

Martin Butler and Gabriel Jackson: Concertos for Presteigne Festival

The 2009 Presteigne Festival of Music and the Arts premiered two concertos by OUP composers, both rapturously received by critics and audience alike.



Martin Butler
photo: Katie Vandyck

Butler's *Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Strings* was premiered by Amy Dickson and the Presteigne Festival Orchestra, conducted by George Vass in the opening concert of the Festival, on 27 August.

'Martin Butler's Concerto for Soprano Saxophone and Strings is a jaunty affair. Lively, insistent rhythms propel its dancing outer sections with unflagging, minimalist energy, while the raw silk of the saxophone's tone is highlighted in the central cantilena.'

Rian Evans, The Guardian

'the music in fact spoke for itself, combining rustic, raw sounds with bucolic energy'

Christopher Morley, The Birmingham Post

The premiere of Jackson's *Piano Concerto* was included in the Presteigne Festival Finale concert on 1 September, performed by Huw Watkins and the Presteigne Festival Orchestra, conducted by George Vass.

'a dazzling world premiere... Jackson's concerto has an easy familiarity that makes it seem like an old friend. In the opening movement sparse textures characterise much of the solo part, as well as punchy chords, while at other points the pianist provides rippling accompaniments to elegantly crafted modal woodwind solos. Elsewhere the lush string writing is unashamedly romantic, though never cloying, and there are several passages of joyous melody and rhythmic vitality. ... a finely structured work, so full of charm and free of tensions.'

David Hart, The Birmingham Post

'...pretty, witty, and bright...'

John Rushby-Smith, The Hereford Times



Gabriel Jackson
photo: Katie Vandyck

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