



JOHANNES BRAHMS

1833-97



*Cantorum Choir*

# Brahms – REQUIEM

*Songs and Motets by Schubert, Richard Strauss & Bruckner*

ALISON RODDY – *soprano*

DAVID KEMPSTER – *baritone*

LAURIE PERKINS – *piano*

ANTHONY KRAUS – *piano*

MURRAY HIPKIN – *piano / conductor*

*Saturday 13 July 2002 at 8.00 pm*

*Norden Farm Centre for the Arts, Maidenhead*

PROGRAMME

"The things I believe can't all be true, though one of them must be.

But I believe in all of them... at one and the same time. This contradictory way of believing seems to me, right now, the only way I can believe anything. Whatever the truth is, I will be ready for it.

This also is a belief of mine. This also may be untrue.

One of the gravestones in the cemetery near the earliest church has an anchor on it and an hourglass, and the words: *INHOPE*.

*INHOPE*. Why did they put that above a dead person? Was it the corpse hoping, or those still alive?"

Margaret Atwood 'The Handmaid's Tale'

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During the 1950s and early 1960s both my parents, Richard and Hilary, sang with the Philharmonia Chorus. Consequently I grew up surrounded by the sound of choral music and the bookshelves of my home were filled with vocal scores. By the age of eleven, I could recite the entire text of Britten's *Spring Symphony*, and would frequently play along with recordings of *Elizabetta* or Verdi's *Requiem* on the piano in my bedroom, accompanying Elisabeth Schwarzkopf, Gwyneth Jones or Dietrich Fischer-Dieskau. Brahms' *Requiem* must have been one of the first works I got to know, and, even as a child, something in the music must have touched me deeply – perhaps it was the uncertainty, the hope, the humanity, the admission of doubt. Perhaps the loss of my mother at seven years old made me more sensitive to such things – certainly, there was little comfort to be found in the Verdi, and Faure's vision of Paradise never moved me in quite the same way. Thinking about this, I realised that in the thirty-four years since my mother's death I have never once dedicated a performance of mine to her memory. I should like to do that tonight.

Murray Hipkin

... from my own way ... performance ... Cantorum Choir ...  
... from my own way ... performance ... Cantorum Choir ...  
... from my own way ... performance ... Cantorum Choir ...

# CANTORUM CHOIR



- SOPRANO Helen Baker, Bridget Bentley, Julia Bentley\*, Tamara Migrana, Jo Parton, Susannah Riley, Valerie Snapes, Marianne Stork, Jo Tanner, ALTO Penny Bysshe, Leonie Cormack\*, Eleanor Griffiths, Mary Jefferies, Jo Rodgers, Sally Stafford, Lorna Sykes TENOR Howard Faulks, Philip Martineau\*, Peter Roe, Michael Snapes, Jonathan Stork\*, Malcolm Stork BASS John Buck, Stuart Davis, William Falconer\*, Arthur Giorgi, Peter Griffiths, David Hazeldine, Andrew Hubbard, Paul Seddon, Nick Weait

\* guest singers

## REHEARSAL ACCOMPANIST Sophie Behrman

There are currently vacancies in Cantorum for all voices. If you would like to apply for an audition, please contact Valerie Snapes on 01753 866479 or Murray Hipkin on 07966 513187

## PART ONE

Geistliches Lied (*Sacred Song*)

BRAHMS

Ein deutsches Requiem

BRAHMS

Three songs

An die Musik (*To Music*)

Frühlingsglaube (*Spring's Promise*)

Die junge Nonne (*The Young Nun*)

Alison Roddy & Murray Hipkin

SCHUBERT

1 Selig sind, die da Leid tragen  
(*Blessed are those who mourn*)

2 Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras  
(*For all men are like grass*)

Two motets

Locus iste (*This place was made by God*)

Christus factus est pro nobis (*Philippians 2: 8-9*)

BRUCKNER

3 Herr, lehre doch mich, das ein Ende  
(*Show me, O Lord my life's end*)

Three songs

Allerseelen (*All Souls*)

Lob des Leidens (*In Praise of Sorrow*)

Zueignung (*Devotion*)

David Kempster & Murray Hipkin

RICHARD STRAUSS

4 Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen  
(*How lovely is your dwelling place*)

5 Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit  
(*Now is your time of grief*)

INTERVAL

6 Denn wir haben hie keine bleibende Statt  
(*For here we have no enduring place*)

7 Selig sind die Toten  
(*Blessed are the dead*)

PLEASE TURN OFF ALL MOBILE  
PHONES AND DIGITAL WATCHES

**Geistliches Lied – Sacred Song** (*Paul Fleming*)

Do not allow sorrow and mourning to remain with you. Be at peace! I am happy with things as God wills them. Why should you despair about tomorrow? He who takes care of all will provide for you. Be steadfast in all things. Stand firm! What God has decided is necessarily for the best.

