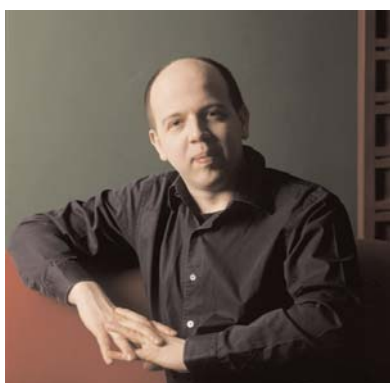


Martin Butler and Gabriel Jackson: Concertos for Presteigne Festival

Presteigne Festival is well known for its continuing commitment to the performance and promotion of contemporary music. For the 2009 festival, Martin Butler and Gabriel Jackson have been commissioned to write exciting new works; a **Concerto for Saxophone and String Orchestra** from Martin Butler, to be premiered at the Festival's opening concert by the internationally acclaimed Australian saxophonist, Amy Dickson, and a Mozartian-sized **Piano Concerto** from Gabriel Jackson to be performed on 1 September by the Welsh musical polymath Huw Watkins.

The music of two other Oxford composers, William Mathias and Cecilia McDowall, will also be included in the 2009 Presteigne Festival.

The 27th Presteigne Festival of Music and the Arts will promote more than thirty events over six days from 27 August to 1 September 2009.



Huw Watkins
photo: Hanya Chala

Gabriel Jackson writes:

'I am particularly excited that the first performance of my **Piano Concerto** will be at Presteigne. Huw Watkins will be the soloist which is fantastic—he is a great musician and, being a composer himself, very understanding!

'The piano is my favourite instrument, and I love all the big bravura Romantic concertos. My piece is on a more modest scale, for a Mozart-sized orchestra in the standard three-movement form. A Neo-Neo-Classical piece perhaps . . .'

Martin Butler writes :

'Three things have fed into my thoughts as I compose my **Saxophone Concerto**: Amy Dickson's playing – fantastic tone, wonderful style!; John Coltrane playing *My Favourite Things* in a disconcertingly earthy way, as if he were a snake charmer; and a tiny, bagpipe-esque soprano saxophone phrase from my earlier piece, *Hootenanny*.

'These ingredients have meant that the concerto will use folk-derived materials and performing practices—in much the same vein as other works of mine, such as *Hootenanny*, *Down-Hollow Winds*, and *American Rounds*. I really enjoy the idea that certain strands of one's work link with one another, and form a continuum within an otherwise diverse output.

'My Saxophone Concerto will certainly be virtuosic, in the tradition of the concerto as a genre; but it will also capitalize on Amy's uniquely lyrical tone and expressive style – and will finish with something of an unexpected firecracker.'



Amy Dickson
photo: Christian Mushenko

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