

A Portativ—in Two Parts

Made by CHARLES W. McMANIS

A miniature organ with a great variety of uses

HERE'S a neat little organ you can carry around with you, or use to annoy your neighbors, your wife, or the family cat. It's already annoyed the builder's wife, but only because it lacks that normal organ bottom-octave and top-octave of pipes—which he promises to add in the interests of family harmony. If you count, the keys are there but not the pipes. Here's Junior:

- 8' Rohrfloete 37m, chimneyed
- 4' Spitzprinzipal 37m, tapered
- 2' Octave 37m
- III Scharf III m
- Tremulant

And here's the composition of the mixture:

- 22-26-29 CC octave to be added
- 19-22-26 Tenor-C octave
- 15-19-22 Middle-C
- 12-15-19 Upper-C octave
- 8-12-15 Top-C octave to be added

"Junior is voiced Schnitgerly and quite gently but when we put him in a chapel seating a thousand he sounded like a big organ. Amazing." When Mr. McManis speaks of Schnitger tone he knows what he's talking about, for the nation staged worldwar-2 just to force him over to Europe where he escaped war duties long enough to get accidentally lost in a tour through Germany to hear and try and examine a lot of the ancient German organs, a list of which he accidentally happened to have with him.

Junior was built partly for fun, partly because the builder thinks organs are the finest things on earth, partly to have a convenient little instrument along with him whenever he wants to talk about or demonstrate organ tone. And of course it had to be beautiful, to eye as well as ear.

Mechanically it "demonstrates a sliderless keychamber chest idea with pneumatic stop-action. The experimental chest proved to us that a keychamber chest—with or without mechanical action—can be built that will avoid the faults of the sliderchest, that the tonal results using the common keychamber are vastly superior to those of the individual-valve chest, and that the pneumatic stop-action intercepting the windway between keychamber and pipe does not affect the smooth flow of wind to the pipe.

"For the sake of portability the case divides into two separate units joined only by gravity and a couple of dowels. The lower section contains a 1/6 h.p. Orgoblo Jr., the reservoir, and the Tremulant. The upper section contains the chest, manual, and all mechanical connections, as well as the stop-action.

"Drawknobs on the left are Rohrfloete and Spitzprinzipal; on the right, Octave and Scharf. On the chest, the Scharf is at the back, then Rohrfloete, Spitz, and Octave in front. The dark knob at the left, under the manual, is for the Tremulant; button in same position on the right is the blower-switch.

"Voicing is without nicking, but with a bit of feathering in the lower register of the Spitzprinzipal—stiletto scoring of the languet. Cut-ups are quite low, producing a highly energized but gentle tone; the same cut-ups if used on an individual-valve chest would produce an unpleasant harmonic cough entirely dissociated from the sustained tone. On the keychamber chest the low-cut pipes produce an attack sound which knits with the sustained tone. What is most amazing is the homogenizing effect of the keychamber—with the proper cut-ups and the proper voicing."

And personally to T.S.B.: "Your recent tirades against the non-8' organs would make me mad if it were not for the fact that I have heard some of the terrified ensembles being



THE McMANIS PORTATIV

made by the Charles W. McManis Company and called a Positiv, but so constructed as to come apart in two sections for easy portability; this experimental first model was made just for the love of organbuilding, but may possibly be later put to many practical uses.

produced. Since I see visions—and hear them—of what organs should sound like, I cannot join you in your crusade. I think you would like the sounds we produce, even with all the upperwork. It must not be identifiable as upperwork, which doesn't mean it should be weak. The scaling has to be right."

Junior, whose formal name is Positiv, speaks on 2" pressure, weighs under 400 pounds, stands 7' high, is 42" long, 14" deep. We believe the case is of mahogany, an ornament to the eyes. "The plan is to produce small self-contained organs for practise instruments and small chapels, mass-produced in mechanism but customized in stoplist and tone. All this on the side, the main line to be larger instruments of course. The mechanical connections of the Positiv are piano-wire and 1" pulleys, no trackers. The keyboard feels good. There is definite expressive control of the melodic lines by the type of attack."

As here shown & described the Positiv—which should be called a Portativ—stands

V-4. R-6. S-4. P-222.

APPLIES TO MUSIC ALSO

By J. L. in *The Inland Printer*, Chicago

"One angle of the 'revolution' of the period, marked by the development of both pseudo-modern and real modern devices, was a desire to break precedent. That may be good and that might be bad. Change effecting improvement is always to be desired. It will never be possible, though, to break the laws of nature with success. The good must not be thrown to the lions. The human body and senses have not changed since creation." (J. L. Frazier?)