**An die Musik – To Music** (*Franz von Schöberl*)

O gracious art, how often in dark hours, when I have been overcome by the tumult of life, you have kindled the warmth of love in my heart and carried me into a better world! How often a sigh, flowing from your harp, a sweet, divine chord, has opened up to me a heaven of better times. O gracious art – thank you!

**Frühlingspläube – Spring's promise** (*Ludwig Uhland*)

Soft breezes awaken; day and night they whisper and stir, busy everywhere. O fresh scents, new sounds! Be anxious no more, poor heart – everything, everything must now hangel! The world is lovelier each day; we do not know what is yet to come, for the blossoming never ends – even in the furthest, deepest valley. Now, poor heart, forget your torment! Everything now must change!

**Die junge Nonne – The young nun** (*Johann Nikolaus Craigher de Tschubatta*)

How the raging storm howls in the treetops! How the rafters groan, the house shudders! How the thunder rumbles, and the lightning flashes, and the night is dark as the grave! Yet of late such storms raged in me! My life blustered as now the gale; my limbs trembled as the house; my love flared as the lightning, and my heart was dark as the grave. Now rage, you wild and mighty storm! In my heart is peace, in my heart tranquillity. The loving bride awaits the Bridegroom, purified in a testing fire, wedded to Eternal Love. I await my Saviour, longing in my eyes! Come, heavenly Bridegroom, take your bride – set free my soul from its earthly prison. Listen, how peacefully the little bell sounds in the steeple! Its sweet tones are calling me all-powerfully to the eternal heights! Hallelujah!

**Locus iste – This place was made by God**

This place was made by God, a priceless sacrament; there is no fault in it.

**Christus factus est pro nobis – Christ became obedient for us**

Christ became obedient for us even unto death, death upon the cross. For this, God raised him and bestowed on him the name which is above all names.

**Allerseelen – All Souls** (*Hermann von Glin*)

Lay on the table the fragrant mignonette and the last red asters, and let us speak again of love, like once in May!

Give me your hand that I may press it secretly – and if anyone should see, what does it matter? Then give me just one sweet glance, like once in May! Today each grave is fragrant with flowers. For one day in the year the dead are free. Come to my heart that I may hold you again, like once in May!

**Lob des Leidens – In praise of sorrow** (*Adolf Friedrich, Graf von Schack*)

O do not revile the sorrows of life! Look at the leaves: when they die, is not the golden light of Autumn richer than when coloured by Spring? What can compare to the blossom of forgiveness in the October breeze? More crystalline than the clearest waters are eyes streaming with tears. Twilight glows with a profounder, darker gleam than does the sun when it is high and bright in the sky, and no one kisses with such an ardent kiss as when one must depart forever.

**Zueignung – Devotion** (*Hermann von Glin*)

Yes, you know, dear heart, that far from you I am tormented. Love makes the heart sick – thank you! Once, revelling in liberty, I raised high a goblet of amethyst, and you blessed the draught – thank you! And you banished the evil away, till I was purified as never before, and sank onto your breast – thank you!

# EINDEUTCHES REQUIEM

*Selig sind, die da Leid tragen* (Matthew 5:4, Psalm 126:5-6)

Blessed are those who mourn: for they will be comforted. Those who sow in tears will reap with songs of joy. He who goes out weeping, carrying seed to sow, will return with songs of joy carrying sheaves with him.

*I Denn alles Fleisch es ist wie Gras* (1 Peter 1:24-25, James 5:7, Isaiah 35:10)

For all men are like grass, and all their glory is like the flowers of the field, the grass withers, and the flower fall... Be patient then, brothers, until the Lord's coming. See how the farmer waits for the land to yield its valuable crop and how patient he is for the autumn and spring rains. But the word of the Lord stands forever. And the ransomed of the Lord will return. They will enter Zion with singing; everlasting joy will crown their heads. Gladness and joy will overtake them, and sorrow and sighing will flee away.

