



## Deborah Meader Papers

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## The Patent

- Filed for on May 8, 1931
- Written by Thomas H. Simmons, who was a lawyer and had researched previous patents meticulously. Drafted the patent in pencilled longhand on now-yellowed, almost crispy sheets of inexpensive paper.
- Received patent on August 30, 1932 – received by Thomas H. Simmons and “his heirs”
- Carefully detailed drawings accompany the patent.
- Of particular mention is the “semi-transparent back drop” and the fact that the “miniature theater” may be used for both hand puppets and marionettes, it being two foldable frames that could be latched together – the one for hand puppets having the stage opening at the top so the performer standing comfortably looking out with the hand puppet in front of his or her face, rather than above the head as was conventional. The performer’s face, of course, would be obscured by the semi-transparent back drop and clever lighting via a lighting strip that was part of the ensemble and also patented.
- The preamble states “The art of puppetry is an extremely ancient one, and puppets have been used in most of the countries of the world for centuries. However, in spite of the long continued and widespread use of hand puppets and marionettes, little advance has been made in the art of either, except in refinements in the figures themselves and in the means of manipulating them.
- Objects of the invention:
  - He states in his draft that one of the objects of the theatre was to “provide by all the above-mentioned features a miniature theater adapted to home use, as well as to use in giving public performances or shows before groups.
  - All accessories could be placed inside the collapsed unit, giving great ease in transporting.
  - “Its object is to provide a theater which shall be electronically lighted and have all ordinary and extraordinary accessories, convenient and completed.”
- There probably could not be a patent on the purple one because it was much like other table top ones. ??However, the semi-transparent back drop would still be in use.

# RECORD *of* INVENTION

H. S. JOHNSON

ATTORNEY AT LAW

1612 Pioneer Bldg.

Fill out this form and describe your invention on the inside of this folder as indicated on the last page.

Title of invention .....

Date of Invention ..... 19.....

First drawings made ..... 19.....

First written description made ..... 19.....

First full size operating model made ..... 19.....

Place where model was first used .....

Signed at ..... on ..... , 19.....

Subscribed and sworn to before me

this ..... day of ..... 192 ... ..

Inventor

Notary

Inventor

Be it known: That ..... disclosed  
to the undersigned the invention described and illustrated in this folder on the date below  
written, who fully understand the construction and operation thereof

Witness

Date ..... 19.....

Witness

Date ..... 19.....

Make a careful sketch of your invention on the inside of this folder and write a description of it in your own words, referring to the parts by numbers. State how it operates and, briefly, its advantages over existing constructions. If the space provided is not sufficient use plain white paper, preferably of the same size as this folder, and insert it within the folder as additional sheets.

If you send a model of your invention be sure that it is well packed and bears your name on a sheet of paper pasted or securely fastened to the model.

Patent application must be filed within two years of first public use of invention, and should be filed as soon as possible after the invention is conceived. Delay has lost many a valuable idea to its inventor.



C. N.



1874819

# THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA

TO ALL TO WHOM THESE PRESENTS SHALL COME:

Whereas

THOMAS H. SIMMONS,

of

St. Paul,

Minnesota,

PRESENTED TO THE **Commissioner of Patents** A PETITION PRAYING FOR THE GRANT OF LETTERS PATENT FOR AN ALLEGED NEW AND USEFUL IMPROVEMENT IN

MINIATURE THEATERS,

A DESCRIPTION OF WHICH INVENTION IS CONTAINED IN THE SPECIFICATION OF WHICH A COPY IS HEREUNTO ANNEXED AND MADE A PART HEREOF, AND COMPLIED WITH THE VARIOUS REQUIREMENTS OF LAW IN SUCH CASES MADE AND PROVIDED, AND

Whereas UPON DUE EXAMINATION MADE THE SAID CLAIMANT is ADJUDGED TO BE JUSTLY ENTITLED TO A PATENT UNDER THE LAW.

NOW THEREFORE THESE **Letters Patent** ARE TO GRANT UNTO THE SAID

Thomas H. Simmons, his heirs

OR ASSIGNS

FOR THE TERM OF **SEVENTEEN** YEARS FROM THE DATE OF THIS GRANT

THE EXCLUSIVE RIGHT TO MAKE, USE AND VEND THE SAID INVENTION THROUGHOUT THE UNITED STATES AND THE TERRITORIES THEREOF.



Attest:

*H. S. Miller*  
Law Examiner.

*In testimony whereof I have hereunto set my hand and caused the seal of the Patent Office to be affixed at the City of Washington this thirtieth day of August, in the year of our Lord one thousand nine hundred and thirty-two, and of the Independence of the United States of America the one hundred and fifty-seventh.*

*Thomas E. Robertson*  
Commissioner of Patents.

