

Rudolph Wurlitzer Co.

Cincinnati, Ohio

- 1853 Franz Rudolph Wurlitzer (1831-1914) emigrates from Saxony to Cincinnati (photo 1)
- 1857 Rudolph Wurlitzer, bookkeeper, #96 Main St. (he establishes an instrument importing business this year)
- 1861 R.W., musical instruments, #123 Main St., upstairs; brother Anton Frances Wurlitzer (1839-1901) has now joined him as a clerk (directory)
- 1865 a branch opens in Chicago on Wabash Ave. (dir)
- 1867 brother Constantine (1846-1934) immigrates to US and joins them as a clerk (dir)
- 1868 moves to #115 Main St. (dir)
- 1872 now R. Wurlitzer & Bro., #115 Main St., with Anton (dir)
- 1880 W. & Bro., #115 Main St., manufacturer & importer of musical instruments, regular & "Excelsior" models of brass
- 1889 son Howard Eugene Wurlitzer (1871-1928) joins the company and develops the organ business (photo 2)
- 1891 moves to #23 W. 4th St. and incorp. as R. Wurlitzer Co.
- 1893 offering "Cincinnati", "Courtois", "Professional", & "Besson" model cornets as well as "Amateur Superior" & "Popular Superior" trombones (catalog)
- 1894 son Rudolph Henry Wurlitzer (1873-1948) joins the company as director & develops the violin dept. (photo 3)
- 1896 moves to #117-121 East 4th St. (dir)
- 1899 Anton retires
- 1904 son Fanny Reginald Wurlitzer (1883-1972) joins the company as a sales rep after studying manufacturing in Germany (MTR)
- 1912 Rudolph retires as president; Howard takes his place
- 1914 a branch opens in San Francisco, CA, #985 Market St.
- 1922 Howard E. Martin becomes the VP for Martin BIC.
- 1925 offering Martin Handcraft instruments as well as their own "Lyric" and "Professional" model brass, the "Innovation" trumpet, the new "Melody" trumpet, and the new "Vocal" cornet in C/Bb/A; Chicago store at #329-331



S. Wabash; NYC store at #120 W. 42nd; SF store at #250 Stockton; LA store at #814-818 S. Broadway (catalog)

- 1927 son Rudolph Henry becomes president
- 1929 offering the new “Master” trumpets & trombones by Martin as well as their own “Lyric” & “Professional” models
- 1932 son Farny becomes president
- 1941 the main office is moved to Chicago and R. C. Rolwing becomes president
- 1964 Wurlitzer buys Martin BIC from RMC. (US tariff report)
- 1967 William Herleman becomes president
- 1969 The Wurlitzer Co., #375 Boylston St., Boston (dir); All production at Martin ends in October as they could not compete with their antiquated factory. The machinery was sold and the building and property given to the city. (1973 US tariff report)
- 1970 The Martin plant is sold to Leblanc. (US tariff report)

Brass Instruments:

R. Wurlitzer: 1857-1871, probably all German imports

R. Wurlitzer & Bro.: 1872-1890, probably all German imports

R. Wurlitzer Co.: 1891-1940, these are a mixture of domestic and imported instruments; models include “Monarch”, “Perfection”, “Lyric”, “Lyric Liberty”, “Lyric Victory” (probably after WWI), “American”, “Majestic”, “Artist Special”, “Professional” (if serial number starts with “P” then made by Pan American), “Symphony” (if there is an anchor or “B&F” on the middle valve then made by Bohland & Fuchs of Austria), and “Melodie”.

All brass that I have found photos of date to c.1940 or earlier with very few past the 1920s.

Photos from Horn-u-copia.net & auction sales except 1&2 this page from author’s collection.



Below is the repair shop in 1898



Wurlitzer Store: #117-121 East 4th St. in 1904 below

