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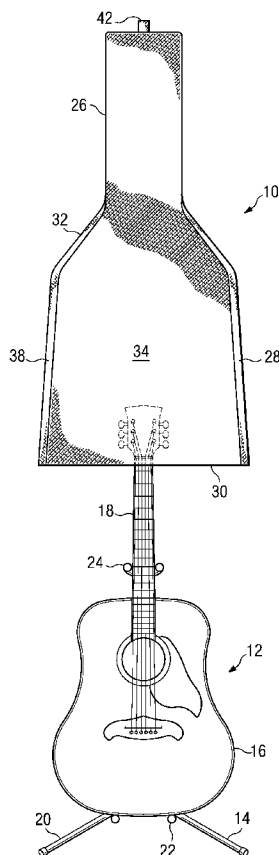
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(54) Title: METHOD OF PROTECTING A STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT



(57) Abstract: A method of protecting a stringed musical instrument (12, 46) is accomplished by providing a stringed musical instrument (12, 46) of the type having a body (16) and an elongated neck (18) extending from the body (16). The stringed musical instrument (12, 46) is provided on a stand (14) so that the instrument (12, 46) is supported by the stand (14) in a generally upright position, with the neck (18) extending upward from the body (16). An instrument cover (10) is provided and is formed from a flexible fabric material having a neck portion (26) and a body portion (28) configured as a continuous sleeve that is open (30) at the end of the body portion (28) for receiving and generally conforming to the stringed instrument (12, 46) supported on the stand (14) without binding to facilitate removal of the instrument cover (10) from the instrument (12, 46). The instrument cover (10) is positioned over the musical instrument (12, 46) and the stand as the stringed instrument (12, 46) is supported on the stand (14) so that the cover (10) generally conforms to the musical instrument (12, 46) when in a fully covered position. The instrument cover (10) is optionally removed from the instrument (12, 46) and stand (14) after the cover (10) has been positioned thereon.

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METHOD OF PROTECTING A STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENT

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This application is related to U.S. Patent Application No. 11/463,929, filed August 11, 2006, which is incorporated herein by reference.

BACKGROUND

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The invention relates to musical devices and methods of protecting musical devices.

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BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

For a more complete understanding of the present invention, reference is now made to the following descriptions taken in conjunction with the accompanying figures, in which:

5 FIGURE 1 is front elevational view of a guitar and stand, shown with an instrument cover drawn away from the guitar and stand;

 FIGURE 2 is front perspective view of the instrument cover of Figure 1 in a fully covered position over the guitar and stand;

 FIGURE 3 is rear perspective view of the instrument cover of Figure 2;

10 FIGURE 4 is a top perspective view of the instrument cover, showing a handle of the cover; and

 FIGURE 5 is a front perspective view of an instrument cover in a fully covered position over a banjo and stand.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

Referring to Figure 1, an instrument cover 10 is provided for use with a stringed musical instrument 12 that is supported on a stand 14. The musical instrument 12 has a body 16 with an elongated neck 18 extending from the body 16.

5 Although the instrument 12 is shown as a guitar in this embodiment, the invention has application to other stringed musical instruments as well. These may include, but are not limited to, such stringed musical instruments as a guitar, a banjo, a bass, a cello, a violin, a viola, a ukulele and a mandolin. The instruments may be acoustical or electric musical instruments.

10 The stand 14 may include a base 20 that supports the stand 14. Examples of suitable instrument stands may include those described in U.S. Patent Nos. 6,772,981; 6,877,706; 6,881,884 and 7,002,066, each of which is incorporated herein by reference in its entirety. A lower support bracket 22 of the stand 14 may support the lower portion of the guitar body 16. A generally upright arm may extend upward
15 from the base and carry an upper support bracket 24 of the arm. The bracket 24 may support the neck 18, as shown.

The stand 14 supports the instrument 10 in a generally upright manner. Typically, the stand will support the instrument so that the instrument is in a rearwardly inclined position so that the instrument does not fall from the stand 12 due
20 to gravity.

