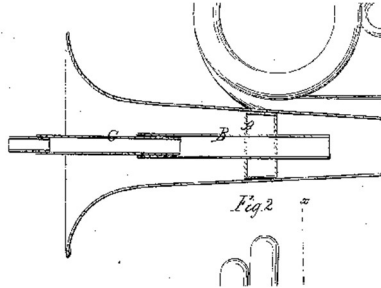


Harmon Mutes

Chicago

1865 John Stratton of NYC is granted patent #51,363 for a cornet practice mute consisting of a plug with an adjustable stem in the center (below).



1878 Patrick (Paddy) Thomas Harmon is born in Illinois (draft).

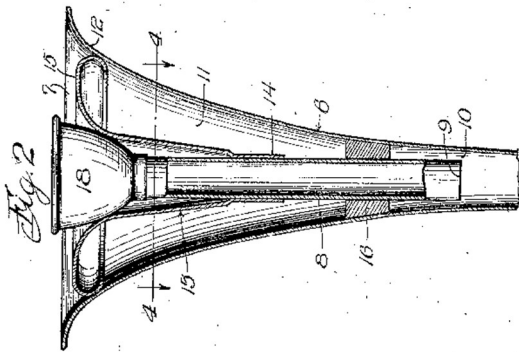
1910 Harmon is a roller rink manager (census).

1918 P. T. Harmon, b. 5-26-1877, self-employed in amusement business at #1701 St. Van Buren, Chicago (draft).

1918 George Schluesselburg, mechanical engineer, self-employed at #712 Masonic Temple, Chicago, citizen of Hamburg, Germany (draft; no other records found).

1920 P. T. Harmon, dance promoter (census).

1923 Ad shows Harmon as the owner of the Arcadia Ballroom, #4444 N. Broadway, a popular place for black jazz bands to play. It is said that Harmon heard King Oliver at his club and got the idea to patent the mute design that he was using. The patent was filed on February 21st by George Schluesselburg (the builder) with half assigned to Harmon (the financier). No mention is made of the original Stratton patent. Original Swingmaster mute is at right.



1925 Harmon mutes were sold through Continental Music Co in Chicago, successors to Conn Chicago Co. (advertising).

1926 Patent #1,578,763 granted to Schluesselburg & Harmon.

1929 Harmon opens the Chicago Stadium, #1800 W. Madison.



1930 Harmon, sports promoter, #3500 Sheridan Rd (census).

1930 Harmon dies in a car accident on July 22.

1939 ad below

"Wow-Wow"
THE ORIGINAL HARMON
SWINGMASTER
CORNET, TRUMPET MUTE
Now Only \$5.75



● Copper with sliding brass tube and removable cup, "sweet as a nut" for recording, broadcasting, harmonizes with gold instrument bell; will not finger mark; a definite sensation. Continental approved. Endorsed by leaders.



Below is a Conn mute from an 1882 cornet which follows the same principle and is said to have a Harmon-like sound. Could this be what Harmon was copying?



I also read that Oliver used an old Conn cornet mute in combination with his hand or a plunger to make the sound. These "Pixie" mutes date back to the late 1800s (below).





- 1940 Harmon has a new combination mute for cup, straight, or plunger (ad). Harmon mute company was taking multiple other mute companies to court over patent infringements.
- 2018 The Harmon mute is now owned by American Way Marketing in Elkhart, Indiana.
- 2022 The Harmon mutes are made in Skokie, Illinois, not far from where they began (American Way Marketing website).