Dec. 31, 1935. H. J. SPINA 2,025,786

FINGER BAR FOR USE WITH STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

Filed Jan. 12, 1934

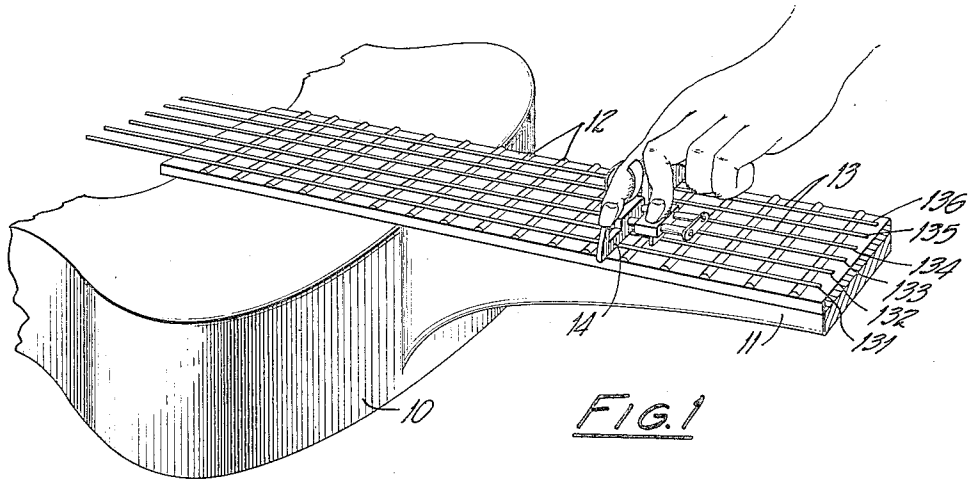


FIG. 1

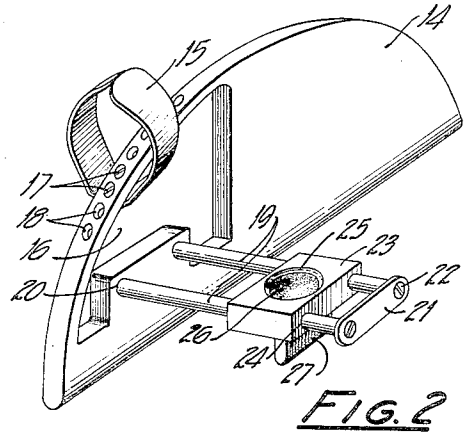


FIG. 2

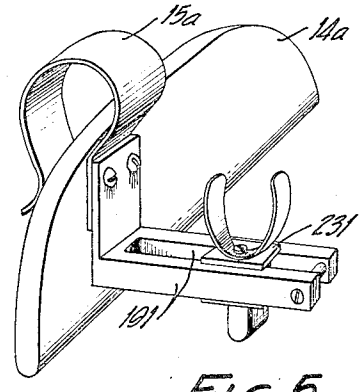


FIG. 5

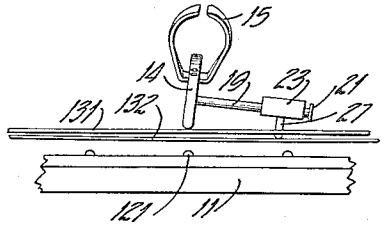


FIG. 3

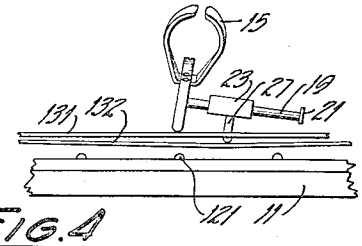


FIG. 4

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FINGER BAR FOR USE WITH STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS

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Application January 12, 1934, Serial No. 706,383

6 Claims. (Cl. 84—319)

My invention more particularly relates to a bar or steel of the general character used by musicians in playing an Hawaiian guitar or other stringed musical instruments.

My present invention is an improvement over the invention covered by my application Serial No. 639,102 which was filed in the Patent Office on or about October 22, 1932.

One of the objects of my invention is the provision of a bar of the foregoing character provided with means by which a musical note on one of the strings may readily be lowered a half tone thereby producing a minor chord. Heretofore in the use of a bar for playing an Hawaiian guitar it has been necessary, in order to produce a minor chord, for the player to hold the bar diagonally across the strings in order to engage the string on which the desired lowered tone is to be produced at the correct point. A minor chord can be produced in this manner, however, only on the second and third strings, and producing two tones only. Furthermore, it is difficult for the player to manipulate the bar in the foregoing manner.

It will be understood that in use the strings are not depressed by the bar sufficiently to bring them into engagement with a fret and that the same is unattached to the instrument when in playing position. The bar also has a substantially continuous and preferably straight and smooth lower edge.

My invention provides means by which a minor chord may be produced while holding the bar transversely across the strings in the normal manner and at the same time all six of the strings may be used for producing the desired chord.

Another advantage of my invention resides in the fact that the player may readily produce a diminished fifth on three of the strings, a dominant seventh, and the device embodying my invention may also be used in melody work.

