J. BELL-RANSKE.

STAGE SCENERY.

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1,304,649. Patented May 27, 1919.

Fig. 1.

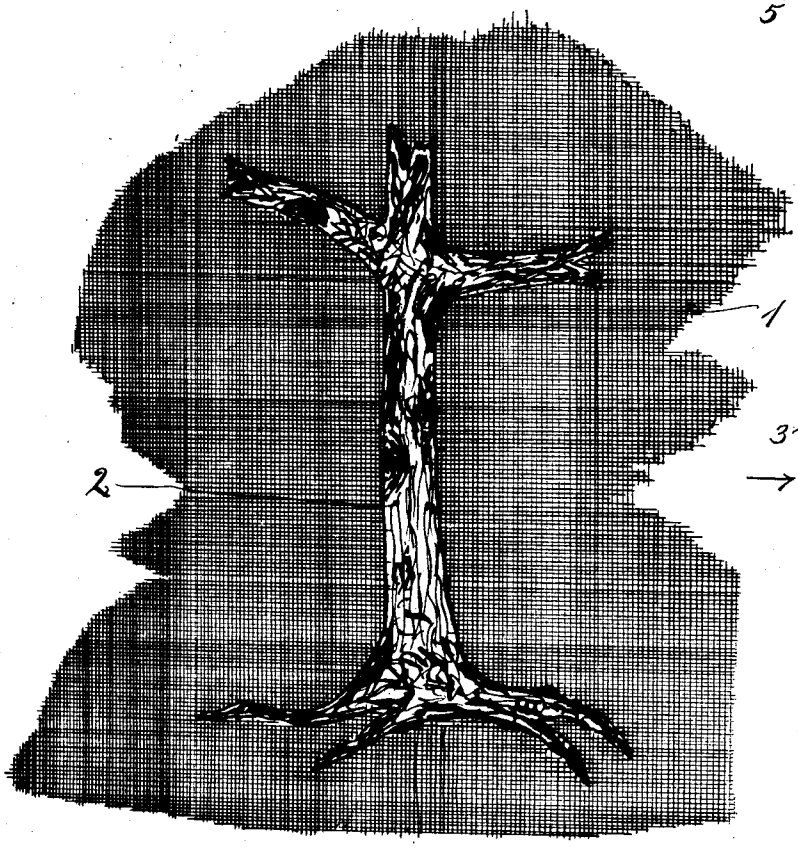
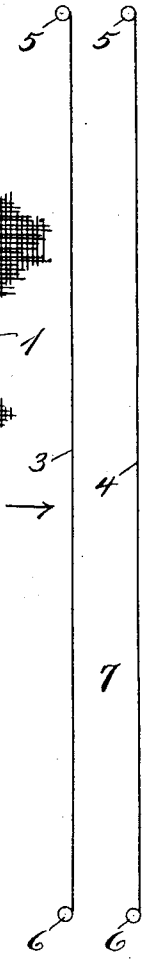


Fig. 2.



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THE NORRIS PETERS CO., PHOTO-LITHO., WASHINGTON, D. C.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

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STAGE-SCENERY.

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To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JUTTA BELL-RANSKE, a British subject, residing at New York, in the county of New York and State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Stage-Scenery, of which the following is a specification.

My invention relates to the scenic art and has for its object to produce scenic or stage effects with a minimum of outlay and to create entirely novel effects capable of a great variety and range.

The scenic art, as practised heretofore and the production of stage effects usually entail great expense, due both to the production of the scenery done by special artists and also to its operation or manipulation. The painting of scenery not only requires special skill and particular talents, but also large studios, and the handling and operation of the heavy scenery is usually done by machinery, either hydraulic or electric, which in turn requires highly paid skilful operators. Some of the wonderful scenic effects produced on large stages necessitate complex arrangements in order to produce the desired illusions, and on account of the frequent shifting of heavy scenery, there is a good deal of wear and tear, resulting in constant repair and expense. Also the storing of such scenery and carting it back and forth add to the sums expended thereon.

Compared therewith, the initial expense of the scenery according to my invention is very small, the handling of the scenery does not require any machinery or skilful operators, and it can be easily transported because it is light and occupies only small space being capable of being folded together. Moreover, and this is not the least important feature of my invention, my scenery readily lends itself to an infinite variety of combinations and arrangements or settings, whereby the most unexpected and wonderful effects and illusions can be obtained, which effects, of course, include proper lighting arrangements, as are used with the present day stage scenery or stage setting.

