S. MACKAYE.

Theater Appliance.

No. 222,143. Patented Dec. 2, 1879.

Fig. 1.

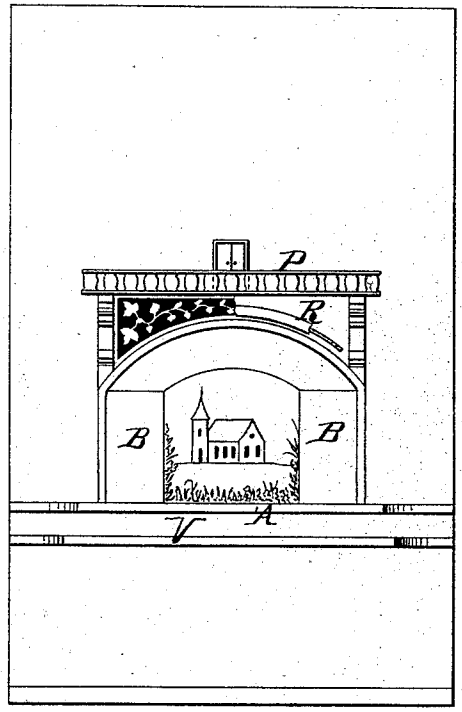


Fig. 2.

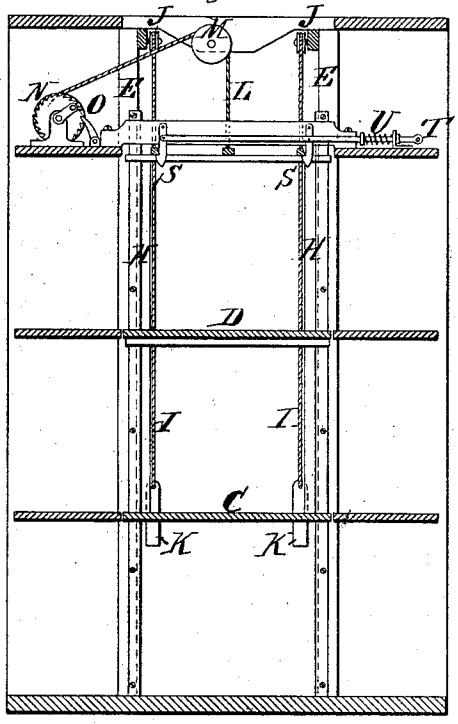
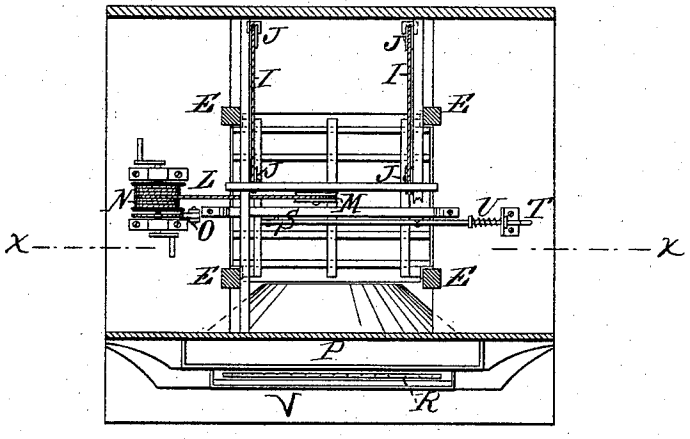


Fig. 3.



Witnesses

John W. Ripley

Boyd Eliot

Inventor.

Steele Mackaye

by S. J. Gordon

his Atty.

N. PETERS, PHOTO-LITHOGRAPHER, WASHINGTON, D. C.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

STEELE MACKAYE, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

IMPROVEMENT IN THEATER APPLIANCES.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. **222,143**, dated December 2, 1879; application filed September 9, 1879.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, STEELE MACKAYE, of New York, county of New York, State of New York, have invented a new and useful Improved Theater Stage and Orchestra, which is fully set forth in the following specification and accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a front view of my improved stage and orchestra; Fig. 2, a vertical section of the stages at line *x x* of Fig. 3; Fig. 3, a plan or top view of the same with the casing removed.

The object of my invention is to facilitate the speedy setting of the scenery of different acts of a stage play or opera, an economy of space in the auditorium of a theater, and the concentration of light upon the stage with the least inconvenience to the audience.

These ends are accomplished by constructing two movable stages, one above the other, with appliances for lifting and depressing the same, locating the orchestra above the proscenium with the stage-lights hid beneath it, casting the light from above within, instead of from below upon, the stage.

A represents the stage proper; B B, the flare of the proscenium thereof; C, the lower movable stage; D, the upper movable stage; E E E E, the guide-posts; H, movable stage-frame; I I, the suspension-ropes; J J, the pulleys therefor; K K, the balance-weights; L, the hoisting-rope; M, its pulley; N, the drum; O, the ratchet and pawl; P, the orchestra; R, the stage-lights; S, the automatic latch; T, its rod; U, the spring thereon; V, the floor of the auditorium.

The operation of these contrivances and arrangements is this: Supposing lower movable stage, C, to be secured on a level with stage A, the scenes, furniture, and properties of the first and second scenes or acts of a play may be set on movable stages C and D. After the presentation of the first of these, automatic latch S is withdrawn by rod T and the pawl of ratchet O on drum N released, and both stages C and D lowered by rope L, passing over pulley M and drum N.

The second scene or act may then be given immediately from movable stage D, and while it is in progress the third scene or act will be struck and changed on stage C.

Upon the completion of the second act or scene stages C and D are raised by the action of the apparatus before described, bringing stage C, with the third act or scene set thereon, upon the level of stage A, ready to be presented to the audience.

While the third scene is being acted upon stage C the fourth scene is being struck and changed on stage D, ready for presentation in its turn on the conclusion of the performance of scene three, and this process is continued until all the scenes and acts of the play have been performed.

The latches S S are automatic in their action in catching under a rafter of the stage-frame, spring U returning them into their places as soon as the beveled-edge rafter, which in rising pushed them aside, has passed the projection which constitutes the latch.

The extension of the rafters of the stage-frame within the guide-posts causes them to serve also as guides to steady the stages in their rise and descent between the posts.

These compound stages may be divided and separately moved, instead of together, as herein explained, without departing from the leading idea and principle of my invention, which is the organizing of double stages capable of being separately operated upon at the same time for successive presentation.

It will be seen that by this contrivance the time formerly lost between the acts in setting the scene for the succeeding act will be saved, and the audience spared the long and fatiguing waits that often intervene between the acts of elaborately-mounted plays at modern theaters.

The location of orchestra P above the stage, with concealed lights R beneath it reflecting inwardly directly upon the stage, accomplishes two desirable ends: The space ordinarily given up to the orchestra in the auditorium is saved for the audience, and the stage-lights, which, however carefully screened, are necessarily an annoyance and an injury to the eyes of many spectators, especially to those occupying places in the boxes and upper tiers, are removed to

a position where their entire force can be concentrated directly upon the stage, the rays in all other directions being cut off.

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

The combination of stage proper, A, movable stages C and D, connecting-frame H, and guide-posts E E E E, provided with a hoisting, securing, and balancing apparatus, constructed and adapted to operate together substantially as and for the purposes set forth.

STEELE MACKAYE.

Witnesses:
S. J. GORDON,
JOHN W. RIPLEY.