No. 892,600. PATENTED JULY 7, 1908.

M. LITTMANN.

THEATER APPLIANCE.

APPLICATION FILED NOV. 8, 1906.

Fig. 1.

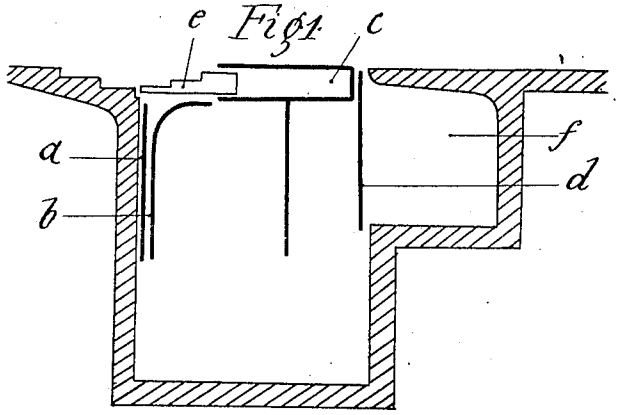


Fig. 2.

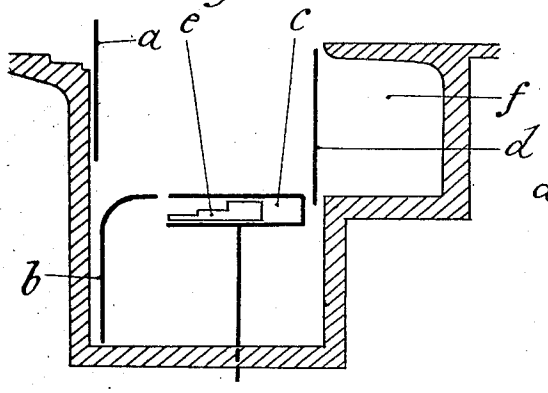


Fig. 3.

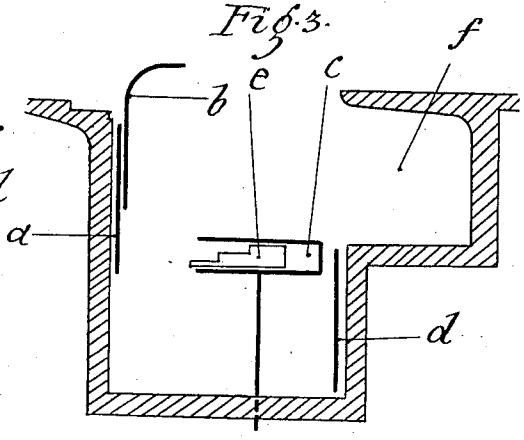
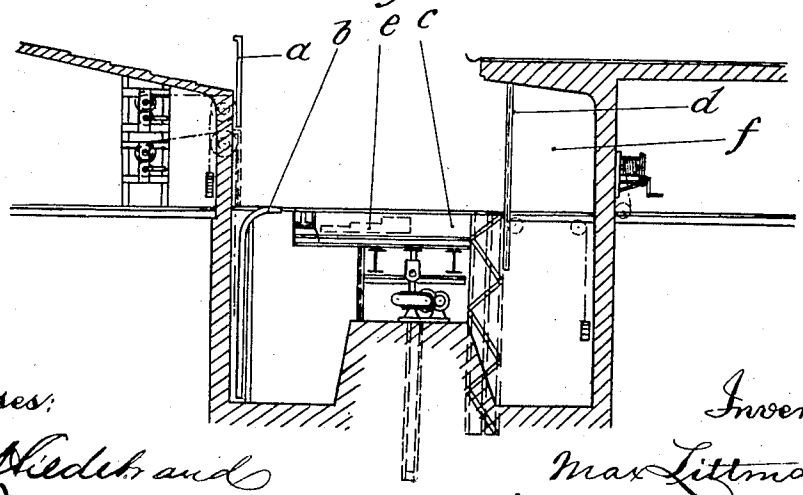


Fig. 4.



Witnesses:

E. A. Sieder and

N. Reynolds.

Inventor:

Max Littmann,

by Georgii Massie,

attorney

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

MAX LITTMANN, OF MUNICH, GERMANY.

THEATER APPLIANCE.

No. 892,600. Specification of Letters Patent. Patented July 7, 1908.

Application filed November 8, 1906. Serial No. 342,512.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, MAX LITTMANN, citizen of Germany, residing at Munich, Bavaria, Germany, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Theater Appliances; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same.

The present invention meets the demands made upon the equipment of stage and orchestra by the artistically complete representation of great musical dramas, operas and plays.

The great musical dramas of Richard Wagner and his followers require a sunken and invisible great orchestra; the ordinary operatic performance, on the other hand, an open, invisible small orchestra. In the case of the play, the space for the orchestra, empty or filled with unused chairs or music stands, is harmful both in an acoustic and aesthetic sense. It is further important that for the representation of the dramas of some classical writers, for instance, Shakespeare, a proscenium is necessary, the construction of which over the ordinary open orchestra is always difficult, and in many cases, especially if time presses, quite impossible with the heretofore available means.

