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OK Go's Rube Goldberg music video

Mark Frauenfelder at 11:29 AM March 2, 2010



OK Go shot a fantastic Rube Goldberg contraption video for their new song "This Too Shall Pass." The **MAKE team race car** makes an appearance at around 3:00 minutes into the video.

The contraption was built by **Synn Labs**. Adam Sadowsky of Synn Labs wrote:

“The requirements were that it had to be interesting, not "overbuilt" or too technology-heavy, and easy to follow. The machine also had to be built on a shoestring budget, synchronize with beats and lyrics in the music and end on time over a 3.5 minute song, play a part of the song, and be filmed in one shot. To make things more challenging still, the space chosen was divided into two floors and the machine would use both.

Look for a "making of" article written by Adam in a forthcoming issue of MAKE magazine.

High resolution version here: [OK Go - This Too Shall Pass - RGM version](#)

33 Comments • [Add a comment](#)

MrsBug • #1 • 11:38 on Tue, Mar. 2 • [Reply](#)

Now that was fun.

barba • #2 • 11:38 on Tue, Mar. 2 • [Reply](#)

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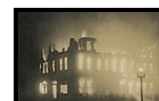
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boing boing video



Peter Serafinowicz: Boing Boing Video interview

Fantastic

cinemajay • #3 • 11:38 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

Absolutely awesome in every way possible.

pstarr • #4 • 11:39 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

shit like this restores my faith in humanity.

kmoser • #5 • 11:40 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

Niiiiice camera work!

Andrea James • #6 • 12:10 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

I was curious about the State Farm Insurance truck at the start, then I saw the "making of" pieces on this vid were branded State Farm. Viralicious!

Anon • #7 • 12:13 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

Glorious

Urthen • #8 • 12:15 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

The only thing that could have made this better is if it ended with "I'm on a horse!"

jlc3 • #9 • 12:18 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

this was good. I enjoyed greatly. Did a lot of early videos with Michael Nesmith, though I think this would have been about as fun as sny of them.

love the pile of smashed tv sets piled up behind the scene where the sledge hammer wacks the tv. could probably guess how many takes from that :)

thanks - this was great fun.

/john

Dudeosaurus Rex • #10 • 12:31 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

One day, some crafty gentleman will develop a Rube Goldberg Von Neumann machine, which will develop out of control, overpowering its creators, deconstructing the great works of Man, turning the entire world into an overly complicated contraption, dedicated to making more overly complicated contraptions, which link into each other, augmenting and improving, using their mechanical energy to start others anew, in a eternal cycle of clinks, clangs and gunshots, until finally, when hope is all but lost, Humanity is saved by a misfiring trebuchet and the whole thing comes to a grinding halt.

Then some poor bastard has to clean everything up.

Lobster • #11 • 12:47 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

Very cool, but I wonder if some of it wasn't triggered manually. Some of the steps look like there'd be too much variation in duration to synch up to music as well as it is. Plus, they would have lost a LOT of TVs to test runs.

El Stinko • #12 • 12:47 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply

WOW!

So many awesome details. Most amazing, in my mind, was that they got certain sequences to sync with the music! the klinks of the bottles, the big steel ball lifting the picture shades.. I am in awe.

Anon replied to comment from Lobster • #13 • 13:00 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



Mardi Gras 1956: "Through my father's lens" (Boing Boing Video)



N.A.S.A.: "O Pato," feat. Kool Kojak + DJ Babao (BB Video)

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if it was a unicorn it would have gored you

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They did actually go through a lot of TVs, they're visible in the background just after the swinging one is smashed by a hammer.

nigelfootpowder • #14 • 13:15 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



@ lobster: we did lose a lot of tvs. you can see them in the background. but the TV smash happened close to the end, and most of the stuff that followed was bigger and thus more predictable. When things went wrong, it usually went wrong on the first floor. re: sync there were cues to start sections of the song at their corresponding parts of the sequence to help with that. The durations of parts was surprisingly consistent.

