Restoration of Royal Festival Hall Organ

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Southbank Centre has been given the green light* by the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) to work up plans for a grant of £950,000 to complete the refurbishment of the Royal Festival Hall's organ.

The first phase of the organ refurbishment, the restoration and reinstallation of the Swell, Great fluework and Pedal Principal 32ft stop, was completed as part of the major transformation of the Royal Festival Hall, which reopened in June 2007. The final phase, at a cost of over £2 million, will be completed in 2013.

The second round application to HLF will be submitted by Southbank Centre in March and the outcome is likely to be announced in June. A major fundraising campaign will be launched in September to complete the funding required for the work.

The restoration work is being carried out by Harrison and Harrison Ltd, the company that originally built and installed the organ in 1954, and was responsible for the first phase of the refurbishment.

Alan Bishop, Chief Executive of Southbank Centre, said: "We are committed to fully restoring the great organ of the Royal Festival Hall for the next generation. I am delighted that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given us this important encouragement at such a vital time in our plans."

Sue Bowers, Head of Heritage Lottery Fund London, said: "We look forward to working further with the Southbank Centre to develop their plans for a full award to restore this magnificent organ, so that this centre-piece of the Royal Festival Hall may be enjoyed by future generations."

Sir Roger Norrington, said: "The Ralph Downes organ in the Royal Festival Hall is at the heart of classical music-making in London and an incredibly important part of our musical heritage. I'm so pleased that the Heritage Lottery Fund has given Southbank Centre the go-ahead to take their application to the final stage."

Notes to editors

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.

*A first-round pass means the project meets our criteria for funding and we believe it has potential to deliver high-quality benefits and value for Lottery money. The application was in competition with other supportable projects, so a first-round pass is an endorsement of outline proposals. Having been awarded a first-round pass, the project now has up to two years to submit fully developed proposals to compete for a firm 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.

In July 2004 HLF Trustees awarded a grant of £19.176m towards the restoration and renovation of the Royal Festival Hall. The HLF project did not include the organ. In 2007, as part of the reopening of the RFH, a third of the organ was installed, but there were insufficient funds to complete the installation. This project will complete the installation of the organ and the restoration of the auditorium while adding value to HLF's previous investment in the Royal Festival Hall.

Further information

Southbank Centre, Patricia O'Connor, Head of Press on 020 7921 0632 / patricia.oconnor@southbankcentre.co.uk or Dennis Chang, Classical Music Press Manager on 020 7921 0824 / dennis.chang@southbankcentre.co.uk.

Vicky Wilford, HLF Press Office, on; 020 7591 6046 / 07973 401937, email vickyw@hlf.org.uk.