

Besson & Co.

London

- 1850 Gustav Besson opens a London branch at 8 Lowther Arcade, Strand, at the store of John Pask (*New Langwill Index*).
- 1855 Besson now at #214 Regent St. with Jullien & Co. (*NLI*).
- 1858 Besson opens a factory at #198 Euston Rd. (now Stephenson Way, a lane behind the Euston Rd showroom) (*NLI*). His wife Florentine Besson is now running the Paris factory (*NLI*).
- 1862 Paris instruments now marked "F. Besson" (*NLI*)
- 1874 Gustav Besson dies, leaving the company to his widow (*NLI*). Louis Schreiber becomes the US agent for Besson.
- 1877 Florentine Besson dies, leaving the company in charge of daughter Marthe (Howell).
- 1880 Now advertising as Fontaine-Besson with her marriage to Adolph Fontaine (Howell).
- 1883 US agency changes from Schreiber to Carl Fischer in NY.
- 1890 Marthe moves to London to escape an abusive Fontaine, while he remains in control of the Paris operation (Howell).
- 1894 Besson London employs 131 workers with an output of 100 instruments per week (*NLI*).
- 1895 Marthe sells the London business to Arthur Bryans, who sells to Besson & Co on June 1. They become a Ltd company on July 27. (Howell).
- Adolph Fontaine obtains a warrant in London on October 22 for the arrest of his wife Marthe, who left London in August with her daughter and £7,000 and fled to Seville (*MTR*).
- 1896 Marthe is acquitted in London in February of the charges of robbing her husband. When visiting the World's Fair in the US, she buys extensive land in Texas (*MTR*, 2-22).
- 1897 Besson & Co, England, obtained an injunction against Carl Fischer for use of the Besson and Prototype names on French made instruments by Adolph Fontaine. This injunction was granted in March, 1898. (*MTR*, 12-25 & 3-12-1898).
- 1902 Besson & Co adds 196 Euston Rd, London (Howell).



- 1925 Besson buys the woodwind business of Stephen Quilter in London (*NLI*).
- 1933 The former Boosey & Co. factory is leased by Besson.
- 1934 Besson is at Euston Rd and #57 New Compton St. (*NLI*).
- 1935 Besson at New Compton & #7-10 Frederick Close St. (*NLI*).
- 1940 Besson buys woodwind maker Wheatstone & Co. (*NLI*).
- 1940-1945 No production due to the war (*NLI*).
- 1948 Besson is purchased by Boosey & Hawkes (*NLI*).
Production is moved to Edgware (Howell).
- 1950 Besson Inc. is established in San Antonio, Texas on October 17 to sell Besson instruments. It is started by Geoffrey Hawkes and set up between Milton Fink and B&H. (Howell & Corporation Wiki).
- The English Besson works are merged into the B&H production on January 1, and they take over all manufacturing of the Besson line (Howell).
- 1951 Besson & Co purchases the almost bankrupt F. Besson in Paris and a new company is formed by Editions Hawkes (60%) and Couesnon SA (40%), as a subsidiary of Editions Hawkes. Directors from Besson Inc in Texas were included. E. Stoecklin of Couesnon is appointed director (Besson shareholders' minutes). [It's been said that Couesnon moved production of F. Besson to their facility at this time, but I have found no proof yet.]
- 1954 Besson serial numbers are merged with B&H in October (Howell).
- 1963 Besson catalog still offers the F. Besson Paris trumpet model 125.
- 1968 B&H completes buying all the shares of Besson & Co (Howell).
- 1970 B&H is making some Buescher stencils (Howell).
- 2006 Besson joins the Buffet Crampon Group (Buffet).
- 2013 Buffet buys B&S and all brass manufacture is in Markneukirchen, Germany (Buffet).