Aug. 30, 1932

T. H. SIMMONS

1,874,819

MINIATURE THEATER

Filed May 8, 1931

2 Sheets-Sheet 2

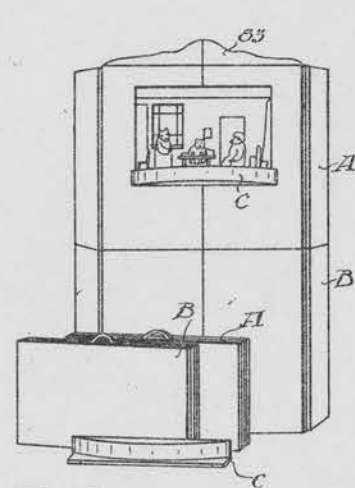


Fig. 4

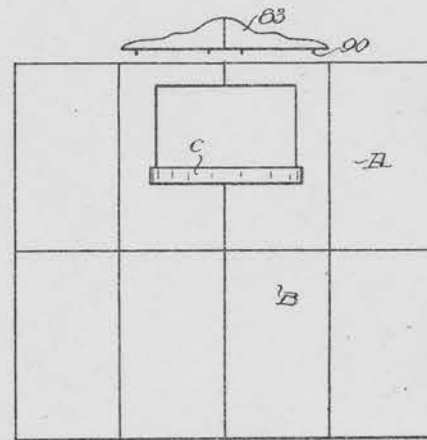


Fig. 5

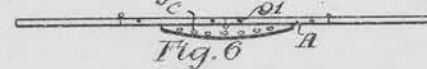


Fig. 6

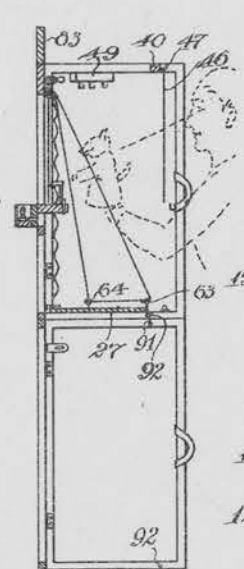


Fig. 7

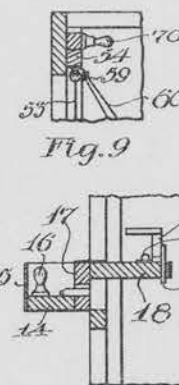


Fig. 9

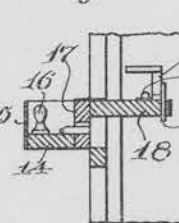


Fig. 10

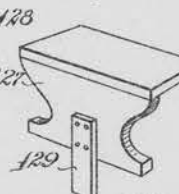


Fig. 11

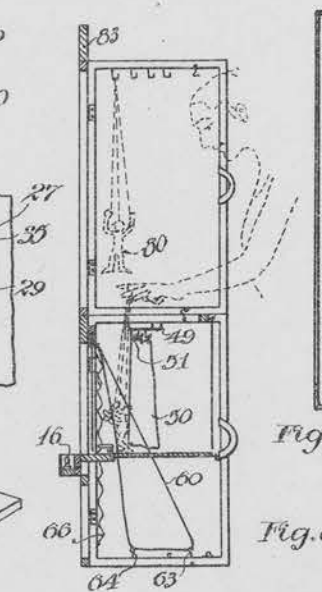


Fig. 8

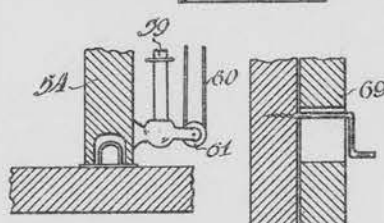


Fig. 12

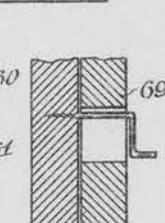


Fig. 13

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Attorney



Aug. 30, 1932.

