

Gustav Besson

Paris, France

- 1837 Gustav Besson (1820-1874) designs a new cornet with better acoustical properties than any others.
- 1838 Besson opens shop in Paris, rue Tiquetonne 14 (photo 1).
- 1845 Besson moves to rue des Trois Couronnes 7 (photos 2&3).
- 1854 Besson invents a straight through bore design.
- 1855 Besson invents a full-bore design, improving response.
- 1856 Besson invents the prototype system of tools to enable production of consistent copies.
- 1857 A dispute with Sax over his patent forces Besson to move to London and open a factory there while his wife takes over the Paris factory. The "Brevete" mark changes to "Brevetee" to indicate feminine ownership.
- 1869 Separate serial numbers for Paris and London start with Paris starting at zero in their new location at rue d'Angouleme 92.
- 1874 Gustav dies, leaving the business to his widow and two daughters. Daughter Marthe takes over running it.
- 1880 Marthe (photo 4) marries Adolphe Fontaine and the company changes to Fontaine-Besson.
- 1881 The Paris factory has 62 workers.
- 1882 Besson develops a new cornet with compensating design.
- 1884 The Paris factory is at serial #30000.
- 1889 The Paris factory moves to rue d'Angouleme 96-98.

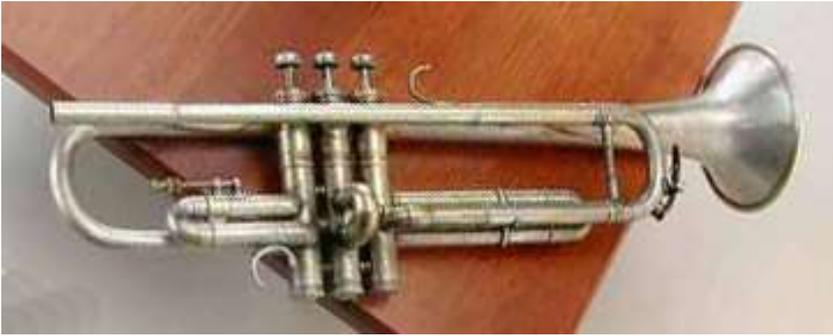
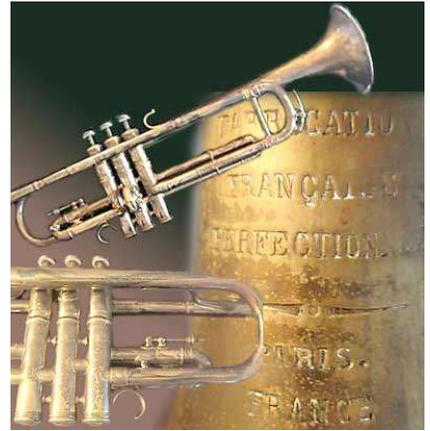


	<p>MANUFACTURE D'INSTRUMENTS DE MUSIQUE, BOIS & CUIVRE Système Prototype F. BESSON 96, 98, rue d'Angoulême, Paris (Adresse télégraphique : Fontaine-Besson, Paris) Fournisseur des Armées, Marins et Conservatoires de toutes les nations, des Concerts du Conservatoire, Lemoine et Colonne, de la Garde de Paris et de toutes les Musiques civiles et militaires en répétition. 49 MÉDAILLES et DIPLOMES D'HONNEUR, la seule MÉDAILLE D'OR décernée par le Ministère de la Guerre en 1889 Le "Système Prototype" est le seul assurant la parfaite justesse dans tous les Instruments</p> <p>DERNIÈRES CREATIONS Saxophones, nouvelle percus et clés additionnelles. — Les "Cornophones". — La Clarinette "Pédale". — Basses et Contrebasses, nouvelles proportions. — Les Cornets "Le Soliste", le desideratum. — Le Concertiste. — Trombones. — Clairs et Trompettes.</p>	
LE SOLISTE		CORNOPHONE

- 1894 The Paris factory is at serial #50000 and a work force of 145. Marthe moves to London to avoid Fontaine's violent behavior. 90 workers in Paris strike for six weeks in protest of him.
- 1895 Marthe sells the London business on April 15th and Adolphe sues to try and block the sale. The quarrel is finally resolved the following year.