The cover 10 may be formed from a flexible fabric or sheet material. The cover 10 has an upper neck portion 26 and a lower body portion 28, which are joined together and configured to form a continuous sleeve. A lower opening 30 is formed in the body portion 28 to facilitate receiving of the instrument 12 as it is positioned on
25 the stand 14. The neck portion 26 may have a generally uniform width along its length.

Referring to Figures 2 and 3, the cover 10 is formed from front and rear panels 34, 36, respectively. The front and rear panels 34, 36 are joined together by side panels 38. The side panels 38 may have a generally uniform width along their
30 lengths. Although this width may vary based upon the instrument for which it is used, a width of approximately 4 - 7 inches (10 - 18 cm) may be suitable for conventional guitars and stands.

The lateral dimensions of the neck portion 26 of the front and rear panels 34, 36 may be generally equal, with a width of from about 5- 8 inches (12.5 – 20.5 cm) being suitable from most conventional guitars and stands.

5 The neck portion 26 is joined to the body portion 28 through opposite tapered shoulder portions 32. The shoulder portions 32 taper outward at an angle of from about 15 to about 35° angle from a longitudinal axis of the cover 10. The neck portion 26 may have a length of approximately 16 to 20 inches (40 to 51 cm) for most conventional guitars and stands. In one embodiment, the neck portion 26 has a length of 18 inches (46 cm). The shoulder portion 32 may expand at the lower end of the neck portion 26 at the 15 to 35° angle to a width of about 12 to 16 inches (30 to 41 10 cm). The shoulder portions 32 may each have a length of from about 4 to 8 inches (10 to 20.5 cm). In one embodiment, the shoulder tapers at an angle of approximately 30° and has a length of about 6 inches (15.25 cm).

As is described below with respect to the body portion 28, the lateral 15 dimensions across the width of the cover 10 at the shoulders may be different for the front and rear panels. In particular, the rear panel 36 of the body portion 28 may have lateral dimensions that are greater than the longitudinally corresponding lateral dimensions of the front panel 34. The difference in the lateral dimensions may vary from 1 to 5 inches (2.5 to 13 cm). In one embodiment, the lower end of the shoulder 20 portion 32 has a lateral dimension or width of about 14 inches (35.5 cm) for the front panel 34 and about 16 inches (41 cm) for the rear panel.

The sides of the body portion 28 may taper downwardly outwards from about 3° to about 10° from a longitudinal axis of the cover 10. The length of the sides of the body portion 28 may range from about 22 inches (55 cm) to about 30 inches (76.5 25 cm). In one embodiment, the sides taper at an angle of approximately 5° and have a length of about 26 inches (66 cm) from the lower end of the shoulder portion 32.

The width or lateral dimensions of the body portion 28 of the front and rear panels 34, 36 may also be different. In particular, the rear panel 36 of the body portion 28 may have lateral dimensions that are greater than the longitudinally 30 corresponding lateral dimensions of the front panel 34. This difference may vary from about 1 to 5 inches (2.5 to 13 cm). In one embodiment, the difference in width is about 2 inches (5 cm) for the entire length of the front and rear panels 34, 36 of the body portion 28, with the body portion 28 having a width at the upper end of about 14 inches (35.5 cm) for the front panel and about 16 inches (41 cm) for the rear panel and

tapering to the bottom to a width of about 18 inches (46 cm) for the front panel and a width of about 20 inches (51 cm) for the rear panel. The differences in lateral dimensions or width of the shoulder and/or body portions facilitates accommodating of the stand 14 when the cover is positioned over the instrument and stand.

5 Referring to Figure 4, an end piece or panel 40 is provided at the upper end of the cover 10 and is joined to the side panels 38 and front and rear panels 34, 36 to close off the upper end of the cover 10. A handle 42 may be provided at the upper end 40 of the cover. The handle 42 may be a strip of material that is joined to the cover generally at the edges of the panels 34, 36 or 38 and extends across the width or
10 depth of the cover 10.

