

The "visible toy counter additive" . . .

PROJECT FOR A RAINY DAY A 'TOY COUNTER POSITIVE'

DID you ever hear of an organ with a "toy counter positiv?" A positiv, you'll recall, is either a small portable organ of 4' pitch (also "portativ") or a set of treble pipes installed in full view of the listener, usually on a shelf located at a distance from the main body of pipework. It is useful mainly for antiphonal music where "stereo" effects are desired. If the truth be known, the sound is often similar to that of an air calliope. But a positiv (pronounced "Posi-teef") is the kind of luxury which gives a concert organ class, despite its limited use.

The positiv idea often manifested itself among theatre organ builders, but to a limited degree. We recall that Dan Barton experimented with orchestra bells spread around the walls of a theatre—long before he developed the Barton organ. And Talley's Theatre in Los Angeles, an early house equipped with a huge straight organ, had such goodies as chimes spaced at even intervals around the inside of its shoe-box auditorium. And perhaps the rare theatre echo organ is a bow to the "ruckpositives" of the early German organs. But the idea never took in a big way—and, probably, just as well.

So, time marched on to the era when theatre organs became parlor pets, although most of them only feigned tameness in their new environments. Owners vied with one another for outlandish gadgets with which to festoon their prizes. For example, ATOE ex-prexy Judd Walton has concealed his bird whistle effect within an imitation bird (the kind that once decorated Nellie's hat, in case anyone recalls that ancient dithyramb). The ensemble is mounted in a cage which is visible to chamber visitors.

But most organ owners discourage chamber visits for many good reasons which we'll not go into at this time. But back to positivs.

IT all started after we published an article on how to build a "rain effect." So far, no one has reported building one from our specification, but how many of us followed up even a few of those wonderful construction projects described in the pages of "Popular Mechanics" over the past half century! It's still fascinating just to read about them.

So, we turned to our "rain" man, Harvey Heck, for a plan for something useful, amusing, visual and novel. We

caught him at an opportune moment. He was holding a huge slide whistle in his hand.

"John Ledwon just brought this over—and asked me how he could blow it from his console."

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The new gimmick occupies a commanding spot between Harvey's Main and Solo chambers. Here the "party favor" is uncoiling skyward.

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"Complete with the 'smear' effect?"

"Yup—both upward and back down—a double smear."

"How about adding a few extra goodies—maybe a goose honk, or a moose call—or perhaps a set of clacking false teeth. Just for the visual gag?"

"Don't rush me!"

Months went by and then one day we got a call from Harvey.

"It's finished."

"What's finished?"



Harvey Heck, researcher in weird and different pipe organ effects, puts the finishing touches on another "positive." He has just mounted the slide whistle. Other noisemakers await mounting.

"That thing we were talking about just past Whitsuntide—the visible toy counter additive."

We jumped in the bug and made tracks for Harvey's. There he sat in an easy chair just three feet from the console that Eddie Dunstedter once played in the Missouri Theatre in St. Louis. He merely looked upward toward a spot between his twin chamber grilles.

There it stood atop the bookcase—a tiny chest with a row of assorted tubes stuck in it. But dominating the whole

The construction diagram at right was drawn by Lee Haggart, a man of considerable whimsy with his pen. He appends the following notes, which will probably be intelligible to those familiar with blueprint jargon:

1. Section view magnet is shown in "operated" position, and "F" pneumatic is "ON."
2. Z-Z indicates a view through the pouch rail (primary) channel board in "full view."
3. In "full view" from left to right on pouch rail are four "O" pneumatics on to "ON" pneumatics.
4. Slide whistle action: wired so "D" button slides plunger left for downward glissando; the "U" button sends plunger right for an upward glissando.

—G. Bandini

was the shining slide whistle and the long rod which guided it up and down its chromatic glide. Harvey looked real smug as he sat down at the 4-deck console and started Beethoven's "Fifth"—from the beginning. Just a few measures along he swung out a little shelf from beneath the left side jamb (about like Conn's theatre trap switch shelf, for the benefit of your transistor tooters). There were some mother-of-pearl buttons which Harv pushed for a number of Beethoven's accords. The effect was electrifying. A vivace Goose call! A presto Jaybird call! An obviously corn-fed Crow "caw!" The tinkle of tiny temple bells and then the piece-de-resistance—an andante rising "whooooooosh" of a slide whistle which suddenly reversed itself, started back downward with a "hsooooooow" for a few measures and then continued its upward climb to the final majestic note. Harvey had been faithful to Beethoven but we were not convinced that Ludwig would have approved: In fact, there was something arresting...

The word stuck in our craw. The unmistakable sound of a policeman's whistle rose to a high-pitched scream and trailed off. Yes, it all came from the little "visible toy counter additive." It was at this point that we decided that the clumsy handle would have to go. The "positiv" angle evolved shortly thereafter.

