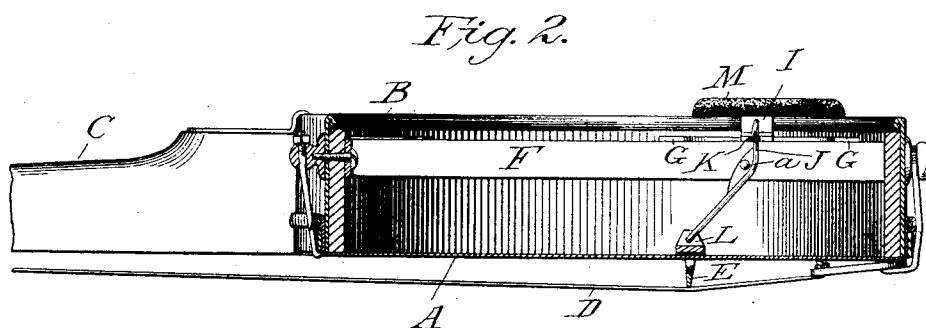
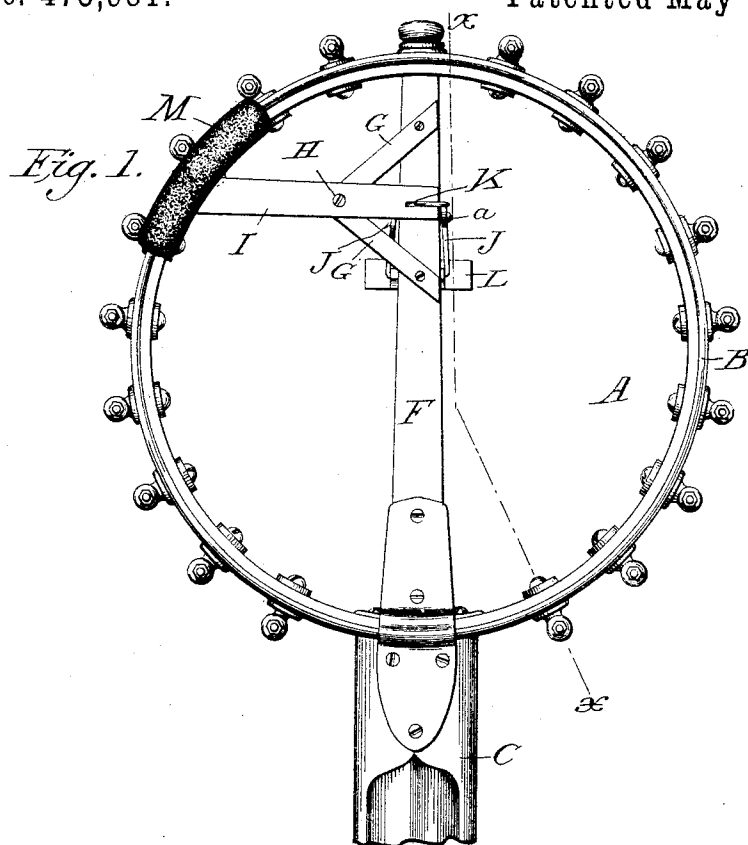


(No Model.)

A. P. VENEN.
MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

No. 473,981.

Patented May 3, 1892.



Witnesses:

Leonard Diller
R. U. Hoyt

Inventor:

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UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ALBERT P. VENEN, OF SEATTLE, WASHINGTON.

MUSICAL INSTRUMENT.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 473,981, dated May 3, 1892.

Application filed September 23, 1891. Serial No. 406,615. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, ALBERT P. VENEN, a citizen of the United States, residing in the city of Seattle, county of King, and State of Washington, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Musical Instruments; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the invention, such as will enable others skilled in the art to which it appertains to make and use the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, and to the letters of reference marked thereon, which form a part of this specification, and in which similar letters refer to similar parts throughout the several views.