*III Herr, lehre doch mich* (Psalm 39:5-8)

Show me, O Lord, my life's end, and the number of my days; let me know how fleeting is my life. You have made my days a mere handbreadth; the span of my years is as nothing before you. Man is a mere phantom as he goes to and fro: he bustles about, but only in vain; he heaps up wealth, not knowing who will get it. But now, Lord, what do I look for? My hope is in you. But the souls of the righteous are in God's hand, and no torment will touch them.

*IV Wie lieblich sind deine Wohnungen* (Psalm 84:2-3, 5)

How lovely is your dwelling-place, O Lord Almighty! My soul yearns, even faints for the courts of the Lord: my heart and my flesh cry out for the

living God. Blessed are those who dwell in your house: they are ever praising you.

*V Ihr habt nun Traurigkeit* (John 16:22, Ecclesiastes 5:1-3, Isaiah 66:3)

Now is your time of grief; but I will see you again, and you will rejoice, and no one will take away your joy. (As a mother comforts her child, so will I comfort you.) Behold with your eyes, how I laboured only a little, yet found for myself much rest.

*VI Denn wir haben keine bleibende Statt*

(Hebrews 13:14, 1 Cor 15:51-55, Revelation 4:11)

For here we do not have an enduring place, but we are looking for the one to come. Listen, I tell you a mystery; we will not all sleep, but we will all be changed, in a flash, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet. For the trumpet will sound, and the dead will be raised imperishable, and we will be changed. Then the saying that is written will come true: "Death has been swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your sting? O Hell, where is your victory? You are worthy, O Lord, to receive glory and honour and power: for you created all things, and by your will they were created and have their being.

*VII Selig sind die Toten* (Revelation 14:13)

Blessed are the dead, who die in the Lord from now on. Yes, says the Spirit, they will rest from their labour, and their deeds will follow them.

ENGLISH TEXT TAKEN FROM THE NEW INTERNATIONAL  
VERSION OF THE BIBLE

## PROGRAMME NOTES

Although Brahms' *Geistliches Lied* was written in 1856 as an exercise in counterpoint (the vocal parts form a double canon at the ninth) its mood of gentle, lyrical serenity clearly foreshadows the *Requiem* in a gentle exhortation to find comfort through faith. Schubert's *Ar die Musik* (1817) is essentially a prayer in this case placing faith in art and recognising its power to transform, to console and to bless. Three years later came *Erzählungsstunde* with its tremulous sadness and naïve faith, this time in the renewing power of nature. *Die junge Nonne* (1825) draws these themes together as a young nun listens to a distant storm. Comparing her former life to the turmoil of the elements, she contemplates her newly found peace. The steeple bell seems to be calling her as she looks forward to release from her earthly prison.

Unlike his almost exact contemporary, Brahms, Anton Bruckner was a solitary and profoundly religious individual. *Lazarus* (1869) is arguably the most poignant of his *a capella* motets, contrasting simplicity with a less comfortable use of chromaticism. *Christus factus est* is used as part of the Mass services, on Maundy Thursday, and its text comes from Philippians 2:8-9. This setting was completed in 1884, just after the 7th symphony and *Te Deum*, and is a prime example of the way that Bruckner gradually develops harmonic tension, building to memorable climaxes and then easing away.

Although Richard Strauss (1864-1949) is usually associated with large-scale operas and tone poems, his output of *Lieder* reveals an intimate lyricism, which is never more apparent than in his eight Opus 10 settings of poems by Hermann von Gilm (1812-64), first published in 1885. *Allerseelen*, the last of the set, has a rich atmosphere, evoking reminiscences of love. The text is ambiguous at first and it is not until the final stanza that the mention of flowers on a grave confirms that the poet is mourning a dead lover. *Zwanzig* (Opus 10, No. 1) is another ambiguous text, which is open to similar interpretation. Each verse begins in the same way, but through a series of ingenious twists to melodic and harmonic direction, Strauss achieves an extraordinary build-up of emotional temperature, which culminates at the close in explosive gratitude to the absent lover. *Lob des Leidens* (Opus 15, No. 3) is largely positive in tone, despite being a hymn of praise to sorrow. Strauss chooses to linger over the poem's autumnal sentiments, creating an inspired study in melancholy. Published in 1886, the song builds up from nothing to a momentous climax on the words "no one kisses with such an ardent kiss as when one must depart forever".