In use, a guitar or instrument 12 is positioned on the stand 14, as is shown. The cover 10 is then positioned over the guitar and stand, with the opening 30 receiving the upper end of the guitar and stand. The cover 10 is lowered over the guitar 12 and stand 14, with the neck 18 of the instrument 12 being received within
15 the neck portion 26 of the cover 10 and the body portion 28 receiving the body 16 of the instrument 12. When so positioned, the cover 10 generally conforms to the musical instrument when in a fully covered position. The greater width of the rear panel of the cover accommodates the stand 14. The cover 10 completely covers the entire instrument 12 so that no areas of the instrument are exposed. The cover 10 may
20 completely cover the stand as well, however, in the embodiment shown, the cover 10 does not extend to the support surface on which the stand 14 rests so that a lower portion of the stand base 20 remains exposed.

The dimensions of the cover 10 may be selected so that the cover may be easily positioned and removed from the instrument and stand without binding.
25 Additionally, the materials of the cover 10, while flexible, may have a certain rigidity so that the material does not readily fold onto itself, which may make it more difficult to position the cover over the instrument.

The cover 10 protects the instrument 12 from various dust and debris that may otherwise contact the instrument. In particular, the cover protects the instrument from
30 dust that may otherwise accumulate on the surfaces of the instrument 12, and which is oftentimes difficult to remove because of the intricate surfaces of the instrument.

When desired, the instrument cover 10 may be removed by grasping the handle 42 and pulling the cover upward from the instrument and stand. Because the cover does not bind to the instrument and stand, this may be done without

manipulation of the material of the cover 10. The interior of the cover 10 may be free from projecting seams and structures that would catch or otherwise bind to the instrument or stand during removal.

Figure 5 shows a cover 44 for use with a banjo 46 positioned on the stand 14.

5 The cover 44 is generally the same as the cover 10 previously described, with similar elements labeled the same. The length of the body portion 28 of the cover 44 is shortened, however, due to the shorter nature of the banjo body 48. Other dimensions may be varied as well.

10 While the invention has been shown in only some of its forms, it should be apparent to those skilled in the art that it is not so limited, but is susceptible to various changes and modifications without departing from the scope of the invention. Accordingly, it is appropriate that the appended claims be construed broadly and in a manner consistent with the scope of the invention.

CLAIMS

I claim:

5 1. A method of protecting a stringed musical instrument comprising:

providing a stringed musical instrument of the type having a body and an elongated neck extending from the body, the stringed musical instrument being provided on a stand so that the instrument is supported by the stand in a generally upright position with the neck extending upward from the body;

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providing an instrument cover formed from a flexible fabric material having a neck portion and a body portion configured as a continuous sleeve that is open at the end of the body portion for receiving and generally conforming to the stringed instrument supported on the stand without binding to facilitate removal of the instrument cover from the instrument;

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positioning the instrument cover over the musical instrument and the stand as the stringed instrument is supported on the stand so that the cover generally conforms to the musical instrument when in a fully covered position; and optionally

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removing the instrument cover from the instrument and stand after the cover has been positioned thereon.

25 2. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the stand has a base and a generally upright arm that extends from the base that supports the neck portion, and wherein the instrument cover receives at least a portion of the upright arm.

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3. The method of claim 1, wherein:

the instrument cover is formed from front and rear panels that are joined together by side panels and wherein the rear panel of the body portion has lateral
5 dimensions that are greater than the longitudinally corresponding lateral dimensions of the front panel.

4. The method of claim 1, wherein:

10 the instrument cover is provided with a handle at the upper end to facilitate grasping of the cover.

5. The method of claim 1, wherein:

15 the sides of the body portion taper downwardly outwards from about 3° to about 10° from a longitudinal axis of the cover.

6. The method of claim 1, wherein:

20 shoulder portions are defined where the neck portion joins the body portion, the shoulder portions tapering downwardly outward at an angle of from about 15° to about 35° from a longitudinal axis of the cover.

7. The method of claim 1, wherein:

25 the instrument cover covers the entire length of the instrument.

8. The method of claim 1, wherein:

30 the stringed musical instrument is selected from at least one of a guitar, a banjo, a bass, a cello, a violin, a viola, a ukulele and a mandolin.