A specific object of my invention is the provision of a bar having an element extending laterally therefrom on which is mounted a member which is movable toward and away from the bar and engageable with a string of the musical instrument to vary the length of the vibrating portion of the string which the member engages.

Other objects of my invention will appear in the specification and the novel features thereof will be particularly pointed out in the claims.

My invention will best be understood by reference to the accompanying drawing in which I have illustrated a preferred embodiment thereof and in which—

Fig. 1 is a fragmentary perspective view of a portion of an Hawaiian guitar with the bar embodying my invention held by the player above the strings thereof;

Fig. 2 is a perspective view of a bar embodying my invention;

Fig. 3 is an end view of the bar embodying my invention located above the strings of a musical instrument and with the member carried by the laterally extending bars located at the end of the bars and in engagement with one of the strings;

Fig. 4 is a view similar to Fig. 3 but illustrating the member carried by the laterally extending element moved towards the bar; and

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a modified form of bar.

Like reference characters indicate like parts throughout the drawing.

Referring to the drawing 10 is an Hawaiian guitar in connection with which I have illustrated my invention and provided with the conventional neck 11 on which are mounted the usual frets 12 and over which are located the usual strings 13 individually indicated from the first string to the sixth by the reference characters 131, 132, 133, 134, 135 and 136, respectively. A bar 14 preferably formed of metal such as steel or bell metal is preferably provided with a curved finger clip 15 which may be engaged by the index finger of the left hand of the player, as illustrated in Fig. 1, the clip affording a convenient means for supporting the bar or steel on the finger of the player. The two ends of the clip may be conveniently spaced and are preferably sufficiently flexible to permit of their being bent to accommodate themselves to the finger of the player. The bar 14 is preferably provided with an opening 16 for a purpose which will more fully hereinafter appear, and the finger piece may conveniently be passed through the opening and secured in the desired position along the edge of the bar by screws 17 which are engageable in tapped openings 18 along the edge of the bar, a plurality of such openings preferably being provided thereby providing for adjustment of the finger piece longitudinally of the bar to accommodate it to the hand of the player.

In accordance with my invention, the bar 14 is provided with an element attached thereto and extending laterally therefrom, said element being provided with a member engageable by a finger of the player and movable toward and away from

said bar. In the embodiment illustrated, said element comprises two bars 19 secured to the bar 14 and extending laterally therefrom. The bar 14 may advantageously be provided with openings 20 in which the bars have a tight fit and in which they may, if desired, be welded or otherwise secured. The bars 19 are parallel, and are preferably maintained in parallel relation by a member 21 extending across the ends thereof and attached thereto as by screws 22. A member 23 is mounted on the element or bars 19 and is movable toward and away from the bar 14. In the embodiment illustrated in Figs. 2 to 4, the member 23 is provided with transverse openings 24 in which the bars 19 are received and on which the member is slidable toward and away from the bar. Preferably the member 23 is provided with a depression 25 for the reception of the end of the finger, usually the second, the depression preferably being cushioned by a pad 26 of yielding material, such as felt, for the comfort of the player. The member 23 is preferably provided with a downwardly extending rib or lug 27 which is engageable with a desired string of the musical instrument, and is preferably so spaced from the end of the bar 14 that when the bar is in normal use, the rib 27 is located above the second string 132 of the instrument.

When the bar 14 is held in the normal vertical playing position, the rib 27 of the member 23, and all parts of the element 19, are located above the strings of the instrument. When the member 23 is depressed by the finger of the player sufficiently to depress the string located beneath the same, the vibrating portion of that string is thereby changed. The bar 14 is at the same time tilted about its lower edge as a pivot. When the device is held by the left hand in the manner indicated in Fig. 1, the depression of the second string 132 by the rib 27 lengthens the vibrating portion of the string thereby lowering the pitch thereof. By moving the member 23 towards or away from the bar and correspondingly moving the rib 27 over the second string, the desired pitch may be secured without the necessity of the player varying the amount of depression of the string to produce the desired pitch.

As an example of the use of the device, let it be assumed that a chord in the key of A major is to be produced. When the bar is held above the twelfth fret 121 as indicated in Fig. 3 and the string depressed, and the pick, which it will be understood is usually carried on the thumb of the right hand, sweeps over the strings 131, 132 and 133, the chord formed by the notes A, C sharp and E is produced. The string 134 is an octave below the string 131, the string 135 is an octave below the string 133 and the string 136 an octave below string 134. When the pick sweeps over the strings therefore a major chord is produced on all six strings.