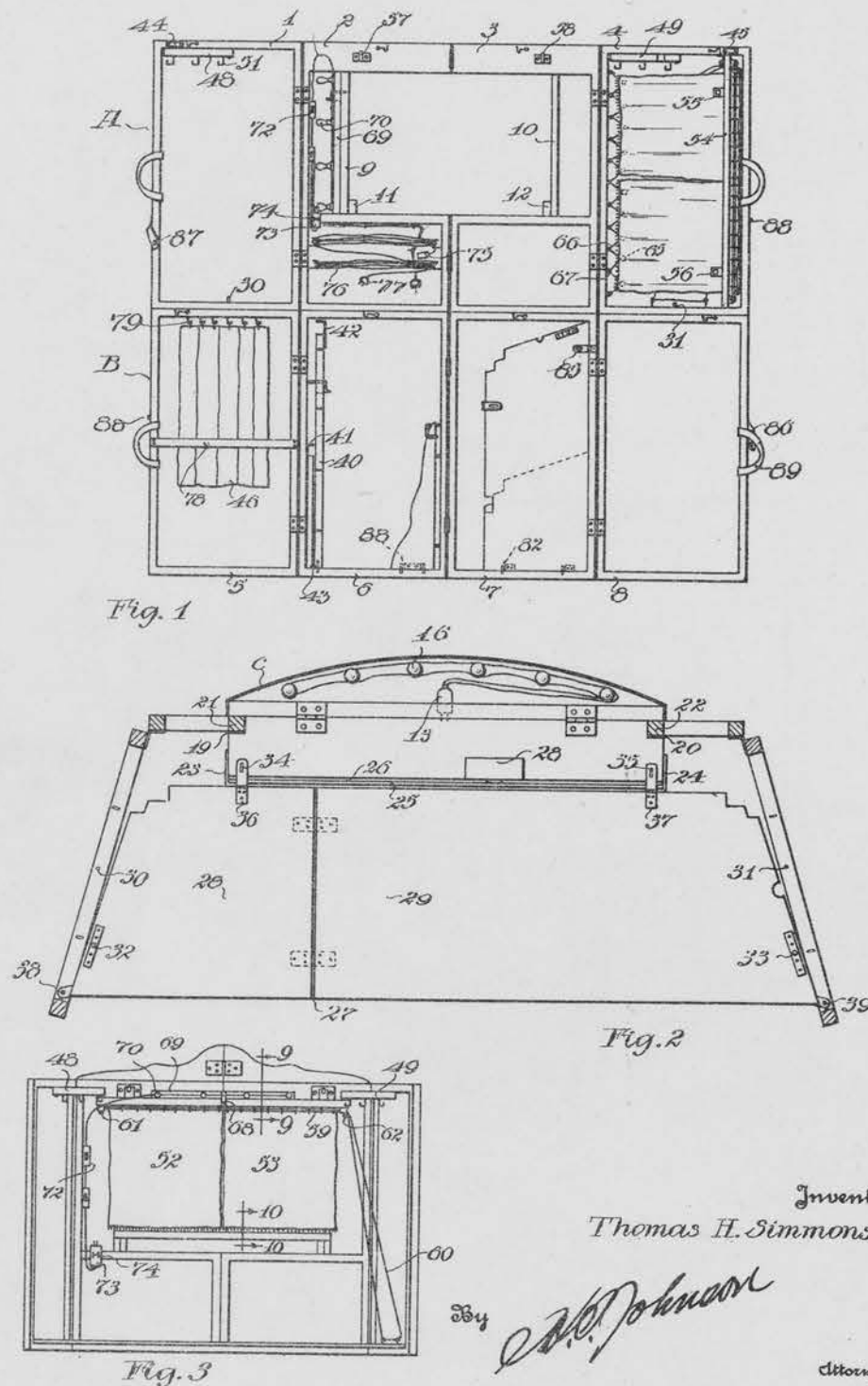
T. H. SIMMONS

1,874,819

MINIATURE THEATER

Filed May 8, 1931

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



Inventor  
Thomas H. Simmons

Attorney  
*E. M. Johnson*

Patented Aug. 30, 1932

1,874,819

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE

THOMAS H. SIMMONS, OF ST. PAUL, MINNESOTA

MINIATURE THEATER

Application filed May 8, 1931. Serial No. 535,908.

The present invention relates to a miniature theater for use with hand puppets or marionettes.

The art of puppetry is an extremely ancient one, and puppets have been used in most of the countries of the world for centuries. However, in spite of the long continued and widespread use of hand puppets and marionettes, little advance has been made in the art of either, except in refinements in the figures themselves and in the means of manipulating them.

An object of the present invention is to make an improved miniature theater.

In order to attain this object, there is provided, in accordance with one feature of the invention, a pair of foldable frame structures adapted to be mounted one upon the other, one of the foldable frame structures having a stage opening therein and the frames being so constructed that either may be placed in superposed position above the other and secured in such position.

When the foldable frame having the stage opening therein is placed above the other frame structure, the device is adapted for use as a hand puppet theater, while, when the frame having the stage opening therein is placed below the other, the device is adapted for use as a marionette theater. In either case, the frame not provided with the stage opening serves to mask the body of the operator from the audience.

The foldable frames are preferably constructed with shallow wall recesses in which various accessories are arranged and securely housed when the structure is folded for storage or transportation.

These and other features of the invention will be more fully brought out in the following description and the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a rear view of two superposed, foldable frame structures in extended position showing various accessories housed therein.

Figure 2 is a horizontal sectional view through the stage opening of the device when arranged as illustrated in Figure 8 for the use of marionettes.

Figure 3 is a rear elevation of one frame structure of the device as used for hand puppets, a semi-transparent back drop and a transverse top bracing member being removed to more clearly display the construction of the device.

Figure 4 is a view in perspective of the front of a theater, embodying the present invention, as set up and in use as a hand puppet theater and also shows the two frames which comprise the theater, folded, and a footlight housing and stage floor member folded for storage or transportation.

Figure 5 is a view in front elevation of the superposed frames in extended position, showing an ornamentally curved top member raised slightly from its normal position to show means for fastening this member to the top of the framework.

Figure 6 is a top edge view of one of the foldable frames, showing the hinge arrangement by which it is folded.

Figure 7 is a vertical, sectional view through the theater, set up for use as a hand puppet theater, an operator, holding a puppet in operative position, being indicated in dotted lines.