AGAIN, like the rain effect, this addition is for the organ that "has everything" but which could use a forceful conversation piece. In fact, it's guaranteed to drown out all conversation. And there's no reason it couldn't be mounted in the chamber, if desired. However, it's fun to watch the slide whistle slither back and forth—and for a topper Harvey added a party favor, the kind which when blown into uncoils

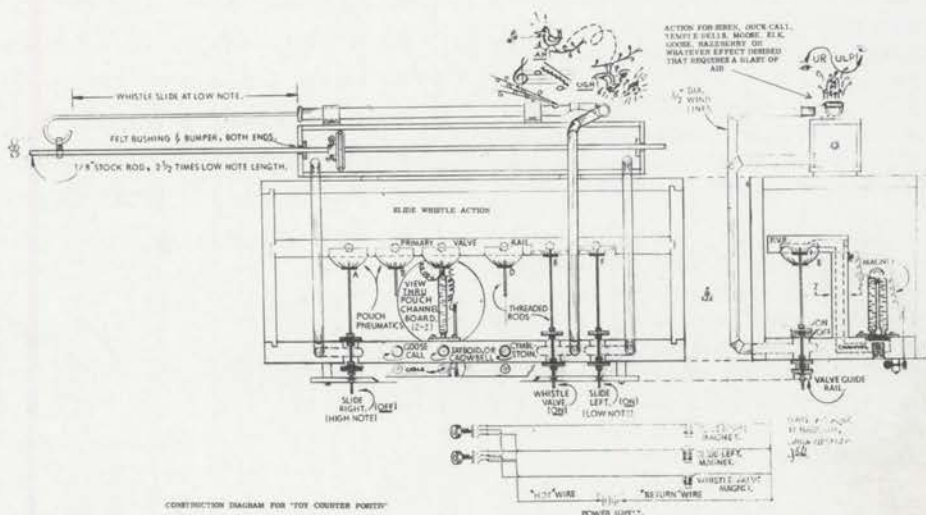
toward its victim while unleashing a raucous bleat. Harvey's bleats while shooting for the ceiling.

The first step is to decide what kind of honks are desired. The next is to obtain the "honkers." Music stores are a good source of such novel instruments as slide whistles and cow bells. Get a good quality whistle, the orchestral variety which were once part of a trap drummer's stock in trade (remember Paul Whiteman's "Whispering?"). It'll cost around five dollars. That's the most expensive single "instrument." Sporting goods stores provide crow, goose and moose calls, plus a few other irresistible items intended for lung power. Oriental novelty shops provide all sizes and shapes of temple bells. A set of brass wind chimes would make a perfect cymbelstern!

For his chest and "glissando motor," Harvey used sections of discarded wooden pipes, mainly because they were handy. The wooden boxes may be cut from any soft wood and should be glued to make them airtight. Note that the glissando motor is mounted directly on top of the chest, placed so as to leave an inch or more to mount the other honkers and tinklers in front of it.

THE only tricky action is the "alterator" for the slide whistle. All the other effects are no more than standard electro-pneumatic pipe actions but the slide whistle action is actually two actions, one for each direction. And they must be rigged in such a way that both don't operate at once. One method would be to use a rocker switch (single pole, double throw, center off) at the console. It should be spring-loaded for "off position normal." Our sketch suggests two doorbell-type pushbuttons.

The diagram supplies most details of
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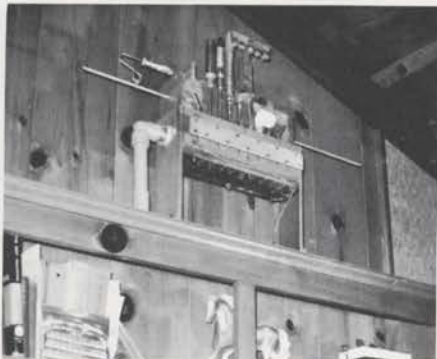


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construction. If the moving plunger in the slide whistle motor fails to move smoothly inside its wooden tube, lubricate it with graphite.

The positiv is wound at ten inches and is fed through a one-inch conductor. A sound length of that discarded one-inch garden hose should do the trick. The cable need consist of one conductor for each of the single-tone effects and two for the slide whistle—plus a return for all. Better include a couple of spares because it's easier to switch over to a spare than trace an entire cable for a flaw once it's installed.



Another view of the "positiv." The Moose Call, Police Siren, Temple Bells (Cymbelstern?) and Crow Call add immeasurably to the beauty of—say, "Let Me Call You Sweetheart."

The small size of the kind and electrical connections makes locating the showpiece a simple matter of selecting the place where it will be most effective from both visual and sound perspectives. Probably the best place is high on the wall, preferably with a beam of light shining on it.

