

£950,000 lottery cash confirmed for Royal Festival Hall organ

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The work, to restore and reinstall the remaining two thirds of the organ including almost 5,000 pipes, will be carried out by Harrison and Harrison Ltd, the company that originally built and installed the organ in 1954 in the Grade I listed Hall, often described as the strongest architectural creation of Britain's post-war culture.

The project is expected to be completed in 2013 at a cost of over £2 million and will see the organ put back to its rightful place and original location at the heart of the Royal Festival Hall auditorium in time for the organ's 60th anniversary celebration in 2014.

With 7,710 pipes the Royal Festival Hall organ forms the architectural centrepiece of Sir Leslie Martin's concert auditorium and is the largest ever built by Harrison and Harrison. Conceived in the spirit of radical thought at the heart of the 1951 Festival of Britain it was the largest music project in the country at the time, and was designed to serve Classical and Baroque repertoires alongside the full range of organ and orchestral musical repertoires. As such it gave rise to a totally new school of organ building known as English Organ Reform and its open plan design and eclectic tone had a massive impact on English organ construction and its influence was felt across the world.

In addition to the vital restoration and reinstallation work that will see the refurbishment of the Royal Festival Hall finally 'complete', a community learning and engagement programme will be carried out enabling people of all ages to experience the organ for free. These will include monthly free recitals in collaboration with the Royal College of Music and Royal Academy of Music, plus provision for two new apprentices to work with Harrison and Harrison in addition to an organ scholar placement.

Sue Bowers, Head of the Heritage Lottery Fund for London, said: "We are delighted that the Royal Festival Hall will soon be complete and this amazing internationally important organ back in its rightful place for people of all ages to learn from, experience and enjoy."

Alan Bishop, Chief Executive of Southbank Centre, said: "I would like to thank the Heritage Lottery Fund for their significant contribution to the full restoration of the great organ of the Royal Festival Hall for the next generation. This is a major boost ahead of our fundraising campaign, which we will launch in September, announcing how the public can also support the completion of the organ project."

The first phase of the organ refurbishment, also carried out by Harrison and Harrison Ltd, saw the restoration and reinstallation of the Swell, Great fluework and Pedal Principal 32ft stop, and was completed as part of a major transformation of the Royal Festival Hall, which reopened in June 2007.

Notes to editors

* The HLF grant to the project Royal Festival Hall Organ Project is for £950,000 (44% of project costs) and is a second-round pass, which means it is a confirmed award.

Using money raised through the National Lottery, the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) sustains and transforms a wide range of heritage for present and future generations to take part in, learn from and enjoy. From museums, parks and historic places to archaeology, natural environment and cultural traditions, we invest in every part of our diverse heritage. HLF has supported 33,900 projects, allocating £4.4billion across the UK, including £865million to projects in London alone.

To date, the Heritage Lottery Fund has awarded just over £42.6million to 179 projects in LB Lambeth.

Southbank Centre is the UK's largest arts centre, occupying a 21-acre site that sits in the midst of London's most vibrant cultural quarter on the South Bank of the Thames. The site has an extraordinary creative and architectural history stretching back to the 1951 Festival of Britain. Southbank Centre is home to the Royal Festival Hall, Queen Elizabeth Hall, Purcell Room and The Hayward as well as The Saison Poetry Library and the Arts Council Collection. The Royal Festival Hall reopened in June 2007 following the major refurbishment of the Hall and redevelopment of the surrounding area and facilities. www.southbankcentre.co.uk

Further information

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