Figure 8 is a view similar to Figure 7, showing the theater set up for use with marionettes, an operator being also indicated in this view in dotted lines.

Figure 9 is an enlarged sectional view on the line 9-9 of Figure 3.

Figure 10 is an enlarged sectional view on the line 10-10 of Figure 3.

Figure 11 is a view in perspective of a piece of theatrical property showing a strip connected to the rear thereof for mounting said property in a slotted opening in the stage floor.

Figure 12 is an enlarged sectional view through one end of a curtain support member showing a method of securing the curtain support member in the frame when not in use.

Figure 13 is a sectional view through a lighting strip support member when secured in the frame for storage or transportation, showing an offset screw which is used to re-

movably secure the strip in this position; and

Figure 14 is a sectional view of a modified form of frame section.

Referring to the drawings in detail, a pair of foldable frame members A and B are each constructed of a plurality of frame sections, hingedly connected together so as to be foldable, one upon the other. The foldable frame A comprises frame sections 1, 2, 3, and 4, and the frame structure B also comprises four sections 5, 6, 7, and 8. All of the sections of both frames A and B, except the two center sections 2 and 3 of the frame A, are constructed in the form of rectangular frames having longitudinal side members and transverse end members, preferably of light, strong construction. These rectangular frames are covered on their outer sides by a substantially opaque material such as duck. The construction of these frames is not material to the invention, however, and it would be feasible to construct these frame members of sheet metal with inturned channeled edges, as indicated at 1a in the modified form shown in Figure 14.

The two central sections of the frame A are constructed with complementary, rectangular notches 9 and 10 therein, to form a stage opening. A pair of blocks 11 and 12 are permanently mounted, one in each of the lower corners of the stage opening, to support a stage floor and footlight housing member C in raised position from the lower edge of the stage opening, so as to permit the insertion in this opening of an electrical contact plug 13 by means of which the footlights may be connected to a source of electrical current.

The combined stage floor and footlight housing member C comprises a bottom member 14 which may be of wood, having a curved outer edge and with a piece of sheet material 15, secured around its curved outer edge to extend upwardly therefrom to mask the rays of footlights 16 from the audience and to act as a reflector to direct the rays of the footlights into the stage opening. The straight, rear edge of the bottom member 14 is secured to a vertical member 17. A stage floor member 18 is hingedly connected to the upper edge of the vertical member 17 and the floor member 18 is preferably notched out as at 19 and 20 to receive vertical frame members 21 and 22 therein to secure the member C against displacement in the frame. A pair of metal angle members 23 and 24 are secured to the rear corners of the stage floor 18 and a strip 25 which is preferably of hardwood is secured interiorly of these angle members to extend across the rear edge of the stage floor in spaced relation therefrom. This provides an elongated, slotted opening 26 across the entire rear edge of the stage floor. Various pieces of

stage property, which may be employed, are constructed with means extending downwardly therefrom to enter the slotted opening. A table constructed in this manner is indicated in Figure 11. The table, comprises a base portion 127 and a top portion 128. The base 127 has secured thereto a downwardly projecting strip 129 of a thickness to be frictionally engaged by the sides of the slot 26 when inserted therein.

When the device is used for hand puppets, a shelf 27, made in two sections 28 and 29, hingedly connected together to permit folding this member for storage in one frame section, is mounted transversely across the lower portion of the frame member A. The foldable shelf is cut out at its forward corners and center to fit around the frame members at the two forward angles and center of the frame A. A pair of pins 30 and 31, see Figure 1, are mounted in the side sections of the frame A and a pair of openings 32 and 33 are provided in the sides of the shelf 27 to fit over these pins and support the shelf and to firmly brace the frames A and B in position.

When the device is to be used for marionettes, this shelf 27 is mounted rearwardly and in horizontal alinement with the upper surface of the stage floor 18 to form an extension of said floor. A pair of staples 34 and 35 are provided on the rear corners of the upper surface of the stage floor and a pair of hasps 36 and 37 are mounted on the forward edge of the shelf 27 to fit over these hasps as one means to secure the forward edge of the member 27 in position. When used thus, the rear corners of the member 27 are secured to hooks 38 and 39 on the rear vertical frame members of the sections 1 and 4, which hooks are engaged by extended hasps as one means of effecting support for the shelf 27.

A transverse bracing member 40 is provided with angle members 41 and 42 of metal, mounted one on each end thereof. This bracing member is hinged as at 43 to permit inserting it in one of the frame sections for housing. The end portions of the angle members 41 and 42 are spaced outwardly from the ends of the bracing member 40 sufficiently to receive the upper edges of the sections 1 and 4 therein. A pair of metal securing strips 44 and 45, adapted to receive the ends of the angle members 41 and 42, are mounted, one near each of the rear upper corners of sections 1 and 4.

