

Preserving the sound

THOUSANDS of pipes from York Minster's iconic organ are now undergoing meticulous refurbishment work at a Durham specialists.

The instrument, which had its last major refurbishment in 1903, is now in the hands of Durham-based organ specialists Harrison and Harrison.

They will carry out an extensive, once-in-a-century refurbishment which is expected to take two years to complete.

The £2m project should preserve the organ's sound for the next 100-years and will include replacing its mechanism, extensive work to dismantle, clean and overhaul the instrument and minor changes to the organ case to both improve how it looks and the sound it allows out.

The work has already seen the removal of nearly 5,403 pipes which are now being examined and repaired where necessary.

Overall, the refurbishment will ensure the unique sound of the Minster's organ is preserved, while restoring the grander, imposing qualities of the instrument which were altered during work in the 1960s.

While the work is underway, the Minster's full music programme is continuing. A grand piano is being used alongside an existing chamber organ in the Quire and a digital organ serves both the Nave and Quire.

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HISTORIC: Technician Jim Reeves, from organ specialists Harrison and Harrison in Durham, looks at one of nearly 5,403 pipes removed from York Minster's Grand Organ
Picture: OWEN HUMPHREYS/PA