The present invention relates to a device fulfilling the above-mentioned requirements in so far as it allows of the rapid creation of a proscenium, which can at will give place to a small or large, open or invisible orchestra for Wagner or other operas, so that the necessary changes can be rapidly made, not only for the evening performance, but also for the various rehearsals during the day.

In the accompanying drawings, Figures 1 to 3 show different positions of this device schematically, while Fig. 4 shows a form of construction in section.

In the sunken space or pit for the orchestra (Figs. 2 and 3) a vertically movable platform *c* is arranged in known manner, which carries the musicians of the orchestra and can be raised to and fixed at any desired height; it may also be raised to the level of the stage (Fig. 1); in the latter case it represents a proscenium for the purposes of plays and enables dramatic representations to be given before a lowered curtain, this being necessary, for instance, in the case of some of Shakespeare's dramas. This proscenium is then connected with the space allotted to the audience by means of a flight of steps. For this purpose the platform *c* is made hollow and open on one side, and contains one or more sets of steps *e* arranged to slide out when required. In front of the platform an acoustic screen *b* serving to hide the orchestra in known manner is so arranged that it can be raised and lowered in the orchestral cavity independently of the position of the platform, see Figs. 3 and 2 respectively.

The vertically sliding partition *a* serves to divide the orchestra and space set apart for the audience without entirely concealing the latter from the view of the former; this partition can, for instance, be arranged to subside when the screen *b* is raised, the latter then serving in its place also as partition. The wall *d* can also be raised and lowered and serves to increase or diminish the space required by the orchestra, see Figs. 3 and 2 respectively. If the orchestra is not required, for instance, when performing dramas, the platform *c* is raised to the height of the floor of the stage, and after screen *b* and partition *a* have been lowered, the steps *e* can be drawn out of the cavity of the platform *c*. In this way, as shown in Fig. 1, the space for the orchestra is immediately covered over and hidden and at the same time a proscenium is created.

If the performance of operas with a small orchestra is intended, the screen *b* and the platform *c* with the steps *e* pushed home are brought into the positions shown in Figs. 2 and 4; the partition *a* is slightly raised to form a partition between the orchestra and the space set apart for the audience, and further the wall *d* is raised to diminish the space for the orchestra by shutting off the extra space *f*. For the purpose of operas requiring a great orchestra (Wagner operas), the wall *d* is lowered, so that the space *f* is again available, as shown in Fig. 3. Further the partition *a* is lowered and screen *b* raised.

The raising and lowering of the wall, partition and screen and also of the platform can be accomplished either by any desired mechanical means such as winches, or by hand.

What I claim as my invention and desire to secure by Letters Patent is:

1. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a platform mounted in the pit between the auditorium and stage,

and arranged to be adjusted to positions even with and below the stage.

2. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a slide and a platform mounted in the order named in the pit, the respective elements arranged to be independently adjusted to positions even with and below the stage.

3. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a partition, a screen, and a platform mounted in the order named in the pit, the respective elements arranged to be independently adjusted to positions even with and below the stage.

4. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a platform mounted in the pit, the pit having an off-set portion extending to the rear beneath the stage, the platform arranged to be adjusted to a position even with the stage and to a position below the level of the stage even with the off-set portion of the pit.

5. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a platform mounted in the pit, the pit having an off-set portion extending to the rear beneath the stage, the platform arranged to be adjusted to a position even with the stage and to a position below the level of the stage even with the off-set portion of the pit, and a removable wall arranged to separate the off-set portion of the pit from the main portion thereof.

6. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a partition, a slide, a platform, and a wall, mounted in the order named in the pit, the pit having an off-set portion extending to the rear beneath the stage, the respective elements arranged to be independently adjusted, the platform to a position even with the stage and to a position below the stage level and even with the off-set portion of the pit, the partition and screen to a position below the level of the auditorium, and to a position forming a barrier between the auditorium and pit, and the wall to and from a position dividing the off-set portion of the pit from the main portion thereof.

7. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a platform mounted in the pit, the platform arranged to be adjusted to positions even with and below the stage, and steps for said platform in its elevated position and arranged to be withdrawn from before the platform in its lowered position.

8. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a hollow platform mounted in the pit, the platform arranged to be adjusted to positions even with and below the stage, and steps for said platform in its elevated position and arranged to be withdrawn into the hollow platform in its lowered position.

9. A theater appliance, comprising the combination, with the auditorium and stage separated by a pit, of a partition, a screen, a hollow platform and a wall, mounted in the order named in the pit, the pit having an off-set portion extending to the rear beneath the stage, the respective elements arranged to be independently adjusted, the platform to a position even with the stage and to a position below the stage level and even with the off-set portion of the pit, the partition and screen to a position below the level of the auditorium, and to a position forming a barrier between the auditorium and pit, and the wall to and from a position dividing the off-set portion of the pit from the main portion thereof, and steps for said platform in its elevated position and arranged to be withdrawn into said platform in its lowered position.

In testimony whereof I hereunto affix my signature in the presence of two witnesses.

MAX LITTMANN.

Witnesses:

ANHITEK MENZ,

PROMUVIST SICHARD.