no fewer than seven decades.

**Titian’s oeuvre**

Between 250 and 300 paintings are currently attributed to Titian, including religious scenes, more intimate devotional pieces and works with classical themes. In mythological paintings like the *poesie* – a series of large paintings he began in 1551 for King Philip II of Spain – Titian went to town in his depiction of virtually nude goddesses, gods and heroes. He viewed these works, which were inspired by the *Metamorphoses* of the Roman poet Ovid, as the visual equivalent of poems. Rubens copied several of the *poesie* during his time in Madrid in 1628.

Titian also proved to be a brilliant portrait painter with a flawless sense of his subjects’ personalities. Around a hundred of his portraits have survived, featuring the likes of the doges of Venice, King Francis I of France, Emperor Charles V and his son Philip II, and several popes. The most powerful men, in other words, of the era. Bourgeois portraits like that of *A Lady and Her Daughter* are relatively few and far between in his work, and this double portrait is the only one by him that we know of that shows a mother and child.

Titian’s portraits always seem natural; they are simple in composition and in no way contrived. The sitter’s personality is chiefly conveyed through his or her face and pose, rather than all sorts of secondary details. Titian avoided any sense of stiffness by suggesting movement – a small gesture of the hand or a slight turn of the head relative to the torso, or the eyes to the head. Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt and Velázquez adopted these little tricks and made further use of them.

It was primarily in his painting technique that Titian made the fullest possible use of his freedom, working in an increasingly bold and expressive manner, also in his portraits. In so doing, his technique was not only representational, but almost tangible. Only the faces are painted with greater refinement than the rest of the body or costume.

**Titian’s style and technique**

Titian’s rich body of work is typified by its warm colours and lighting effects – stylistic features that came to be viewed as characteristic of Renaissance painting in Venice, even in his own lifetime.

He developed markedly in the course of his career, during which he gradually began to paint in a broader, sketchier manner. The *Portrait of a Lady and Her Daughter* likewise includes the occasional brilliantly loose brushstroke. In some cases, the brushwork in Titian’s late-period works is so free that they seem unfinished. This so-called *non finito* style was immensely admired, not only by contemporaries but by later generations too. Titian’s use of colour and fabulous technique – especially in his late paintings – were legendary among seventeenth-century painters like Rubens, Van Dyck, Rembrandt and Velázquez.

In some instances, however, Titian’s works truly were unfinished. He spent a great deal of time on his compositions. A contemporary, Jacopo Palma the Younger, recalled how Titian would work on several paintings at once, sometimes leaving them for months at a time, turned to the wall, before returning to them. *Portrait of a Lady and Her Daughter* is a lovely example of an unfinished work of this kind.