9. A method of protecting a stringed musical instrument comprising:

providing a stringed musical instrument of the type having a body and an elongated neck extending from the body, the body have lateral dimensions that are greater than those of the neck, the stringed musical instrument being provided on a stand so that the instrument is supported by the stand in a generally upright position
5 with the neck extending upward from the body;

providing an instrument cover formed from a flexible fabric material having a neck portion and a body portion configured as a continuous sleeve that is open at the end of the body portion for closely receiving and generally conforming to the stringed
10 instrument supported on the stand without binding to facilitate removal of the instrument cover from the instrument, and wherein shoulder portions are defined where the neck portion joins the body portion, the shoulder portions tapering downwardly outward at an angle of from about 15° to about 35° from a longitudinal axis of the cover and the sides of the body portion tapering downwardly outwards
15 from about 3° to about 10° from a longitudinal axis of the cover;

positioning the instrument cover over the musical instrument and the stand as the stringed instrument is supported thereon so that the cover generally conforms to the musical instrument when in a fully covered position; and optionally
20

removing the instrument cover from the instrument and stand after the cover has been positioned thereon.

10. The method of claim 9, wherein:
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the stand has a base and a generally upright arm that extends from the base that supports the neck portion, and wherein the instrument cover receives at least a portion of the upright arm.

30 11. The method of claim 9, wherein:

the instrument cover is formed from front and rear panels that are joined together by side panels and wherein the rear panel of the body portion has lateral

dimensions that are greater than the longitudinally corresponding lateral dimensions of the front panel.

12. The method of claim 9, wherein:

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the instrument cover is provided with a handle at the upper end to facilitate grasping of the cover.

13. The method of claim 9, wherein:

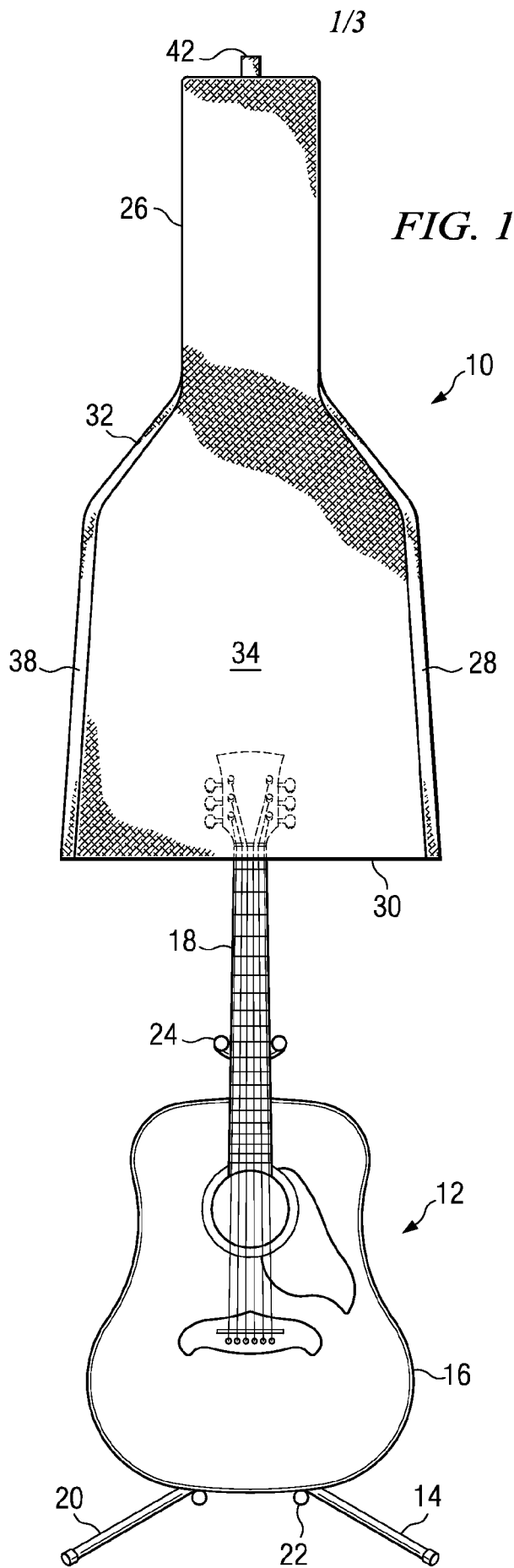
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the instrument cover covers the entire length of the instrument.