Since its first performance, Johannes Brahms' *Ein deutsches Requiem* has been the subject of controversy. Even the conditions surrounding the composer's choice of the Requiem form have sparked numerous debates concerning Brahms' own religious beliefs and intentions. On a musical level, the piece has been praised, attacked, accepted, and re-evaluated and the only element of the *Requiem*'s reception that has remained in any way constant is its continued popularity in concert performances.

Early critics insisted that the idea for a Requiem mass was inspired by the death of the composer's mother in 1865. Brahms does mention that his work was spurred on by this event; in addition, the text refers to a motherly comfort, which consoles those whom the dead have left behind. Later critics, however, have also noted that Brahms was greatly affected by the death of his friend and benefactor Robert Schumann, and had considered, within months after Schumann's death in 1856, composing some sort of musical memorial to him. In fact, Brahms insisted that his *Requiem* was intended for all humanity since its innate themes of melancholy and consolation are applicable to any number of occasions. His personal agnosticism is never more apparent than in his *Requiem*, which is not so much a Mass for the dead, as an attempt to bring comfort and hope to the living and bereaved and to celebrate the believer's ultimate triumph over death through faith in Christ.

The choice of texts, from the Luther Bible, speaks for itself. After a contemplative opening movement, even the chilling funeral march in which we are forced to confront the inevitability of death is soon interrupted by advice to be patient. This is itself transformed into a triumphal procession into Zion. The troubled third movement counters man's awareness of his own frailty with the certainty that God holds the souls of the righteous in his hand. The most widely performed section of the piece is a setting of Psalm 84 'How lovely is your dwelling place', and this is followed by the first and only appearance of the soprano soloist. Although her message of reassurance and comfort is taken directly from the words of Jesus to his disciples (John 16:22) it is not hard to imagine the words being uttered by a departed soul – perhaps even a lost mother. The sixth movement, which is a setting of the same texts that Handel set so memorably in *The Messiah*, ends in a huge affirmation of triumph over the grave. The final movement brings the piece to an apparently serene close.

The first three movements of the *German Requiem* were first performed in a semi-private concert in Vienna on December 1, 1867. At this point in time, the Viennese concertgoers knew Brahms chiefly as a producer of Baroque choral works. Although not a scandal, the performance was nonetheless the subject of hefty critical debate, and played a decisive role in the division of critics into the "Brahms v Wagner" camps that were to become so crucial. Wagner's attitude toward Brahms is well documented. He had nothing positive to say about the *Requiem* and was outraged by Brahms' claim to have written a truly German work. Wagner famously remarked that when the present generation (his own) died, "we will want no *German Requiem* to be played to our ashes."

A reviewer wrote: *The German Requiem is a work of unusual significance and great mystery. It seems to us one of the ripest fruits to have emerged from the style of the late Beethoven in the field of sacred music. Since the masses for the dead and mourning cantatas of our classical composers the shadow of death and the seriousness of loss have scarcely been presented in music with such power. The harmonic and contrapuntal art which Brahms learnt in the school of Bach is inspired by him with the living breath of the present ...*

The first complete performance (excluding the fifth movement) was given on Good Friday, April 10, 1868, in Bremen cathedral, and conducted by Brahms himself. The concert was extremely well-publicized and a matter of great anticipation, as Brahms' position in the Bremen musical world had consistently been highly respected; as a result, the turnout was an astounding 2500 listeners, and by all accounts a fabulous success. The program included excerpts of works by Schumann, and parts of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* and Handel's *Messiah*, making for a rather lengthy concert. Nearly all the critics recognized the extraordinarily complex nature of the composition, stressing in particular the incorporation of traditional elements such as counterpoint together with a modern-sounding modulation and rhythmic structure. Even the few negative comments, usually minor, were expressed with a respect for the composer's achievements that had been completely lacking in Vienna. After the fifth movement had been added and performed privately in September 1868, further performances followed in nearly all the major cities of Germany and reception was, with a few notable exceptions, overwhelmingly respectful. The greatest stumbling block appeared to be the Protestant religious text and its "mystical" and "contemplative" tone, which was found to be at odds with the straightforward Protestantism of Bach, Schütz, and other composers of religious music – and in some Catholic towns the foreign Protestant fervour was found to be quite untenable.

