

# VALENTINE SINGERS

## MIRROR OF PERFECTION

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012 10.00 for 10.30am - 4.30pm**  
Barnardo's Church, Tanners Lane, Barkingside IG6 1QG  
Conductor: Christine Gwynn Accompanist: Tim Smith

[www.valentinesingers.org](http://www.valentinesingers.org)

**WHAT?** We shall be exploring and learning this beautiful cantata by Richard Blackford. *Mirror of Perfection* is a deeply expressive, imaginative and vivid setting of Italian poetry by St Francis of Assisi, as appealing to listeners as to singers.

**WHEN?** Doors open at 10am for coffee and registration. Workshop 10.30am - 4.30pm.

**WHO?** Anyone who enjoys choral singing or would like to sample the experience of singing with a large chorus is invited to join Valentine Singers for the day. Observers are also very welcome. The day will be led by the choir's professional music staff, conductor Christine Gwynn and pianist Tim Smith. Young people of senior school age and over are welcome to join us; anyone younger than 18 must have written parental consent (see enrolment form).

### PROVIDED

- ◆ music copies will be available free of charge
- ◆ tea and coffee will be available at the registration and at all breaks

### BRING

- ◆ food for lunch time (or there are plenty of local shops selling sandwiches etc)
- ◆ a bottle of water

### WEAR

- ◆ something comfortable and casual in which you can breathe freely

**HOW MUCH?** £15; £10 VS members; £5 for full-time students/school-children/benefit holders (e.g. unemployment or disability benefits).

**DIRECTIONS** Barnardo's church is in the Barnardo's village site in Tanners Lane; nearest tube: Barkingside, Central Line. **Map at [www.valentinesingers.org/venues.html](http://www.valentinesingers.org/venues.html)** Entrance currently via Court Way during renovations.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Fill in the form and return it to Midge and Keith Venables, 5 Hempstead Close, Buckhurst Hill, Essex IG9 5JQ  
Please enclose a cheque, payable to Valentine Singers, for your enrolment fee.

- ◆ Acknowledgment will be by email; if you require postal acknowledgement please enclose an s.a.e.
- ◆ **Enquiries about enrolment to 020 8504 1261**
- ◆ Other enquiries should be directed to [info@valentinesingers.org](mailto:info@valentinesingers.org) or 01708 751097

-----REPLY FORM-----

**I would like to reserve ..... place(s) for Valentine Singers' *Mirror of Perfection* Day on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012**

I enclose a cheque, payable to Valentine Singers, for £..... (total amount for all applicants named)

Name(s) ..... Soprano / Alto / Tenor / Bass / Observer (please delete)

Phone ..... Email ..... Mobile .....

Address .....

Any previous vocal/choral experience .....

Please let us know of any special needs or requirements that you would like us to take into consideration (e.g. sight or mobility difficulties) .....

Please tell us how you heard about this event .....

**Applicants under 18** Date of birth of applicant ..... Name of parent or guardian .....

I give permission for ..... to participate in this workshop .....(signature)

# MIRROR OF PERFECTION

Richard Blackford

A cantata for soli, chorus and orchestra  
with text by St Francis of Assisi

**Valentine Singers first performed *Mirror of Perfection* in 2002 in the presence of composer Richard Blackford who described the performance as "a passionate and totally committed rendition, with excellent choral singing and some stunning orchestral playing"**

The cantata made a tremendous impression on the audience who found it both moving and uplifting. The choir had really come to love the work and it is with great delight and excitement that we look forward to singing it again this summer. Challenging in various ways, the work is also very rewarding to sing, hugely imaginative and full of glorious colours and textures.

## OPEN WORKSHOP DAY

**Valentine Singers are holding an open workshop – full details on reverse – on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April and would like to invite interested singers and listeners to share the day with us and explore this beautiful work.**

**Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> April 2012 10.30am - 4.30pm**  
10am Registration and coffee

Barnardo's Church, Tanners Lane,  
Barkingside IG6 1QG  
A few minutes walk from Barkingside Station, Central Line

Conductor: Christine Gwynn Accompanist: Tim Smith

***Mirror of Perfection* was first published in 1996. Composer Richard Blackford wrote:**

*"The words are settings of almost unknown poems by St Francis of Assisi and cover a wide expressive and emotional range: from hope to despair, longing to acceptance, love to bitterness, delight in Creation to an impassioned plea for peace amongst mankind. The cantata is no pious word-setting of an ancient saint – rather it is a passionate and vibrant evocation of a man who remains a symbol of hope in an age of spiritual emptiness and cultural decline. Francis of Assisi remains for me a beacon of spiritual light in our technological, ego-based, twentieth century and suggests that perhaps it is through poetry, music and the celebration of life in all its beauty and horror that we can find redemption as we face the new millennium".*

**Mirror of Perfection was commissioned by the Royal Ballet School and first performed at the Royal College of Music in March 1996.** Ronald Corp immediately recognised it as a work that could become standard choral repertory and conducted a performance shortly afterwards at the Royal Festival Hall with the London Choral Society and the New London Orchestra. The work's success came to the attention of Sony Classical who subsequently recorded it with the Bournemouth Symphony Chorus and Bournemouth Sinfonietta, with soloists Ying Huang and Bo Skovhus. The Sony recording was featured in its entirety in the BBC2 film *Seven Canticles of St. Francis*, narrated by Jeremy Irons, shown on Easter Sunday 1999. The Bournemouth Symphony Chorus have since performed *Mirror of Perfection* on their tour of Israel, their Italian tour in 2000 and at the Sheldonian Theatre in Oxford.

Full performance with orchestra on Saturday 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012

**VALENTINE SINGERS** [www.valentinesingers.org](http://www.valentinesingers.org)