When the device is used as a marionette theater, this frame member is mounted with the angular bent end members 41 and 42 of the bracing strip 40, inserted in the securing strips 44 and 45, while, when used for a hand puppet theater, the angular bent end members 41 and 42 are placed over the upper edge of the sections 1 and 4 to receive the



upper edges of these sections between the outer end of the bracing member 40 and the angle members 41 and 42. In addition to acting as a bracing member, the member 40 provides a support for a removable back drop 46. The bracing member 40 is provided with hooks 47 and the back drop may be provided with suspension rings 48 along its upper edge, so that the drop may be supported by these hooks when in use. This back drop is preferably made of a semi-transparent material, such as cloth, which will permit the operator, when the device is used for hand puppets, to discern the figures of the puppets through the drop, while the drop at the same time masks the operator from the view of the audience. This is better accomplished by giving the performance in a dimly lighted room. The stage lighting illuminates the figures and the front of the drop and permits the operator to see through the back drop, while the operator, being in a dim or unlighted area, is concealed from the spectators by the drop.

A pair of pivotally mounted wing drop support members 48 and 49 are provided to support wing drops 50 when the theater is used for marionettes. These wing drop support members are provided with hooks 51 projecting downwardly from their lower surface and the wing drops are provided with rings along their upper edges to be engaged by these hooks. When not in use the wing drop supports may be folded back into the frame.

Curtains 52 and 53, see Figure 3, are mounted upon a support member 54 which is provided with two supporting eyelets 55 and 56 which are adapted to engage hooks 51 and 58 mounted above the stage opening. The curtains 52 and 53 are provided with rings on their upper edges which are slidably mounted upon a rod 59, mounted transversely below the support member 54. A curtain operating cord 60 is mounted on pulleys 61 and 62, the pulley 62 being of double roller construction so as to receive both runs of the curtain operating cord, while the pulley 61 is of single roller construction, the cord being looped around this pulley. The curtain operating cord is passed around hooks 63 and 64. The supporting rings of each of the curtains 52 and 53 nearest the center of the stage opening are secured one to each run of the cord, so that upon pulling the cord in one direction, the curtains are opened and on pulling it in the opposite direction, the curtains are closed. Other methods of operating theater curtains may be used, if desired. Each of the curtains is provided with a plurality of buttons 65 along the inside of the lower edge thereof, these buttons preferably being of lead so as to weight the curtains. A resilient band 66 which may be of elastic cord, is threaded through eyelets 67 mounted along one of the vertical edges of the section

4. When the curtain is in use over the stage opening, this elastic cord remains in the position illustrated in Figure 7, while, when the curtain is stored in the frame, this cord is looped over the buttons on the lower edges of the curtains to hold the curtains in outstretched position within the frame recess and prevent wrinkling of the curtains. The curtain support member 54 is provided with a metal clip 68 secured to its outer face and positioned to extend upwardly therefrom when the curtain is mounted for use, as illustrated in Figure 3.

A lighting strip 69, preferably of the same thickness as the curtain support member 54, is provided with a plurality of electric light sockets 70 with electric lamps mounted therein. The lighting strip is shown in Figure 1 secured in the frame for storage or transportation, while in Figures 3 and 9 it is shown mounted in operative position above the curtain support strip 54, being held in position thereon by the clip 68. A flexible conductor 71 is connected from the lighting strip to a switch 72 and this switch is in turn connected to contact member 73. The contact member is also connected to a switch 72a which is connected by a conductor 72b to a plug 72c which is adapted to be connected to the plug 13, which is in turn connected to the footlights. A plug 75 adapted to be connected to the member 73 is connected to a long, flexible conductor cord 76 having a socket plug 77 at its other end. This socket plug 77 may be plugged into a wall or other receptacle to energize the overhead and footlights. Any other suitable method of electrically connecting the overhead and footlights to a source of electrical current may be used.

A strip 78 of resilient material, such as elastic webbing is mounted across the section 5 to retain backdrops and wing drops therein. Hooks 79 projecting forwardly are provided at the upper end of this section, from which to hang the drops. These hooks also serve to support marionettes 80 when not in use, as illustrated in Figure 8, when the device is in use as a marionette theater.

Pins 81 and 82 are mounted in the sections 6 and 7. These pins are adapted to be inserted between the folded portions of an ornamental curved top structure 83 and the folded portions of the member 27 when these parts are housed in the frame. A hook 84 which is mounted to swivel in the side of the section 6 retains the upper end of the ornamental top member 83, while a hasp 85 is adapted to overlies the member 27 and secure it in position within the frame.

Straps 86, which may be of fabric webbing, are connected one to each of the sections A and B, respectively. These straps are provided with snap fasteners 87 which are adapted to engage posts 88 on the opposite side of



each frame to secure the respective frames in folded position, as illustrated in Figure 4. Carrying straps 89 which may also be of fabric webbing are secured to the outer sections of both the foldable frames A and B.

The foldable ornamental top section 83 is provided with pins 90 projecting downwardly therefrom, which are adapted to enter openings 91 in the upper edge of either the frames A or B, depending on whether the device is to be used as a hand puppet or a marionette theater.