It comes as no surprise to learn that the *Requiem* was considerably better received in England and the United States than in Catholic countries such as France and Italy. In Britain, which had by far the strongest and most positive reception (as was typical for choral and religious music), the *Requiem* was premiered in a private performance in London in July 1871. It was for this very performance that Brahms arranged the orchestral score for piano duet, and it is interesting to note that he insisted that the work be given in the language of the audience. It appears that the main criticism of early English performances was that English singers were not well trained to sing the contrapuntal German passages. Not surprisingly, when the London Bach Choir began performing the *Requiem* on a regular basis, the reviewers raved: vocalists trained for Bach, they agreed, were by far the best equipped to handle Brahms' difficult demands.

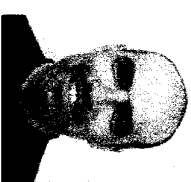
This evening's performance by a chamber choir is a rare opportunity to hear this great work sung in a more intimate setting than usual. Listeners familiar with the orchestral version may miss the colour and impact of the original orchestral accompaniment, and the body of sound that a large choral society can produce. As performers, however, we have chosen to approach this version of the work on its own terms; hopefully our audience will be able to do likewise, finding new colours, new clarity and a new angle on this timeless masterpiece.



ALISON RODDY (*soprano*) was born in Dublin and studied at the RCM and National Opera Studio. Appearances include *Nannetta Falstaff*, *Dunyasha*, *War and Peace*, *Yum-Yum*, *The Mikado*, *Adina*, *The Elixir of Love*, *Jessie*, *The Silver Tassie* (ENO), *Magda*, *La romaine* (Dublin), *Mari*, *Mistress Powder*, *Her Face* (Vienna premiere), *Despina* (*Così fan tutte* (Holland Park), *Wieland*, *Das Rheingold* (New Zealand), *Lucille*, *Danton's Death* (Brighton Festival, UK premiere), *Arsena*, *Der Zigeunerbaron* (Dublin) and *Frasquita*, *Carmen* (Ottawa). Concert appearances include *Messiah* (Bielefeld), *Rutter Magnificat*, *Rossini Stabat Mater* and *Carmine Barana* (RIPO). Recordings include Sullivan *The Rose of Persia* (BBC) and Kenilworth. She is a member of the ENO Jerwood Young Singers Programme. Forthcoming roles for ENO include *Rosina*, *The Barber of Seville*, *Woodbird*, *Siegfried* and *Noira*, *The Handmaid's Tale* (UK premiere).



DAVID KEMPFER (*baritone*) studied at the RNCM and represented Wales in the finals of the 1999 Cardiff Singer of the World competition. His roles at ENO, where he is a company principal, include *Goryanchikov*, *From the House of the Dead*, *Montano*, *Orello*, *Baron La traviata*, *Nazarene*, *Salome*, *Morales*, *Carmen*, *Officer*, *The Carnival*, *Schumann* and *Marcello*, *La bohème*, *Teddy*, *The Silver Tassie*, *Plute*, *St John Passion*, *Chou En-Lai*, *Nixon in China*, *Lescart*, *Manon Lescaut*, *Poacher*, *The Cunning Little Vixen* and *Luna Il trovatore*. Elsewhere he has sung *Rigoletto*, *Don Giovanni*, *Onegin*, *Rossini's Figaro*, *Mozart's Count* and *Wolfram Tannhauser*. His oratorio repertoire includes *Messiah*, *Judas Maccabaeus*, *Elijah*, *Carmine Barana*, *The Dream of Gerontius* and *A Sea Symphony*. Plans include *The Silver Tassie* (Dallas), *Marcello* (Wash National Opera) and *Escamillo* (Glyndebourne Touring Opera).



