


Introduction to the original Catalogue, 1904.

 England is undoubtedly due the credit of having originated the idea of holding public exhibitions of Musical Instruments. The first exhibition of the kind was that held in 1872 at the South Kensington Museum. It is gratifying to know that the success of that undertaking led in due course to its imitation abroad ; and that similar exhibitions were held at Milan in 1881, at Bologna and Brussels in 1888, and in Vienna in 1892 ; and exhibitions of the same kind were also held at South Kensington in 1885 and at the Crystal Palace in 1900. As a further example of the same movement may be mentioned the collection of Wind Instruments brought together at the Military Exhibition at Chelsea in 1890, under the direction of Colonel Shaw-Hellier, a Liveryman of the Company of Musicians, and at that time Commandant of the Royal Military School of Music, Kneller Hall. Nor must we fail to remember the Purcell Exhibition at the British Museum to commemorate the bicentenary of the composer's death ; and the collection of portraits of musicians and of musical compositions shown at the Earl's Court Exhibition of 1897 in illustration of the musical art during the Victorian era.

The promoters of all these exhibitions were impelled by the same motive which has prompted the Musicians' Company of London, in commemoration of the third centenary of the granting of their original Charter, to form the present collection