

Elden E. Benge Co.

Chicago - Burbank - LA - Anaheim

- 1904 Elden Eugene Benge born in Winterset, Iowa
- 1913 Benge begins learning the cornet.
- 1920 Benge still in Winterset, no occupation (census)
- 1920s Benge playing for theater orchestra in Pasadena, CA
- 1928 Benge starts as principle trumpet for Detroit Symphony.
- 1930 Benge is listed with parents, #807 E. Colorado, Glendale, CA, orchestra musician (census).
- 1933 Benge starts with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, twin sons Donald & Ronald are born in November.
- 1935 Benge starts making his own trumpets based on the French Besson that he played; earliest trumpet #500 is made at his home at #2634 W. Berwyn Ave, Chicago (Ron Berndt of Trumpet-History reports that Benge bought lead pipes from Besson in Paris as well as a bell mandrel on which he had Holton make the bells.)
- 1937 Benge moves to #2511 N. Major Ave., Chicago.
- 1939 Benge resigns from the CSO and starts full time production of his trumpets; E.E. Benge Co.; start of Resno-Tempered bell name.
- 1940 home at #2511 Major Ave., musician (census)
- 1942 Benge moves to #1945 W. Morse where most of the Chicago trumpets are made.
- 1945 Benge is first trumpet for the Chicago Philharmonic while overseeing production of his trumpets.
- 1953 Benge moves to Burbank, CA and starts production in his garage there; about 5 trumpets per week.
- 1960 Benge dies due to a car accident and his sons take over the business.
- 1963 Donald buys out his brother; production up to 22 / week
- Late 1960s start of the Claude Gordon model trumpet based on the pre-WWII French Besson with 0.468" bore
- 1969 Short-lived Jubilee models introduced but later dropped since the cheaper model could not be built to quality standards desired.



The
Benge
TRUMPET

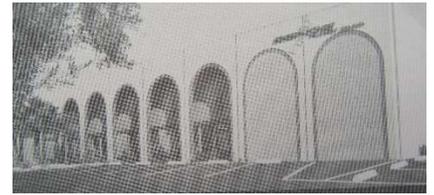
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- 1970 Donald sells Benge to Leisure Time Industries and production is moved to Los Angeles to a shop upstairs above Lockie Music Exchange, #950 S. Broadway
- 1972 Benge is sold to King and moved to a new facility in Anaheim (photo 1); the line is expanded to Kanstul French horns & piccolo trumpets.
- 1973 Benge is described as a small manufacturer located in LA and distributed by KMI. (US tariff report)
- 1979 King / Benge is sold in bankruptcy to creditors
- 1983 Benge is sold to Conn and production is moved to Eastlake; the Claude Gordon model ends; trumpets in Eastlake did not use the old tooling which stayed in LA to become the Burbank trumpet (later Kanstul).
- 1985 Conn is merged into UMI.
- 2000 UMI is purchased by Steinway.
- 2005 All Benge production is ended.
- 2007 Donald Benge dies in a car accident.
- 2020 BAC Musical Instruments acquires the original Benge tooling from Kanstul. (Berndt)



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Trumpets at right: #637 (Chicago, Robb Stewart photo), #2364, #1754, #14700 (Eastlake)(Horn-u-copia photos)