14. The method of claim 9, wherein:

15

the stringed musical instrument is selected from at least one of a guitar, a banjo, a bass, a cello, a violin, a viola, a ukulele and a mandolin.



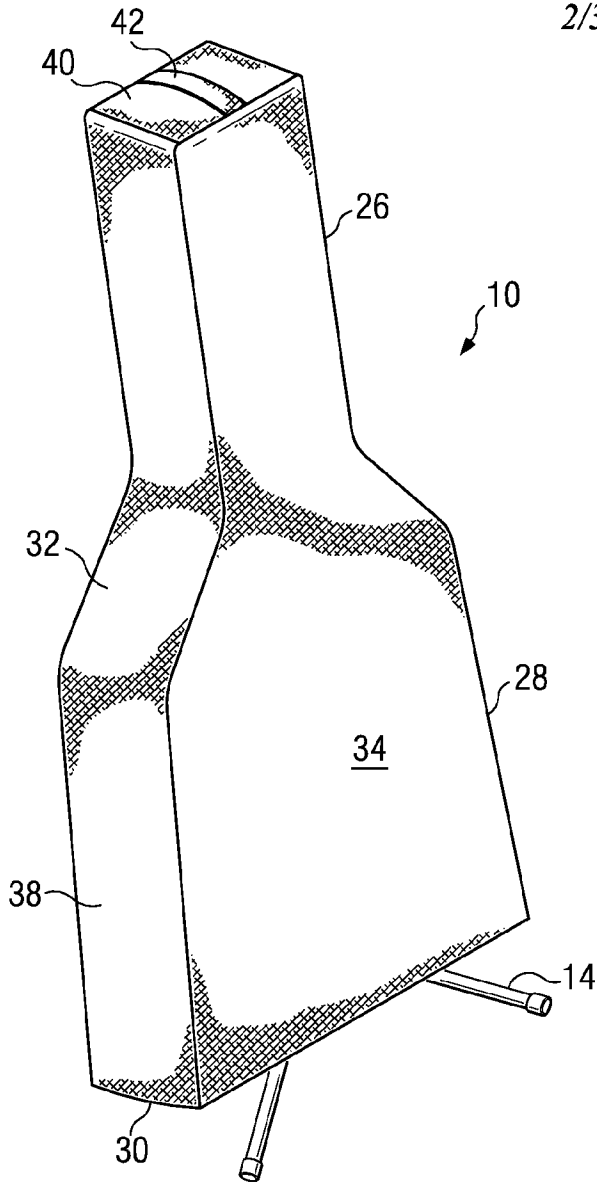