In Fig. 1 I have for convenience shown the third and fourth fingers bent back and away from the neck in order more clearly to show the position of the second finger in engagement with the movable member 23. It will be understood in practice that the third and fourth finger or the fourth finger alone in case the third finger is used for depressing the member 23, is laid upon the strings in order to stop the vibration thereof. Assuming again that the bar 14 is located above the fret 121 and engaging the strings but with pressure insufficient to bring them into engagement with the fret 121 above which the bar is at this time located, then by depressing the member 23 and the string 132 which it engages in the manner illustrated in Fig. 3, the vibrating portion of this string is lengthened by the distance between the fret 121 and the rib 27 with the result that the vibrating portion of the string 132 is lengthened and by moving the member 23 and its rib 27 along the string 132 the pitch of the note produced by the string 132 may be dropped one-half tone to produce C natural rather than C sharp and the strings 131, 132 and 133 produce the minor chord of A, C and E, the other three strings producing the tones E, A and E as above so that the tones produced by all six of the strings make up a minor chord. Similarly the major chord may be changed into a minor chord by depressing the member 23 when the bar 14 is held over any fret. The subdominant minor chord may similarly be produced, it being understood that the major and minor chords are the same for the dominant.

The device may also be used for producing the dominant seventh of the major chord. For example, when the bar or steel 14 is held over fret 15 (counting from the right in Fig. 1) which is the C chord, then by dropping the member 23 against and depressing the third string 133, B flat note may be produced which is the seventh of the dominant major chord.

By the use of my device, a diminished fifth may also be produced when the member 23 is held over the first string 131. By depressing the first string and playing only the first three strings 131, 132 and 133 a diminished fifth is produced. The device is also useful for melody playing on the lower five strings in which a minor tone may be produced by depressing the member 23 on the string 132.

In the embodiment of my invention illustrated in Fig. 5, the laterally extending bars 191 are square rather than round and the member 231 is provided with plates which overlie the upper and lower sides of the bars, and the member 231 slides along the bars 191 which serve as guides. The member 231 is in this embodiment provided with a curved finger engaging member and the finger piece 15a is secured at one end to the bar 14a, the free end of the finger piece being looped over the top edge of the bar.

The frets of a stringed musical instrument including those of an Hawaiian guitar are progressively more closely spaced from the neck inwardly, and the member which is movable towards and away from the bar readily adapts itself to the varying spaces.

By providing the bar 14 with the opening 16, the player may readily view the position of the member 23 relatively to the strings.

While I have described my invention in its preferred embodiment, it is to be understood that the words which I have used are words of description rather than of limitation. Hence, changes within the purview of the appended claims may be made without departing from the true scope and spirit of my invention in its broader aspects.

What I claim is:

1. A device for playing a stringed musical instrument comprising a bar adapted to extend across and above and engage the strings of said instrument, an element attached to said bar and extending laterally therefrom, a member having a lower edge mounted on said element and movable therealong towards and away from said bar, said member being mounted in a position to be engaged by a finger of the player, the lower edge

of said member being located above and near the level of the lower edge of said bar when the latter occupies a substantially vertical position, whereby said member may be brought into engagement with a string of said instrument when said bar is tilted when held in playing position transversely of and against the strings of said instrument.

2. A device for playing a stringed musical instrument comprising a bar adapted to extend across and above and engage the strings of said instrument, an element attached to said bar and extending laterally therefrom, a member having a lower edge mounted on said element and movable therealong towards and away from said bar, said member being mounted in a position to be engaged by a finger of the player, the lower edge of said member being located above and near the level of the lower edge of said bar at an intermediate portion thereof and extending laterally therefrom when the latter occupies a substantially vertical position, whereby said member may be brought into engagement with a string of said instrument when said bar is tilted when held in playing position transversely of and against the strings of said instrument.

3. A device for playing a stringed musical instrument comprising a bar adapted to extend across and above and engage the strings of said instrument, an element attached to said bar and extending laterally therefrom, a member having a lower edge mounted on said element and movable therealong towards and away from said bar, said member being mounted in a position to be engaged by a finger of the player, said member being provided with a downwardly extending projection located above and near the level of the lower edge of said bar when the latter occupies a substantially vertical position, whereby said member may be brought into engagement with a string of said instrument when said bar is tilted when held in playing position transversely of and against the strings of said instrument.

4. A device for playing a stringed musical instrument comprising a first bar adapted to extend across and above and engage the strings of said instrument, an element comprising two spaced bars attached to said first bar and extending laterally therefrom, a member having a lower edge mounted on said spaced bars and movable therealong towards and away from said first bar, said member being mounted in a position to be engaged by a finger of the player, the lower edge of said member being located above and near the level of the lower edge of said first bar when the latter occupies a substantially vertical position, whereby said member may be brought into engagement with a string of said instrument when said first bar is tilted when held in playing position transversely of and against the strings of said instrument.

5. A tone bar comprising a body portion having a string engaging edge forming a contact bar for all of the guitar strings, and an adjustable secondary bar arranged parallel to said tone bar and extending laterally therefrom at substantially right angles thereto of a length to engage and contact the strings at selected frets adjacent the fret being engaged by the contact bar.

6. A tone bar comprising a body portion having a string engaging edge forming a contact bar for all of the guitar strings, and a slidable secondary bar arranged parallel to said tone bar and extending laterally therefrom at substantially right angles thereto of a length to engage and contact the strings at selected frets adjacent the fret being engaged by the contact bar.

HENRY J. SPINA.