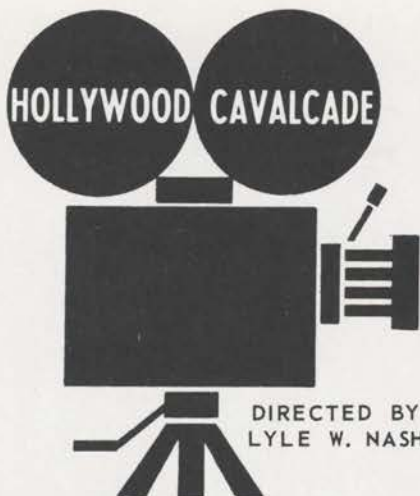
Since completing his own positiv, Harvey has built several more, mostly for friends. One is now on public display in the "Pizza Joynt" at Hayward, California, where it augments the 3-12 Wurlitzer played by Bill Langford.

To encourage prospective builders, Harvey is considering making a demo tape with his very own version of the "Fifth" of Beethoven. He recently completed his own "fifth"—positiv, that is.

Have YOU saved a

mighty Wurlitzer lately?

Try it TODAY!



HAVE YOU ever wondered what "The Covered Wagon" of 1923 would look like in wide screen and living color? A very close approximation of TCW of the silent era is "The Way West" which stars Robert Mitchum, Kirk Douglas, Richard Widmark. The adventures of a wagon train of 1843 headed for Oregon from Missouri is loaded with action and magnificent scenery and caravans stretching across the cinema horizon. The 1967 product is much superior to the old Paramount epic—but outdoor adventure is ever greater to a 12-year-old than an aging adult.

JACKIE COOGAN was a greater draw in 1923 than some stars of today. He signed with the old Metro company for 60 per cent of the picture's profits.

SOJIN, with his spike-tipped moustache and mysterious slant-eyed look, was the greatest arch villain ever to haunt the movies. He began scaring American movie audiences in 1923 in "The Thief of Bagdad" in which Douglas Fairbanks was the hero. Sojin died in 1954 in his native Japan. His son lives and works in TV in Hollywood.

HENRY KING has been directing and acting in films 50 years. The soft voiced Virginia born director created screen epics in the 20s, 30s, 40s, 50s and 60s. No director of the silent era has lasted as long as King in directing virtually every type of film made.

KING is proud of having first discovered Gary Cooper, Tyrone Power, Ernest Torrence and Ronald Colman.

WHAT pictures does King think were best? He's proud of State Fair with Will Rogers, Stella Dallas (1925), Wilson, Song of Bernadette, Twelve O'Clock High and Love Is a Many Splendored Thing. But King is proudest of all of the facts: "I never made a picture that I

would be ashamed to show my mother!" How many directors of today could say the same thing?

WOODLAND HILLS, California is an area of rolling hills about 35 miles from Los Angeles. Here the motion picture industry maintains an elaborate, luxurious estate for retired workers. With the magnificent home is a superb hospital and rest center. Everything at the home is free.

SILENT screen personalities we visited with in Woodland Hills included Ethel Grandin . . . Dorothy Devore, who charmed millions with her comedy roles in the 20s, is mending from a serious illness . . . Dor Farley, famed for her comedy roles with Earle Foxe, lives at the home . . . Betty Blythe, siren of the early silents, lives in a beautiful cottage overlooking the lake.

A REAL old-fashioned silent movie is now being made in Hollywood. Marty Ingels is working on a picture, called "The Silent Treatment." It will be virtually a modern-day version of the 1897-1927 pictures which had titles and screen prologues explaining what was to come. The last major non-talking film was Chaplin's "City Lights" of 1931. It will be interesting to see if today's film makers can use 40 years of cinema improvements and experience and produce a better silent film than the Vidors, Kings, Browns and the De Milles of the '20s.

HORROR films have been around since the first projector started flooding a white sheet with pictures that moved. Now author Carlos Clarens has written "An Illustrated History of the Horror Film" (Putnam) that is worthy reading. The 256-page book covers the horror, mystery, weird, fantastic, supernatural and science-fiction films. Excellent for reference and a movie researcher.

CONTRARY to legend and publicity pap, great stars and featured players in the silents did work in serials. Some players who did included: Lionel Barrymore, Clara Kimball Young, Billie Burke, Doris Kenyon, Gertrude Astor, Priscilla Dean, Milton Sills, Cullen Landis, Antonio Moreno, Lon Chaney, Boris Karloff, Laura La Plante, Esther Ralston, Constance Bennett and Jean Arthur.

THE YEAR 1921 saw the first talking-singing film shown on Broadway in New York. "Dream Street" was shown in April at the Central theatre. Researchers note that Ralph Graves sang a song in it but sync was rather ragged.