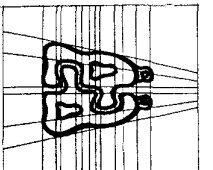
MURRAY HIPKIN (*conductor*) studied at York University, the Guildhall and the National Opera Studio before joining the Music Staff of English National Opera (1983-8). He then worked as a piano teacher, and for Opera de Lyon, Opera Factory, La Monnaie (Brussels), Scottish Opera and Opera Brava (as Musical Director) before returning to ENO in 1995 where, in addition to his extensive work as répétiteur and Assistant Conductor, he has appeared in *The Silver Tassie*, *Mahagonny*, *The Rake's Progress* and *Leoncavallo's La bohème*. He has appeared with Björk in *Pierrot lunaire* (Verbier) and recently worked with her on John Tavener's *Prayer of the Heart*. He has conducted *La bohème* (OperaBox and Surrey Opera), *Noye's Fludde* (Berkshire Youth Opera Group) and recently assisted the composer, John Adams, on the Channel 4 film *The Death of King Lear*. Concerts with Cantorum Choir include *Bach Mass in B minor*, *Rossini Petite Messe Solennelle* and *Britten St Nicholas*. Next season he will be closely involved in the musical preparation of ENO's concert performances of Wagner's *Ring*.

LAURIE PERKINS (*piano*) has just completed the 1-year Opera Repertoire course at the Guildhall School of Music & Drama, working as a coach and pianist on productions there including *La Scala di Seta*, *Iolanta*, *Così fan tutte* & *Pastor From Morocco*. He graduated with a Masters in Music from The University of Bristol and has worked since then in opera, music theatre and pantomime. He has conducted or worked as Musical Director on shows varying from *The Magic Flute* and *Così fan tutte* to *West Side Story*, *Toad of Toad Hall*, *Oliver!* and *Baby*. Laurie has taught at or worked with numerous schools, theatre academies and small opera companies in the UK and is currently playing keyboards for the UK tour of *Sunset Boulevard*.

ANTHONY KRAUS (*piano*) trained at the Guildhall, where he won the Ricordi Prize for Conducting and the National Opera Studio. Credits as répétiteur, accompanist, coach and assistant conductor include concerts with the Junes Vox du Rhin, *The Barber of Seville* (Camberwell Pocket Opera), *Il trovatore* (Stowe Opera), *Carmen* (English Touring Opera), concerts for Opera Interludes in Russia, masterclasses with the Rossini Opera Festival Accademia, Pesaro and the UK premiere of Samuel Barber's *Vanessa* (Lyric Hammersmith). He has played with the London Baroque Sinfonia and the Anton Bruckner Orchestra at the Barbican, St John's Smith Square and Wigmore Hall and has given organ recitals throughout London and the South East. He joined the Music Staff at ENO last season and was Assistant Conductor on *The Marriage of Figaro* and *The Elvir of L'one*.

CANTORUM CHOIR was founded over twenty years ago by its then conductor Jonathan Miall, who now continues his involvement in the role of President. Drawing its members from all around the Thames Valley, but based primarily in Cookham, Cantorum has established a reputation as one of the leading chamber choirs in the area. Its Christmas Carol concerts in Cookham Dean each year have become a village tradition. Cantorum appeared in the first of the *Inspector Morse* adaptations, *The Dead of Jervais* and recorded the soundtrack of *Wuthering Heights*. Its diverse repertoire includes, most recently, Mozart *Requiem*, Rossini *Petite Messe Solenne*, Elgar *The Music Makers*, Bach *Mass in B minor* and *Magnificat*, Buxtehude *Membra Jesu nostri*, Britten *St Nicolas*, Rutter *Requiem*, Handel *David Dominus*, Kodaly *Missa brevis* and Faure *Requiem*. The choir has undertaken several European tours, most recently to Bruges, and next spring hopes to visit Paris for the second time. Cantorum currently has two conductors, Sally Stafford and Murray Hipkin.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS Alison Roddy, David Kempster, Murray Hipkin and Anthony Kraus are all members of English National Opera, and appear by permission. Thanks to Sally Stafford and Rhidian Jones for assisting with rehearsals; the staff of Norden Farm Centre for the Arys; BT for loan of projector; Southern Electric for printing. Programme by Murray Hipkin. Surtitles operated by Stephen Roe.



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**CANTORUM CHOIR DIARY**

**Saturday 19 October**

**Holy Trinity Church, Cookham**

**Programme to include POULIENCÉ - Stabat mater**

**Conductor - SALLY STAFFORD**

**Sunday 15 December - Carols at Cookham Dean Church**

**Conductor - MURRAY HIPKIN**