



About Matthew Best

Matthew Best is one of the most well-known and versatile musicians working in the UK today. An opera singer for over thirty-five years with a distinguished reputation worldwide, he has worked extensively as a choral and orchestral conductor across the UK and Europe, at various stages during his career as composer, arranger and editor, and more recently as a respected singing teacher and coach. He received his musical education at King's College, Cambridge where he was a choral scholar, and at the National Opera Studio. As a singer he has studied under the late Otakar Kraus, with Robert Lloyd and with Patrick McGuigan, and in 1981 was awarded the Decca-Kathleen Ferrier Prize.

As a conductor Matthew Best is well known as a specialist in choral, vocal and orchestral music. Founder (1973) and artistic director of Corydon Singers and Corydon Orchestra, he has made over thirty highly-regarded recordings for the Hyperion label, three of which have been runner-up for the Choral Award in Gramophone, and several others selected as the recommended version on Building a Library on BBC Radio 3. Recordings include a cycle of all the major Bruckner choral works, Vaughan Williams' opera *Hugh the Drover*, *Serenade to Music* and a four-disc set of Vaughan Williams choral works, the Beethoven Mass in C and 'Emperor' Cantatas, the Rachmaninov Vespers and Liturgy of St John Chrysostom, Fauré and Duruflé Requiems, Britten *St Nicolas*, Berlioz *L'Enfance du Christ*, Finzi *Intimations of Immortality* and discs of music by Mendelssohn, Cherubini, Britten, Tchaikovsky, Copland and Villa-Lobos. He has conducted at festivals throughout the UK and Europe, at the BBC Proms, Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, St. John's, Smith Square, and in the cathedrals of Westminster, Salisbury, Lichfield, Gloucester, Chester and Southwark. Earlier in his career he appeared regularly as guest conductor with the English Chamber Orchestra, London Mozart Players, Northern Sinfonia, City of London Sinfonia and BBC Singers; he has also appeared with the Royal Liverpool Philharmonic Orchestra, Manchester Camerata, BBC National Orchestra of Wales, English Northern Philharmonia, New Queen's Hall Orchestra, Royal Seville Symphony Orchestra and Sonderjyllands Sinfoniorkester. For the 1998-9 season he was Principal Conductor of the Hanover Band, conducting a Beethoven cycle in London including the 1st, 3rd, 5th and 7th symphonies and Emperor Concerto.

As a singer Matthew Best has for a great many years been a regular guest artist for all the major UK opera houses and is familiar to concert audiences across the country, Europe and

the USA. He has appeared regularly for The Royal Opera, English National Opera, Welsh National Opera, Scottish Opera and Opera North, for Glyndebourne Festival Opera and Glyndebourne Touring Opera, for Grange Park Opera and Buxton Opera Festival. Abroad he has worked as a guest artist for Opéra de Lyon, Théâtre du Châtelet (Paris), in Nancy, Rouen and Nice, at the opera houses of Frankfurt, Stuttgart and Cologne, for Oper Leipzig in Hong Kong, at the Théâtre de la Monnaie (Brussels), Netherlands Opera, Royal Swedish Opera, Santa Fé Opera and Florida Grand Opera. He appears regularly at all the major UK concert halls, including on several occasions at the BBC Promenade Concerts; in addition he has worked as soloist in over eighty European and UK cities, in Tokyo, Kuala Lumpur and Hong Kong, and in the USA in New York, Miami, St Louis and Los Angeles.

Over his long career Matthew Best's extensive repertoire has included over one hundred bass, bass-baritone and baritone roles. Chief amongst these have been Wotan in the complete Wagner Ring Cycle, The Flying Dutchman, King Mark, Amfortas, Kurwenal, King Heinrich, Scarpia, Jochanaan, La Roche, Orest, Peneios, Commendatore, Timur, Ramfis and Sparafucile, and he has premiered roles in new operas by Jonathan Harvey, Julian Anderson and (US premiere) Kaija Saariaho. He has worked with a great many of the world's leading conductors, including Gergiev, Muti, Haitink, Colin Davis, Andrew Davis, Mehta, Nelsons, Salonen, Svetlanov, Sanderling, Mackerras, Marriner, Runnicles, Gardiner, Hickox, Leppard, Nelson and Gilbert.

At the start of his career Matthew Best was very active as a composer and arranger. He conducted the premiere of his operetta Alice (based on Lewis Carroll's Alice in Wonderland) in Cambridge in February 1979, directed by Nicholas Hytner; further performances were given in the Jubilee Hall, Aldeburgh, as part of the 1979 Aldeburgh Festival, with a guest appearance by Sir Peter Pears. His other works include choral music (first performances including by the choir of King's College, Cambridge and Corydon Singers) and song cycles. He has produced performing editions for a number of works, including of a rare Bruckner manuscript for inclusion in his Bruckner cycle for Hyperion Records.

In recent years Matthew Best has added adjudicating, teaching and coaching to his busy schedule. He has adjudicated several competitions at the Guildhall School of Music, Birmingham Conservatoire and Royal Academy of Music, has given masterclasses at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Cardiff University, and has recently taken up a teaching post at the Royal Northern College of Music in Manchester, which he combines with his singing and conducting commitments. He was a member of the jury for the 2016 Kathleen Ferrier Competition.