FIG. 2

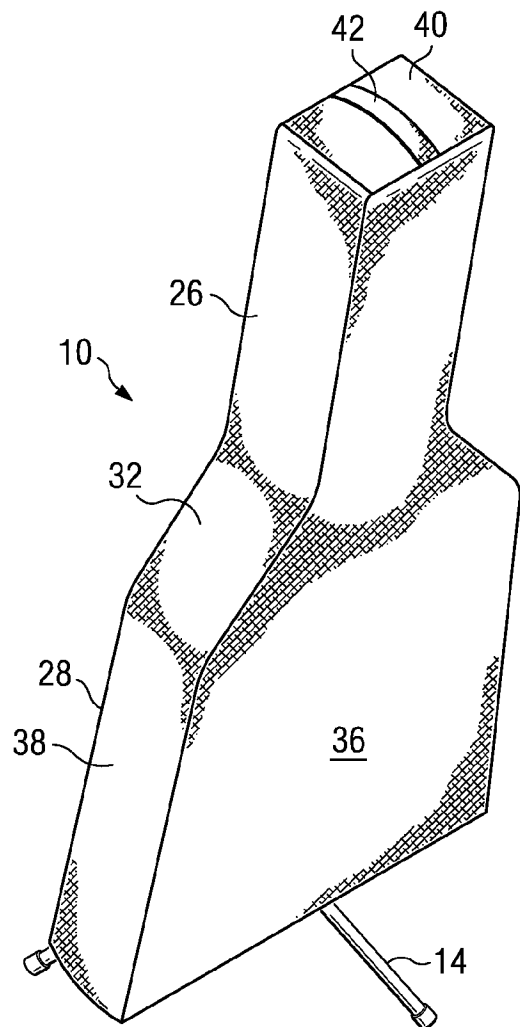


FIG. 3

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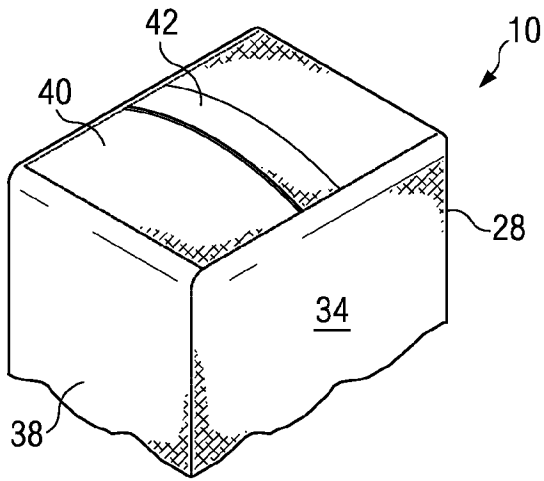


FIG. 4

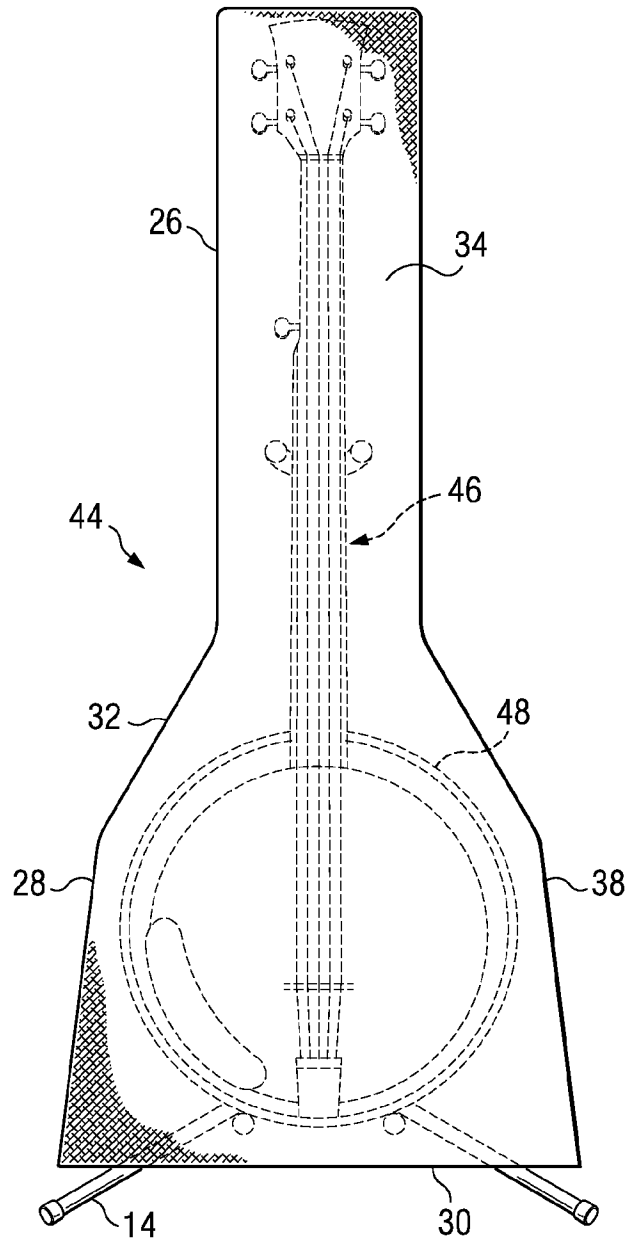


FIG. 5