April 25, 1939. E. PFANNEKUCHEN 2,155,767

STAGE DEVICE FOR CONJURING REPRESENTATIONS

Filed Feb. 6, 1936

Fig. 1.

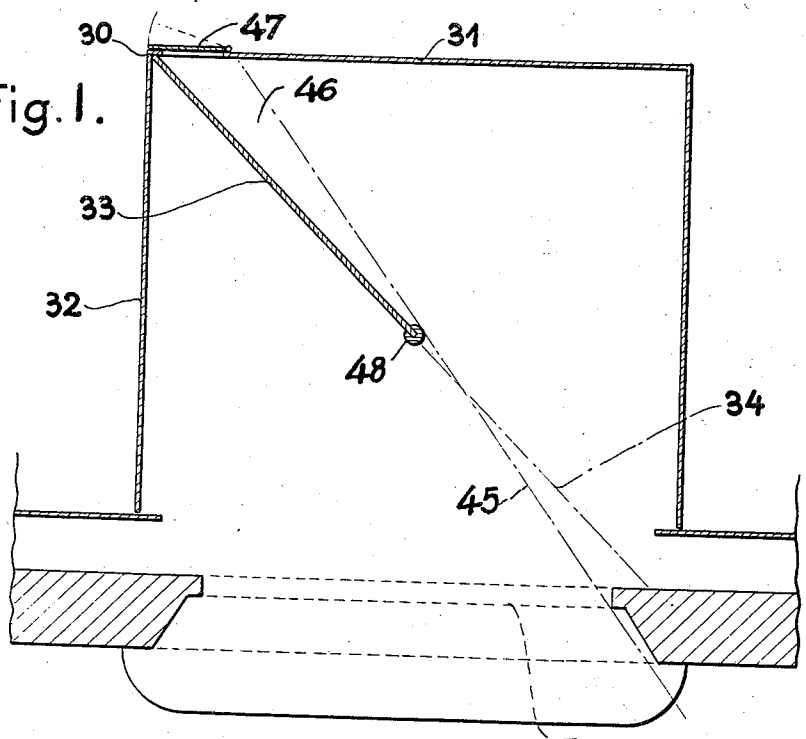
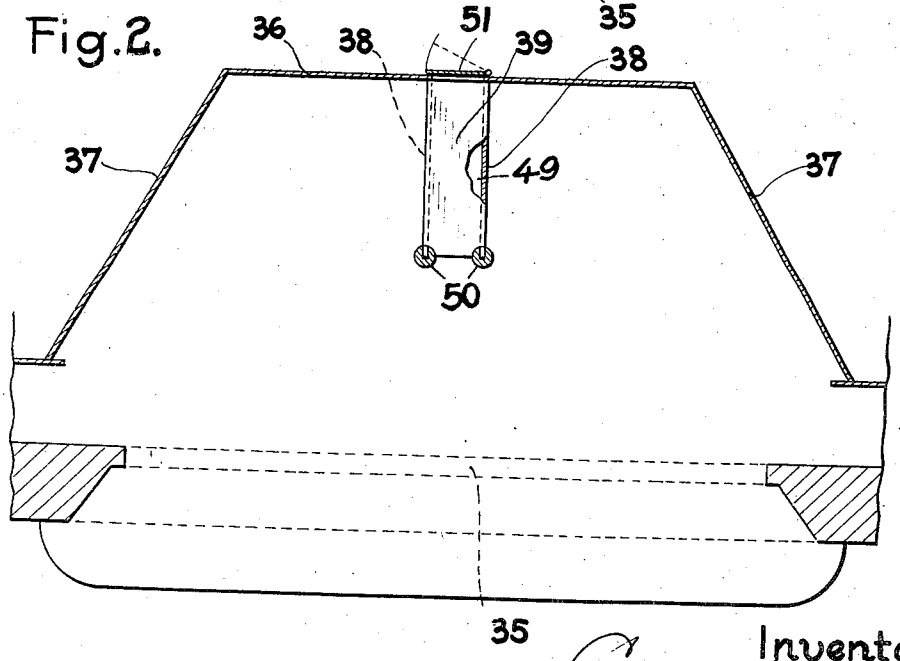



Fig. 2.




Inventor

Ernst Pfannekuchen

By Frank S. Appleman

Attorney.

Patented Apr. 25, 1939 2,155,767

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

2,155,767

## STAGE DEVICE FOR CONJURING REPRESENTATIONS

Ernst Pfannekuchen, Dusseldorf, Germany

Application February 6, 1936, Serial No. 62,687
In Germany October 2, 1933

6 Claims. (Cl. 272—13)

The object of this invention is to provide stage devices for conjuring representations in which human beings, animals or objects of any kind can be made to suddenly appear on the stage and disappear from it again in a manner inexplicable to the spectator. For this purpose, there is erected a stage background framing opening forwardly towards the auditorium and having access openings, said background being formed as a plane surface with foldable lateral walls or as a part of an arc of a circle. In front of this framing there are arranged one or more reflecting screens extending radially therefrom and perpendicular to the floor. By these reflecting screens, images of the persons, animals and objects may be caused to appear suddenly in the centre of the stage platform, being invisible until the moment of their appearance. The radial arrangement of the mirror walls creates, with respect to the observer, the illusion that the stage framing extends unbroken.

Constructional forms of the new stage device are shown in the accompanying drawing, wherein:—

Fig. 1 is a horizontal section of a constructional form with a plane stage framing with lateral wings at right-angles, and

Fig. 2 is a second constructional form of the plane stage framing with lateral wings arranged at angles greater than 90°.