- 1906 The Paris factory is at serial #70000.
- 1908 Both Marthe and Adolphe die this year, and their daughter, Mathilde Sabatier, takes ownership.
- 1920 The Paris factory is at serial #82000.
- 1932 Strasser Margaux & Lemaire acquires F. Besson with Aubertin making valves, bells & final assembly.
- 1934 The Paris instruments are at serial #87000.
- 1930s Besson trumpets are in high demand but illegal to import. Parts can be purchased, and Joseph Rapuano in New York City buys them and assembles trumpets here. They are marked "Fabrication Francaise Perfectionee Paris France" (#86278 below, #88306 top right).



- 1935 Joseph Rapuano dies on February 28, likely ending his imports (NYC records). An ad appears in September announcing a new partnership between Liese-Meha Inc and Mme Besson for importing instruments from Paris.

ANNOUNCEMENT

MADAME F. BESSON
of Paris, France

World-famous manufacturer of brass and woodwind instruments, announces the appointment of

LIESE-MEHA, Inc.
New York Office, 1595 Broadway
Phone, LAckawanna 4-5531

as her sole and exclusive agent for the sale of BESSON-MEHA instruments in the United States of America.

"If its a Besson-Meha its the choice of instrumental artists everywhere."

TRUMPETS TROMBONES SAXOPHONES
WOODWINDS ACCESSORIES



1937 Liese-Meha Inc, 1595 Broadway, New York, representatives of Besson, Paris, owned by Mme. F. Besson (Presto, June). [This was another operation set up to import F. Besson trumpets. Owned by Oscar J. Liese (1906-1983), who lived in Brooklyn.]

Oscar Liese, 145 Lincoln Rd, Brooklyn, returns from La Havre, France to NYC on October 20 (immigration record). [Since this was the main port for Paris, he was likely setting up his import business with Besson.]

1942 A c.1942 Liese-Meha catalog shows players using the Besson Meha trumpets. These were imported to New York and prepared for sale by brass technician Perry Pirone.

1943 Any imports end with the German occupation.

1950 Besson Inc. is formed in San Antonio, Texas on October 10 to sell brass in the US. This is started by Goeffrey Hawkes of B&H and set up by Milton Fink, the owner of Southern Music and the C. Bruno & Son dealership there (The History of B&H, Howell).

Besson trumpet #92226 is sold through Besson Inc and has a guarantee card with their 1100 Broadway address, which they moved to in 1950.

1951 Besson/B&H purchase the almost bankrupt F. Besson. A new company is formed by Geoffrey Hawkes, using his Paris publishing company Editions Hawkes, and Couesnon SA, as a subsidiary of Editions Hawkes. They allocate shares at 60% EH and 40% Couesnon, with Emil Stoecklin of Couesnon the director (Besson shareholder minutes).

1963 The English Besson catalog, published by Bruno, includes the F. Besson trumpet. Mario Marcone, who works for Bruno in NY, visits the Paris factory, which is located at 16 rue du Faubourg, Saint Denis, the same location as Editions Hawkes. The trumpets were being assembled there from parts made by Couesnon. At this time, they decide to switch to valves made by B&H (Marcone).

1968 The English Besson catalog from Bruno has the model 125 trumpet by F. Besson as their top model made in Paris.

1968 B&H now has full ownership of Besson & Co.

1982 The long-dormant F. Besson name is alive again when B&H hires Zig Kanstul to make modern copies. He measures about fifty trumpets and begins production based on these and tools reproduced from the originals saved from Paris. They are introduced for sale in 1983 (*Music Trades*, 1983).

1992 Kanstul starts production of the International models (Howell).



- 1998 Kanstul ends production of most Besson models, but new ones were still available later from old stock. He continues to make the Classic and Stamm models (Besson website).
- 2003 The Music Group buys the manufacturing business of B&H (Howell). The Besson designs & tooling are destroyed, and the name is used in a new line of instruments built in India and other locations (Berndt).
- 2006 Buffet Crampon buys the Besson name and production is moved to Markneukirchen, Germany (Berndt).
- 2019 BAC Musical Instruments acquires the records and tooling from Kanstul (Berndt).
- 2020 BAC acquires the Besson name and starts production.

Information from *The New Langwill Index* unless noted.