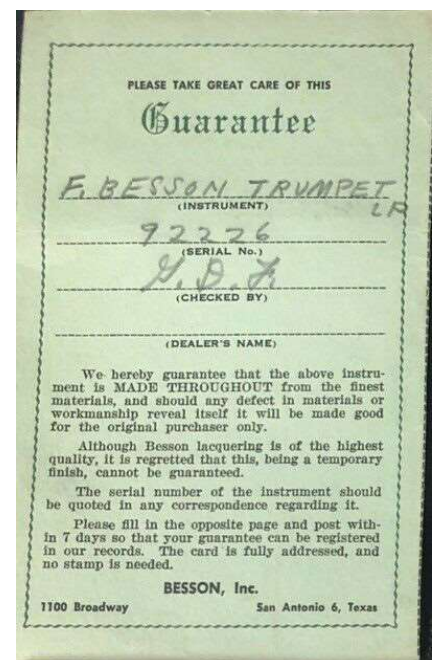


Besson Inc.

San Antonio, Texas

The history of Besson in Texas involves three companies apparently owned by the same person, Milton Fink.

- 1904 Milton Fink is born on February 5 in New York City (death certificate).
- 1920s Milton is working for C. Bruno & Son in New York City (History of Southern Music by Lawrence Jasinski).
- c1930 Milton moves to San Antonio, Texas.
- 1932 Milton is married to Rosalind Scharlock, and they are living at 606 W. Craig Pl, San Antonio. He is listed as a salesman (daughter's birth certificate).
- 1937 Milton starts a music publishing and distribution business in the rear of the Southern Jewelry store on Houston St owned by the Scharlock family. It's called Southern Music (Jasinski).
- 1940 Milton Fink, music store owner, home at 417 W. Rosewood, San Antonio (census).
- 1947 Milton is a passenger on a ship from Liverpool to New York City. His home is at 830 E. Euston Rd, San Antonio.
- 1949 Southern Music is incorporated in Texas on August 30 (Texas State records).
- 1950 Besson Inc is established in Texas to sell brass instruments. It is started by Geoffrey Hawkes and set up by Milton Fisk and Boosey & Hawkes (Howell). They file for incorporation in Texas on October 17 (Texas State records).
- 1950 Southern Music moves to 1100 Broadway, San Antonio (photo 1) (Jasinski). Photo 3 at right shows a guarantee card for a F. Besson trumpet #92226 sold by Besson Inc. at the new 1100 Broadway address.
- 1951 Arthur Gurwitz (1926-2021) (photo 2), of Laredo, TX, marries Ruth Jean Scharlock and joins Southern Music (Jasinski).
- 1951 Editions Hawkes and Couesnon go together and purchase F. Besson in Paris. The new company is set up as a subsidiary of Editions Hawkes and includes board members from Besson Inc, in San Antonio (Howell).
- 1952 In April, Besson Inc is a new commercial member of NAMM in San Antonio.

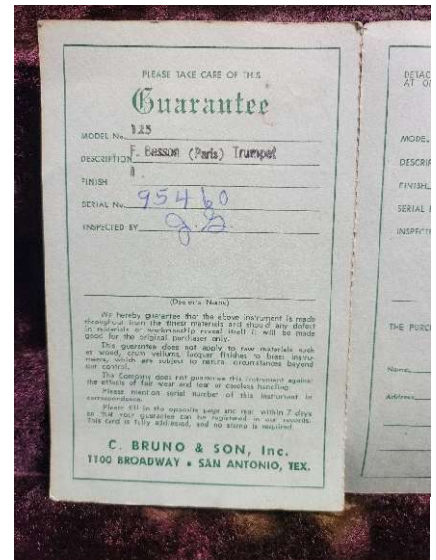


- 1953 Besson Inc of Texas is dissolved on 12-28 (opencorporates.com). At this time, the musical instrument business was sold to C. Bruno & Son (Jonathan Gurwitz). After this, the guarantee cards switch names but have the same address (photo 1, #95460, author's collection). [Fink bought the Bruno name and became the distributor in the US for Besson.]
- 1966 Arthur Gurwitz becomes president of Southern Music (Find-A-Grave).
- 1969 Milton Fink dies on December 13 in San Antonio. He is the vice-president of Southern Music. His address is 122 E. Mariposa Drive (death certificate).
- 1971 C. Bruno & Son is now owned by Kaman Music and they are incorporated on July 29 with an address at 1601 Elm St, Dallas, TX (opencorporates).
- 1972 F. Besson trumpet #103472 has a guarantee card from Bruno & Son in San Antonio and sold through Discount Music in Orlando. [Discount Music says that they opened their first store in 1972 so this should date to then or later. This is one of the last trumpets found.]
- 1974 Meha trumpet #102147 is said by the owner to have been purchased new in 1974 in NY City (Trumpet Herald).
- 1979 The Couesnon factory burned and any trumpet production left would have ended (Couesnon SA).
- 1983 C. Bruno & Son are located in Atlanta & San Antonio (ad).
- 1985 C Bruno & Son has a change of agent or office on 1-6.
- 1987 C. Bruno & Son is terminated on 12-16 (opencorporates).
- 2000 Southern Music moves to 1248 Austin Highway in San Antonio (Jasinski).
- 2012 Gurwitz closes the store and sells the business to Lauren Keiser Music (Jasinski).

The Jasinski history is based on an interview with Arthur Gurwitz in 2009.

These documents tie together Southern Music, C. Bruno & Son, and Besson Inc. all in one location.

The 92226 trumpet has no third slide water key, and that, and the low number, would indicate that it was made before WWII. The address on the card shows that it was sold in 1950 or later and the "Besson Inc" name should date this to the 1950-1953 period when this company existed.



Trumpet #95460 (four photos last page, author's collection) has the third slide water key and is more likely built after the war. The original owner was a Korean War veteran, so may have purchased it in the 1950-1954 period when he was in San Antonio with the Air Force. The paper also has the 125 model number, which is not listed on the earlier trumpet. Perhaps this was added after Besson and Couesnon purchased the company in 1951. It does show up in the 1958 Besson catalog. My guess is that since the company name on the bottom has changed from Besson Inc to Bruno, this would date to 1954 or later, since the Besson name was terminated at the end of 1953.