Anon • #15 • 13:21 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



Supper Awesome

MichaelRN • #16 • 13:31 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



Cannot stop smiling. Made my day. Thanks!

amuderick • #17 • 14:01 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



phenomenal. congratulations.

what i love the most is how the machine branches a bit to create effects on the actors (balls falling, etc) and does other work that is not a necessary part of moving the machine forward. And yet, it continues its unstoppable path to conclusion.

fantastic work.

Proxy Toaster • #18 • 14:32 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



Not only is the machine rad as hell, but the camera work is stunning.

Be sure to check out the *other* video for this song OK Go did with the Notre Dame marching band. It's even more dear to my heart.

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UJKythIXAIY>

Andrew Plotkin • #19 • 15:08 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



"The Way Things OK Go"?

...Done now.

fencesitter • #20 • 16:47 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



Okay, what is it with these videos? "Not available on mobile." This and the Weird Al one. Oh well, I guess I'll watch it on my work computer after all....

ryansoldout • #21 • 17:23 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



So did you guys just go out for drinks afterward and let the work experience kid clean it up?

MetaScience • #22 • 18:01 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



Rube Goldberg machines are in the top of my favorite things list. This has to be one of my favorite music videos of all time.

Anon • #23 • 19:01 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



Awesome video, though it would've been even more awesome if they'd used a song from that album which doesn't already have an official music video- All Is Not Lost or Needing/Getting would've been fun to watch.

zyodei • #24 • 20:26 on Tue, Mar. 2 • Reply



That was absolutely epic. I thought that nothing could top that marvelous Honda ad from a few years back, but this does so - handily.

The amazing thing is, I read they spent \$2M on that ad..I don't think they did on this.

It's some sort of pinnacle of human achievement. Was that all really one shot?

endymion replied to **comment from Proxy Toaster** • #25 • 22:53 on Tue, Mar. 2 • **Reply**

Thanks Proxy Toaster. I totally agree.

It's amazing that, despite how amazing the RGM video is, the Marching Band video is somehow even more amazing.

gothicgeek • #26 • 00:22 on Wed, Mar. 3 • **Reply**

Awesome!

Opspin • #27 • 05:50 on Wed, Mar. 3 • **Reply**

@zyodei and everyone else, sorry to tell you, but there's a cut around the 2:27 mark, curtain is jolted away, the shadow of the light doesn't match up. Still impressive though!

ohnatrz • #28 • 05:55 on Wed, Mar. 3 • **Reply**

Yet again another amazing video. They have raised the standard for music vids. Am going to have to watch it a gazillion times just to take in all the details.

Anon • #29 • 07:07 on Wed, Mar. 3 • **Reply**

Niiice!

jwepurchase • #30 • 07:09 on Wed, Mar. 3 • **Reply**

"there were cues to start sections of the song at their corresponding parts of the sequence"

That is so simple it's brilliant. Why sync the machine to the song when you can sync the song to the machine? Should have thought of that when my inner troll was telling me it was impossible. Hats off to you.

Anon • #31 • 07:28 on Wed, Mar. 3 • **Reply**

The original clip from the seventies looks a bit more dangerous

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Wy5nwV7vrdw>

much more fireworks. what's the matter with the kids nowadays? they do nothing without insurance?

starfish and coffee • #32 • 10:50 on Wed, Mar. 3 • **Reply**

The black umbrellas falling then the coloured airplanes shooting out. Beautiful!!

Hendrik • #33 • 00:31 on Thu, Mar. 4 • **Reply**

The original is much cooler, lasts 30 minutes, is made in the eighties (1987)

It has already been copied by Honda (still pretty cool) and now OK GO. It's a nice clip, well done, but the song is a bit lame and the idea is a bit old, while they don't really update it and do something new with it (except more complexity and obviously a bigger budget)

So personally i think the clip is just a bit uninspired, sings of a band trying hard to relive the excitement and flow of their first lo-fi, small budget genius fitness idea.

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