In Fig 1 is shown an embodiment of the stage framing constructed as a flat wall with side wings arranged at angles of 90°. In the one rectangular corner **30**, which is formed by the back central wall **31** and the one side wing **32**, is one end of a wall **33** covered with mirrors on the side turned towards the observer and running outwardly from this corner, forming with the plane rear wall of the stage framing, an angle of 45°. The distance of the stage framing from the stage opening is here so chosen that the straight line **34** extending from the mirror falls outside the stage opening **35**. Naturally, a second mirror wall can be used which is then fitted at the other corner.

The mirror covering wall **33** reflects the side wall **32** which corresponds in appearance to the back wall **31** and thereby creates the illusion that no mirror is there. Spectators at the extreme right can see behind the mirrored wall **33** to the extent indicated by the broken line **45**. However, between the line **45** and the back of the mirrored wall **33** is a wedge-shaped space **46** in which a performer is invisible to the entire audience. The performer's exit from the space **46** is accomplished by way of a door **47** in that portion of the rear wall **31** which forms the base of space **46**. The front edge of the wall **33** is concealed from the spectators by the column **48** in which such edge is recessed.

In operation, assuming it is a disappearance act, the performer is momentarily concealed from the entire audience by a sheet or the like and steps into the space **46**. He may reappear in the reverse of the manner just described or may exit through the door **47** and reappear from the audience or wings.

In Fig. 2, the stage framing also consists of a plane central rear wall **36**, which has side wings **37** hinged to said wall **36** to project therefrom at an angle of more than 90°. There are here two reflecting screens **38**, fitted on both sides with mirrors, which screens are spaced from each other and which are arranged at right angles to the plane central rear surface **36** of the framing, from which they project.

In order to prevent the public in the gallery from seeing from above into the space **49** provided by the mirror walls, the latter can be covered by a plate **39** placed on the upper edges of the mirror walls. This plate is provided with a mirror on the top. Sources of light of suitable colour, covered from the stage opening, are fitted on the under-side of the plate. The covering of the space, limited by the mirror walls, by a plate with mirrors on the top, can naturally also take place, if the stage framing is made as a part of a circle.

The front edges of the walls **38** are concealed from view by columns **50** which are recessed to receive such edges. A door **51** is provided in the wall **36** between the walls **38** to provide an entrance to or exit from the space **49**.

In operation, the object or person to be magically produced is rearwardly of the wall **36** behind the door **51**. During the representation of a corresponding stage operation, in the course of which the illusion is to take place, the opening between the columns **50** is unobtrusively obscured from view by apparatus or other means to permit an unseen entrance to the space **49** through door **51**. Then, the appearance is made from between the columns **50** when the obscuring apparatus is moved.

While the person is in the space **49** he is, of course, concealed from spectators sitting to the right and left of the stage by the mirrored walls **38**. Consequently, the obscuring apparatus or the like is necessary only to conceal the person from the spectators seated in the center of the

theatre. In disappearance acts, the reverse process occurs.

Having now particularly described and ascertained the nature of my said invention and in what manner the same is to be performed I declare that what I claim is:

1. In a stage illusion apparatus, a background structure extending across the stage opening, said background extending rearwardly from one side of the stage, across the rear of the stage and forward to the other side of the stage, said background structure having at least one access opening concealed therein, and a mirror element extending from the central portion of the background enclosure to the background and concealing the access opening, said background being polygonal in contour.

2. In a stage illusion apparatus, a background structure extending across the stage opening, said background extending rearwardly from one side of the stage, across the rear of the stage and forward to the other side of the stage, said background structure having at least one access opening concealed therein, and a mirror element extending from the central portion of the background enclosure to the background and concealing the access opening, said background being polygonal in contour, said mirror being angularly positioned to reflect only the background from all points in front of said stage.

3. In a stage illusion apparatus, a background structure extending across the stage opening, said background extending rearwardly from one side of the stage, across the rear of the stage and forward to the other side of the stage, said background structure having at least one access opening concealed therein and at least one mirror element extending from the central portion of the background enclosure to the background and concealing the access opening, said background being polygonal in contour.

4. In a stage illusion apparatus, a background structure extending across the stage opening, said background extending rearwardly from one side of the stage, across the rear of the stage and forward to the other side of the stage, said background structure having at least one access opening concealed therein, a plurality of mirror elements extending from the central portion of the background enclosure to the background and concealing the access opening, said background being polygonal in contour, said mirrors being arranged in substantially parallel relationship and being arranged to reflect only the background from all points in front of said stage.

5. In a stage illusion apparatus, a background structure extending across the stage opening, said background extending rearwardly from one side of the stage, across the rear of the stage and forward to the other side of the stage, said background structure having at least one access opening concealed therein, a plurality of mirror elements extending from the central portion of the background enclosure to the background and concealing the access opening, said background being polygonal in contour, said mirrors being arranged in substantially parallel relationship and being arranged at substantialy right angles to said background to reflect only the background from all points in front of said stage.

6. In a stage illusion apparatus, a background structure extending across the stage opening, said background extending rearwardly from one side of the stage, across the rear of the stage and forward to the other side of the stage, said background structure having at least one access opening concealed therein, a plurality of mirror elements extending from the central portion of the background enclosure to the background and concealing the access opening, said background being polygonal in contour, said mirrors being arranged in substantially parallel relationship and being arranged at substantially right angles to said background to reflect only the background from all points in front of said stage, and a mirror element overlying said first named mirrors to cover the space between said mirrors and prevent the viewing thereof from above.

ERNST PFANNEKUCHEN.