Hooks 91 are provided on the upper end of each section, of each of the frames, and pins 92 are mounted on the lower end of each section, so that the frames may be hooked together in superposed position with respect to each other, with either of the frames uppermost. The theater when folded is light and compact and is readily set up and carries, housed within itself, all of the necessary accessories for either a hand puppet or a marionette theater.

It has previously been customary in using hand puppets for the operator or puppeteer to stand below the stage opening and operate the puppets above his head. The structure of the present theater and the use of a semi-transparent back drop makes it possible for the puppeteer to operate the puppets before him in a natural, comfortable position and to accurately observe and better control his own movements of the puppet figures.

I claim:

1. A miniature theater having a stage opening therein, comprising a plurality of hinged frame sections, each of said sections being constructed in the form of a shallow receptacle to house theatrical accessories therein, and a stage floor removably mounted across the lower edge of said stage opening.

2. A miniature theater having a stage opening therein, comprising a plurality of frame sections hinged together to fold into superposed relation with respect to each other, a stage floor removably mounted across the lower edge of said stage opening, and a troughed footlight housing member mounted forwardly of the forward edge of said stage floor.

3. A miniature theater having a stage opening, therein comprising a plurality of recessed frame sections, a curtain support member removably mounted across the upper edge of said stage opening, a curtain mounted thereon and movable to form a closure across said stage opening, and fastening means adapted to removably secure said curtain support member and said curtain within one of said recessed sections.

4. A miniature theater having a pair of foldable frames, one of said frames having a stage opening therein, and means to con-

nect said frames together in superposed, edge-wise position.

5. A miniature theatre having a foldable frame, with a stage opening therein, a footlight housing member mounted across the lower edge of said stage opening, and a stage floor member hingedly connected to said footlight housing member and foldable over said footlight housing member.

6. A miniature theatre comprising a pair of foldable frames, one of said frames having a stage opening therein, and means adapted to connect said frames together in superposed, edgewise position with either of said frames uppermost.

7. In a miniature theatre, a foldable frame having a stage opening therein, a stage floor member mounted adjacent the lower edge of said stage opening, said stage floor having a slotted opening therein, adapted to receive a downwardly projecting portion of a piece of stage property.

8. In a miniature theatre, a stage, a stage floor member terminating short of the rear of said stage, and a resilient strip spaced rearwardly from the rear edge of said stage floor member and adapted to receive a downwardly projecting portion of a piece of stage property therein.

9. In a miniature theatre, a foldable frame having a stage opening therein and having a plurality of recesses in the wall thereof, adapted to receive a plurality of theatrical accessories removably housed in said recesses, and supported means adapted to support theatrical accessories in operative position on said frame.

10. In a miniature theatre, a frame adapted to mask the body of an operator, a stage opening in said frame, and a semi-transparent back drop positioned rearwardly of said stage opening and forwardly of the position occupied by the body of an operator to mask the body of said operator from an audience to permit said operator to view an object positioned forwardly of said semi-transparent drop and rearwardly of said stage opening.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.  
THOMAS H. SIMMONS.

115

120

125

130



## Miniature Theater Construction

This invention relates to certain methods of construction of miniature theaters for puppet performances. Its object is to <sup>provide</sup> a theater which shall be electrically lighted and have all ordinary and extraordinary accessories, convenient and complete. Its further object is to make the theater

collapsible into small units for convenience in <sup>conveyance</sup> packing or storage. Its further object is to house within the spaces of the collapsed theater wall <sup>panels</sup> all accessories.

Its further object is to make the total weight of the <sup>light</sup> theater unit less than forty pounds. <sup>panels</sup> and of such shape as to be easily and conveniently portable.

Its further object is to provide a miniature theater that can be erected or dismantled in a few moments.

Its further object is to provide by all the above mentioned features a miniature theater adapted to home use, as well as to use in giving public performances or shows by juvenile groups.



The theater's construction is as follows:

Its frame consist of eight <sup>rectangular</sup> panels, made of clear white pine or other suitable material. <sup>17 3/4" or other suitable dimension</sup> The panels are covered with duck or other material, tacked to the frames or otherwise attached so as to make the panels, which form the walls <sup>and give assumed front side and a rear side</sup> of the theater. Each panel has for its outside dimension 20" x 36" or may be of any other suitable dimension. Six panels are identical in shape. Two panels have each one side of their margin, so indented as when placed with the indented sides in juxtaposition, a <sup>rectangular</sup> opening is formed for a stage opening, which may be 16" x 27" or other suitable size. Four of the identical panels are <sup>in two pairs</sup> so hinged together on their longer edges, that they fold one against the next with rear sides adjacent <sup>making two duplicate front and three rear</sup> and hinged together <sup>with face sides adjacent</sup> and <sup>when folded</sup> hinged to a fourth with rear sides adjacent when folded. When the four are unfolded, they <sup>hinged</sup> together have an expanse of 36" x 80" with faces of all panels one way and rears the other way. <sup>These four attached panels are called a section.</sup> Like none the other four panels are hinged together. The indented panels are hinged to one another on their indented edges, so as to fold with their face sides together and the remaining panels are so hinged to these that a like expanse of 36" x 80" inches is made with the face of all <sup>these four panels are likewise called a section.</sup> panels on one side and rears on the other. <sup>and finally of panels may be varied to produce any sized or shaped theater desired.</sup> To form a theater for puppets, operated on the hands, not by strings, the section having the stage opening is placed on top of the other

section of four panels. The middle panels <sup>of both sections</sup> are opened so that their faces are in line <sup>saving the front of the theater</sup> while the edge panels are angled to the rear to form wings.