My scenery consists of a fine netting, on which are flatly placed in outline the pictures of the objects required for the particular scene. If, for instance, the scene is to represent part of a wood, trees are shown in their outlines on the netting. Under proper illumination, these trees, at a distance, *i. e.* as seen from the spectator's seat, will appear as real trees. Now, behind the first netting, on which the trees appear, may be hung a second netting, on which are placed stars, or clouds, and under proper illumination, an evening or a night scene in the forest can be produced. There may be a plurality of nettings hung one behind the other with a space between the various nettings, so that persons (actors and actresses) can walk between the same, appearing first in vague and uncertain outlines, as it were, in a mystic way, until they finally, as they step in front of the first netting, are clearly seen in flesh and blood.

According to whether the light is thrown on the nettings from the front (footlights) or from the side (winglights) or from above (toplights) or from the rear (backlights) or simultaneously from more than one direction, or according to whether differently colored lights are used, it will be readily understood from the foregoing description that my new scenery is capable of an almost limitless range of variations and combinations and that I am thereby enabled to produce entirely new and marvelous stage or scenic effects, which not only will be mysterious and baffling to the spectator, but will also have incomparable artistic value and will give great delight to the eye and the imagination.

The netting used in my scenery is an ordinary and entirely inexpensive fabric, as is the material which goes into the making of the pictures of the scenic objects that are placed on the netting. Referring to the above example of a forest scene, the trees are cut out in outline from a cheap fabric, *e. g.*, cheap cotton goods, stitched or otherwise fastened to the netting. In order to give the trees the appearance of real trees, a few strokes with the painter's brush will, of course, be required. But it is at once evident that in this way scenery can be produced with a minimum of outlay so that even the smallest theater can produce its own scenery. As the scenery can be folded up in a small compass, it can be easily transported from one place to another and stored in a small room. Being very light, it can be manipulated without the use of any machinery, requiring no skillful operators. In case of loss it can be easily and quickly replaced, and being so light in weight, it is not subjected to much wear and tear in being handled. To guard it against

fire, it can be impregnated with a non-inflammable substance.

To better illustrate my invention reference is had to the drawing attached hereto, Figure 1 of which shows a portion of stage scenery made in accordance with my invention, whereas Fig. 2 shows in a diagrammatic manner two nettings one arranged behind the other. In Fig. 1, 1 designates a fragment or piece of fine netting, on which is fastened by stitches or otherwise a piece of fabric 2, cut in the shape of an old tree trunk. Instead of such a tree trunk, any other object, of course, may be shown on the netting by mounting thereon suitably cut pieces of fabric, which may be cut either in one piece, or where large objects are to be shown, portions of fabric may be cut and then pieced and fitted together.

Fig. 2 shows two nettings, 3, 4 one arranged behind the other, each netting being suspended from a rod 5 and each netting having passed through a seam at its bottom a rod 6 whereby the nettings are held in stretched position and are prevented from being blown about. The space 7 left between the two nettings is wide enough to permit persons to pass through between them so that they may be seen in outline by the spectators supposed to be looking at the scenery from a direction indicated by the arrow.

On account of the way, in which the picture of a scene is placed on the netting, entirely new impressionistic views can be produced, especially when several nettings are combined, one arranged behind the other.

The netting may be hung from a strong cord, or thin wire, stretched across the stage, and in order to prevent the netting from being blown about or disturbed by drafts of air or other causes, the netting may be and preferably is weighted at the bottom by wire rods, or the like, which are inserted into a seam especially provided therefor at the bottom of the netting, similar to those found in short window curtains. These wire rods, when the netting is folded up, are removed again. The term "fabric" used in this specification may include any fabric, *i. e.*, it is not limited to textile fabrics.

I claim as my invention:

1. Stage scenery comprising netting, and portions of a fabric mounted thereon representing the object or objects forming part of the scenery.

2. Stage scenery, as specified in claim 1, in which the portions of fabric are painted.

3. Stage scenery comprising a plurality of nettings each having portions of a fabric mounted thereon representing the object or objects forming part of the scenery, the said nettings being arranged one behind the other with a space between them.

4. Stage scenery comprising netting, portions of a fabric mounted thereon representing the object or objects forming part of the scenery, and means for suspending the netting.

5. Stage scenery as specified in claim 4, in which also means are provided for holding the netting when suspended in stretched position.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

JUTTA BELL-RANSKE.

Copies of this patent may be obtained for five cents each, by addressing the "Commissioner of Patents, Washington, D. C."