



2.27 The actual subject of the 1874 patent by Florentine Besson was the *Nouvelle Étoile* or *New Star* model, a modification of the 1867 *Étoile* model. As shown in the 1874 patent, the *New Star* model could have two different bell orientations. From the player’s viewpoint, the bell could either be to the right of the pistons (*modèle Français*) or to the left (*modèle Anglais*, dotted line). French Patent no. 103,667, May 28, 1874 (Source: Archives INPI).

**The *Nouvelle Étoile* or *New Star* Model**

The actual subject of Florentine Besson’s 1874 patent was a modification of the 1867 *Étoile* model, and she therefore called the design *Nouvelle Étoile* or *New Star* model. In the *New Star*, the slide branches of the first and third valves were aligned, as in the London *Desideratum* model. The inlet of the tubing was between the slide branches of the third valve, and the outlet was

placed on the same level as the lower slide branch of the first valve, slightly off-center to the left. The stepped intervalve tubing was taken over from the 1867 patent (see figure 2.60). According to the 1874 patent description, the “new arrangement of passages and valves for the inlet and outlet of air ... renders instruments of this improved construction more sonorous, and thereby easier and softer to play upon.”<sup>40</sup>



2.28–29 *Nouvelle Étoile*, *modèle anglais*, or *New Star* model cornet in B-flat, serial number 27036, F. Besson, London, hallmarked in 1883–84 (NMM 7120).



2.30–32 The London F. Besson signature stamp and a full set of hall marks (goldsmiths’ initials *DW JW*; lion passant; leopard’s head; date letter *H*; Queen Victoria’s head) can be found on the bell of NMM 7120. Other parts were stamped with some hallmarks, but not the complete set.

The 1874 patent design had a second tuning slide at the third bow, “placed alone” to the left of both the leadpipe and the slide of the third valve instead of between these two. This arrangement had the advantage that the second tuning slide could be removed and exchanged more easily with another slide (for high pitch or low pitch), as neither the leadpipe nor the slide of the third valve obstructed it. The 1874 patent describes two different bell positions:

1. The “French model” (*modèle dit Français*) in which the bell is to the right of the pistons.
2. The “English model” (*modèle dit Anglais*) in which the bell is to the left of the pistons.

Florentine Besson had already mentioned the two alternative bell positions, the *modèle français* and the *modèle anglais*, in her 1867 patent of the *Étoile* cornet.

NMM 7120 is a representative of the *New Star* model with *modèle anglais* bell placement. The gold-plated sterling-silver cornet NMM 7120 was made in the London branch of F. Besson and has the following bell stamp: 31 MEDALS OF HONOUR / FR / F. BESSON / BREVETÉ / 198. EUSTON ROAD / LONDON / [five-point-star]. While the serial number 27036 on the second-valve casing suggests that NMM 7120 may have been made as early as 1881, it was hallmarked in London only in 1883–84, based on the shape of the date letter *H* and the leopard’s head on various parts. NMM 7120 shows



2.33–35 Engraved floral decoration on the finger buttons; applied silver tendrils winding up the valve cases; and a wreath with colored glass stones inside the bell of NMM 7120.