The adjacent edges of the sections so placed are fastened together with <sup>seat</sup> hooks <sup>and screws</sup> or by other means.

The upper front <sup>of the theater</sup> is provided with a crest <sup>extending over two panels</sup> with its upper edge in curved line for suitable elevation and ornamentation of the top of the theater face. The crest length is that of the <sup>two panel</sup> face of the theater. It is hinged in the middle of its length, so that ~~the~~ rear surfaces of the crest fold together, the reverse of the way the panels fold on which the crest sits. Thus when attached to the upper edge of these two panels <sup>by four</sup> or dowels of metal or wood <sup>fixed in the crest and extending through the panels</sup> not attached by other means, the crest prevents the adjacent panels from folding, holding them stiffly in <sup>open</sup> position. The crest is made of wood covered by material like that covering the panels. <sup>When folded</sup> its shortened length projects up to be <sup>not in use and</sup> housed in a panel space.

A brace made of wood, or other material, extends from the top of one wing to the top of the other, parallel to the front of the theater and about 12 <sup>to 14</sup> inches. The ends of this brace are cut at an angle to conform to the angles of the wings with the theater front. The brace may be attached to the wings by a thin metal strip secured to the ~~strip~~ upper surface of the strip and pas-



passing over the edge of upper panels of the wings and bent down an arch as so to form a hook, which with the angled end of the strip clamps firmly the <sup>wing</sup> panels together. Other means of attaching the brace to the panels may be provided. This brace is sawed in two at a point 34" from the tip of the metal hook at one end, and the two parts are hinged together by a hinge fixed to the under side. The purpose of this is to permit the brace when folded upon itself to be housed <sup>when not in use</sup> in one of the panels of the theater. Except for its hinged construction, it would be too long for the panel space.

A shelf is provided, made preferably of <sup>white pine</sup> panel board  $\frac{1}{2}$ " thick, extending from wing to wing, 14" wide and resting on and made to fit the upper surfaces of the lower <sup>frame members</sup> edges of the four panels forming the upper section of the theater wing a metal post fixed in the panel frame engages a hole in the shelf and holds the shelf <sup>and panel</sup> firmly in position and holds true supports the entire frame of the theater. The shelf <sup>at the</sup> hole in either end of the shelf is made strong by a metal strip, fixed to the shelf through which metal strip the hole extends. This shelf is cut in two <sup>and hinged on the underside</sup> at a point 34" from one end to permit it to be <sup>folded and</sup> housed in a panel space, when not in use.

The theater is provided with a curtain, this may be of any conventional design, rolling up from below on a roller <sup>or</sup> parked at the center, each part moving laterally in opposite directions <sup>suspended by rings from</sup> a rod <sup>and</sup> controlled by a cord, <sup>or</sup> each part moving laterally and upward at the same time, controlled by a cord operating <sup>on rings</sup> on the back of the curtain placed at short intervals and extending from the low corner at the center to the high corner at the side and operated by a cord. Whatever the mode of operation in this miniature theater the curtain is supported by a movable strip of wood or other material of a length not exceeding <sup>the width of the panels</sup> means are employed for attaching this support to the rear of the frame of the theater above the stage opening. This may be by ordinary storm sash hangers or any other effecting method. That movable support with the curtain and its rod and brackets and other fixtures may be bodily housed in the space of one panel of the theater.

The overhead electric light receptacles for the lamps may be mounted on a strip of wood or other material detached and movable which may when in use be supported by placing its length along <sup>and above</sup> the length of the upper surface of the curtain support or otherwise fixing it above the stage <sup>and</sup> above the stage opening. Its detachable construction permits it to be housed in one of the panel spaces. It may be wholly detachable when moved for electricity or the remain attached by the wiring in a way to permit it to be moved and housed as suggested.

The footlights are in a trough with a curved front extending beyond, by an inch or more the sides of the stage opening with the upper edge of the trough at a level one or two inches above the lower margin of the rectangular stage opening. The height of the trough determines the height of the stage and the stage opening is sufficient in height to admit of some variation according to stature of the puppeteer. This trough is just deep enough to conceal the series of receptacles and electric lamps, preferably of candelabra size. The curved front formed of <sup>board</sup> up saw or other timber material and the bottom are covered with the same covering as are the panels. On the inside of the trough between the curved front and the lamps, <sup>small</sup> nickel plates or other bright surfaced sheet metal is placed for reflecting purposes.