The object of my invention is to afford facilities for the player to control at will the vibration of the head of a banjo or other stringed instrument, thereby checking the resonance of the head, softening the notes, and producing what may be termed for want of a better distinctive designation the "soft pedal effect" upon a banjo; and to this end my invention consists in pressing a damper to the under side of the banjo-head immediately beneath or adjacent to the feet of the bridge. I attain this object by the mechanism illustrated in the accompanying drawings, in which—

Figure 1 is a bottom view of a banjo, showing my invention; and Fig. 2 is a vertical section taken upon the dotted line *x x* of Fig. 1.

The head A, frame B, neck C, strings D, bridge E, and cross-bar F constitute the ordinary banjo.

To the bottom of the cross-bar F a plate or arm G, of any suitable form of construction, is firmly attached to furnish a pivot-seat H for a lever I, that may be either straight or curved and extends from the rim of the frame B across the top of the cross-bar F. The inner end of this lever is provided with a slot K for receiving the head of a lever J. The lever J is forked and passes on either side of the cross-bar F, to which it is attached by a rod *a*, passing through its arms, and the cross-bar F forming a pivotal point for the lever, which extends a suitable distance below said bar, where it terminates in a damper-pad L, which is preferably faced with felt or other suitable material and may be of any desired length, but preferably of a length correspond-

ing to the length of the bridge E, so that the damper-pad may engage the head immediately beneath both feet of the bridge.

The outer end of the lever I terminates in a slightly-elongated pad M, the under side of which rests upon the rim of the frame B, which serves as a support for the movement of the end of the lever. The upper side of the pad M may be covered with plush or other suitable material for securing a slight degree of friction when brought into close contact with the clothing of the player.

Any suitable material or form or style of ornamentation and finish of parts may be used to suit the varying styles and form of instrument, and my device may be modified or adapted for application to other kinds of instruments, as I may see fit, without departing from the principle of my invention.

I have shown and described my invention applied to a banjo having a cross-bar F; but where this cross-bar is omitted in the original construction of the banjo I may add the same or any equivalent device.

The operation of my device is as follows, to wit: The banjo is held in the usual position for playing. When the player desires soft notes, he presses the banjo-frame to his body and slightly lowers the neck. The pressure holds the pad M stationary, thereby operating the lever I, which in turn operates the lever J, thereby pressing the damper-pad L against the under side of the head of the banjo beneath the bridge. This pressure lessens or stops to the desired degree the vibration of the head and suspends the resonance produced by it, leaving clear soft sounds produced by the strings. By raising the neck the pressure of the damper is removed and the vibration and resonance are restored. The vibration and resonance of the head are controlled by the amount of pressure of the damper up to the point of suspension, so that the degree of softness of the notes may be controlled by the movement of the neck.

Having thus described my device, what I claim as new and as of my invention, and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is—

1. A banjo provided with an attachment whereby to soften the vibrations, consisting of a damper-pad adapted to be held against

the head of the banjo and a lever pivoted to the cross-bar and connected to the damper-pad at one end and at its other end to a lever having a horizontal movement and extending to
5 the rim of the banjo, substantially as described, whereby the damper is operated and controlled by the movement of the horizontal lever by the body of the player.

2. A damper attachment for a banjo, consisting of a lever pivoted to the cross-piece,
10 having a damper-pad at one end and at its other end connected to or in contact with the end of a lever having a horizontal movement and adapted to operate the lever provided
15 with the damper-pad, said controlling-lever being pivoted to a suitable extension on the cross-piece and provided on its outer end with

an engaging-pad, substantially as described, and for the purpose set forth.

3. In a damper attachment for a banjo or
20 other stringed instruments, the combination of the bar F, the lever J, pivoted thereto, the damper-pad L, connected to one end of said lever, and the lever I, pivoted to bar F or an extension thereof, having one end connected or
25 in contact with the lever J and its outer end provided with the engaging-pad M, adapted to rest on the rim of the banjo, substantially as described.

ALBERT P. VENEN.

Witnesses:

RUSSELL V. HOYT,
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