

Auction signals the end of 100 years of history

# Last tune played out at piano firm

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**THE curtain will come down on UK piano manufacturing next week when more than 30 magnificent instruments go under the hammer.**

It signals the final chapter in nearly 100 years of history at the British Piano Manufacturing Company in Stroud, Gloucestershire.

As the Western Daily Press revealed, the firm, which was the country's last independent maker of pianos, went into liquidation in April with £1.5million debts.

All 23 staff lost their jobs after the business collapsed in the face of competition from the Far East where labour is much cheaper, and a fall in demand at home and abroad.

Paint hopes of a new buyer



**Instrumental change: BPMC was the last independent piano maker**

resurrecting the company fell flat, and its assets are being sold off to the highest bidders on Wednesday.

The sale includes all the unused upright, grand and baby

grand pianos which were made by the company but not sold before the business's sudden downfall, along with wood-working machinery, tools and other equipment. In total, the

lots are expected to fetch up to £100,000.

William Hancock, director of UK auctions for Henry Butcher auctioneers, said: "We have already sold off the company's order book for the work that was in progress, and part-finished pianos, to a single purchaser, which is another manufacturer."

"But there are a fair amount of items left to sell."

"One of the most interesting lots in the sale is a series of framed logos of the different trading names of the company, which changed over the years."

Pianos have been manufactured at the factory in Woodchester since 1911. The firm originally traded under the family owned name Bentley.

The auction takes place at the factory from 11am, Wednesday, with viewing the previous day 9.30am to 4.30pm.