



GRAND OCCASION: Main, pianist Albert Lau with the Steinway piano at the Georgian Theatre in Richmond, where he will be giving a recital tomorrow; above, restorer Aidan Delacey-Simms gives a final check after the piano is moved into place.

PICTURES: GARY LONGBOTTOM.

Piano at its best for new season

WHEN THE curtain rises tomorrow at the Georgian Theatre's autumn season, many eyes will be on pianist Albert Lau,

He will be delivering the first professional performance at the Richmond theatre since the pandemic forced its closure in March 2020. Mr Lau will share the stage with another star – the theatre's magnificent Steinway

grand piano, making a first appearance following its recent restoration.

The Steinway's restoration is just one of several projects to have taken place at the Georgian Theatre Royal during lockdown. These include the installation of new seating and a state-of-the-art heating and ventilation system.

Theatre manager Clare Allen said: "Lockdown and the

subsequent cessation of live performances seemed like a great opportunity to send the piano away for a bit of TLC. We knew it would be a lengthy process so it was a good time to have it out of action."

Tasked with the job of bringing the Steinway up to top concert standard was the Piano Workshop in Kirkbymoorside, near Pickering. Aidan Delacey-

Simms, a specialist in Steinway restoration at the workshop, said: "Steinways are the Rolls-Royce of pianos and this is a beautiful instrument with a fantastic sound."

The Steinway was bought by the theatre in 1965 for £1,500. It was part-funded using a donation of £1,000 from Lady Barlow, also known as the acclaimed actress Margaret Rawlings.