

Henry Pourcelle

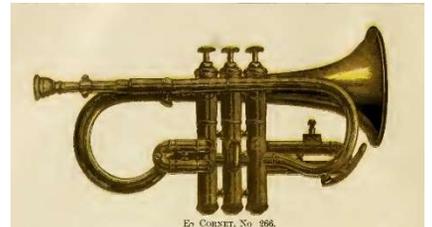
Paris

Henry Pourcelle is another one of those mystery names that appears on imported brass instruments from the late 1800s to early 1900s. These were probably Austrian made with the French name added to make it sound more sophisticated than it was. A more accurate French name would be “Henri”.

The earliest reference I have found for these is from the 1886 C. Bruno & Son catalog. It is likely that the Pourcelle name was an exclusive tradename used only by Bruno. Early instruments have an elegant script name (photos 1 & 2, author’s collection) and later ones add “C Bruno & Son Sole Agents”.

Before 1891 there was no requirement for marking imported items with a country of origin. After that time these may be marked with “Austria”. From 1918 to 1920 this changed to “Czecho-Slovakia” then in 1920 it became “Czechoslovakia” which often helps to date instruments. Many Pourcelle instruments are marked “B&F” which was Bohland & Fuchs in Graslitz, a large factory exporting for many US retailers.

The 1886 Bruno catalog lists Pourcelle as their highest grade offered which included Eb Cornets (photo 3), Bb Cornets, and Eb & Bb Superior Cornets (photos 4 & 5). Below is a Superior (stamped “Superieur” on inlet) model Bb cornet from that era with a C crook (author’s coll.).



Other models from 1886 include Fluegel (photo1), Ballad Horn (2), Concert Horn (3), Eb Solo Alto (4), Eb Alto (5), Bb Tenor (below 1), Bb Baritone (2), Bb Bass (3), Eb Bass (4), and Eb Helicon Bass (bottom).



At right are the trombones offered in 1886.

Below is another early Eb cornet (auction photo)



Another Bb cornet with early engraving (auction photo)



Superior model valve trombone, bell marking at right



Early Helicon Bass & Baritone (Horn-u-copia.net photos)



Later cornets and trumpets are marked "Czechoslovakia" so probably date to the 1920s (auction photos).



This trumpet shows the later engraving and the number 13 on the middle valve probably indicates the B&F model number; not the serial number. This was a common practice on their earlier cornets (auction photos).



Bruno was sold in 1971 but I have not found an example of an instrument much later than the below trumpet c1930 so he may have stopped importing these by then.