This stage consists of a board, the length of the trough and four inches <sup>wide</sup> or other desired width and  $\frac{3}{4}$ " thickness; ~~but not less at its rear edge.~~ Along this rear edge a slot is formed by a strip of hardwood or other material, about  $\frac{1}{4}$ " inch in thickness and with width equaling the thickness of the stage board. This is held in position by <sup>an</sup> angle iron <sup>at each end</sup> <sup>with one again</sup> fixed to the end edge of the stage board and the other arm fixed along the back side of the slot strip <sup>which may be otherwise fastened to the stage by screws or the like</sup>. The width of the slot is preferably about  $\frac{1}{4}$ ". The purpose of this slot is to receive a member of each property used on the stage, thus holding it in any desired position and sufficiently firmly to prevent the puppet from moving it inadvertently. The stage is so hinged to the rear member of the footlight trough that when in use the upper surface of the stage will be <sup>at</sup> the same level as such member and when not in use, will shut as a lid over the footlight trough, thus protecting the lamps. The stage at each end is notched at the margin which is hinged to the footlights. The width of each notch is the width of the covered panel frame at the side of the stage opening and the distance between the notches is the width of the stage opening. The stage and footlights



7.

are placed across the stage opening by elevating one end until the notches in the ends may engage the ~~the~~ sides of the opening and then lowered to a level position. Blocks one or two or other dimension in height affixed to either side of the bottom of the stage opening determine the height of the stage in accommodation to the height of the puppeteer.

The brace connecting the top of the wing panels is utilized to support the scenery drops of cambric or other semi-transparent material permitting the puppeteer, standing with face directly behind the drop to see the puppets in performance. This brace is provided with hooks which are engaged by <sup>the</sup> correspondingly spaced button-holes or suspension rings of the drop. These drops are housed in one or more panels by folding and hanging on <sup>spring</sup> hooks in the panel space and held snugly in by elastic webbing <sup>across</sup> at the middle of the panels length.

The curtain and curtain stick and rod are as a unit housed in one panel space by engaging the curtain stick by means of bars and staples or other means to the panel frame and spreading the curtain towards the opposite side of the panel and fastening its bottom edge to the panel frame by elastic cord or otherwise, so that all is held firmly in place.

<sup>the electric</sup> extension cord is wound back and forth on special hooks in a panel space. The overhead light, the shelf, the crest and the brace drop support are likewise housed in panel spaces.

When puppets manipulated on the hands are to be used the section with the stage opening is placed above the other section.

When puppets manipulated by strings commonly called marionettes are to be used the section with the stage opening is placed below the other section.

For the marionette theater, the shelf is attached to the stage along the slot strip by means of harps and staples and the rear corners of the shelf are provided with harps which when extended engage hook in the wing panel frames at the proper height, thus making a stage eighteen inches in width. The brace drop support connects the same panel wings but at a greater distance from the front of the theater. The hooks at either of the brace engage metal plates on the inside of the wing panels or otherwise is attached to them. Side drop supports are provided that swing out from the center of the under side of the upper member of the wing panel frame.



The theater as a whole may be erected in less than ten minutes and may be as readily collapsed into three units, one 4" x 4" x 29" and two each 4" x 20" x 36". Each of the two larger units are provided with hook on one side and webbing with snap on the other to hold them closed and are provided with webbing handles.

## Claims.

A miniature theater composed of interchangeable sections to form a hand puppet theater in the one combination having the stage opening section above and in the other combination with the section, having the stage opening, placed below, thus forming a marionette theater for puppets operated by strings.

A miniature theater that is collapsible into <sup>three</sup> small, light and conveniently portable units.

A miniature theater that is collapsible into three small light and conveniently portable units with such construction that the time required to erect complete or to collapse completely into the three units in a few moments of time.

A miniature theater so constructed and conceived in its parts as to provide for housing <sup>within the panels of the two sections</sup> all the accessories such as overhead electric lights, footlights, extension cord, stage floors, shelf, curtains and rod and stick support, scenery supports, scenery back and side drops and erect.

A miniature theater stage provided with a slot along the rear edge for receiving members of the stage properties used, thus holding them in a fixed position and permitting wide choice of position by length of the slot.

A miniature theater curtain and rod and stick support so combined as to be movable as a whole for the purpose of housing same within ~~the~~ a panel of the theater or to hang as a unit above the stage opening, ready to perform its function.

A shelf so designed as to be used to firmly brace a collapsible miniature theater, as described and serve to hold puppets not in use and to hold the manuscript of a play in view of the puppeteer when the theater is used for hand puppets and when the theater is used for marionettes serve to form with the small hand puppet stage an expanded stage such as is required when marionettes are used and further so constructed as to be housed within a panel space when the theater is collapsed.

Footlights, fully ~~wired~~ <sup>equipped</sup> with electric lights ~~and hinged to the stage~~ in a trough which is hinged to a stage which ~~sets at the~~ in the stage opening, and is instantly removable ~~and~~ with the stage forming <sup>hinged</sup> a lid to the trough for lamps protection and ~~to make a~~ thus making the small unit of the of the ~~three~~ <sup>theater</sup> ~~unit~~ into which the theater collapses.

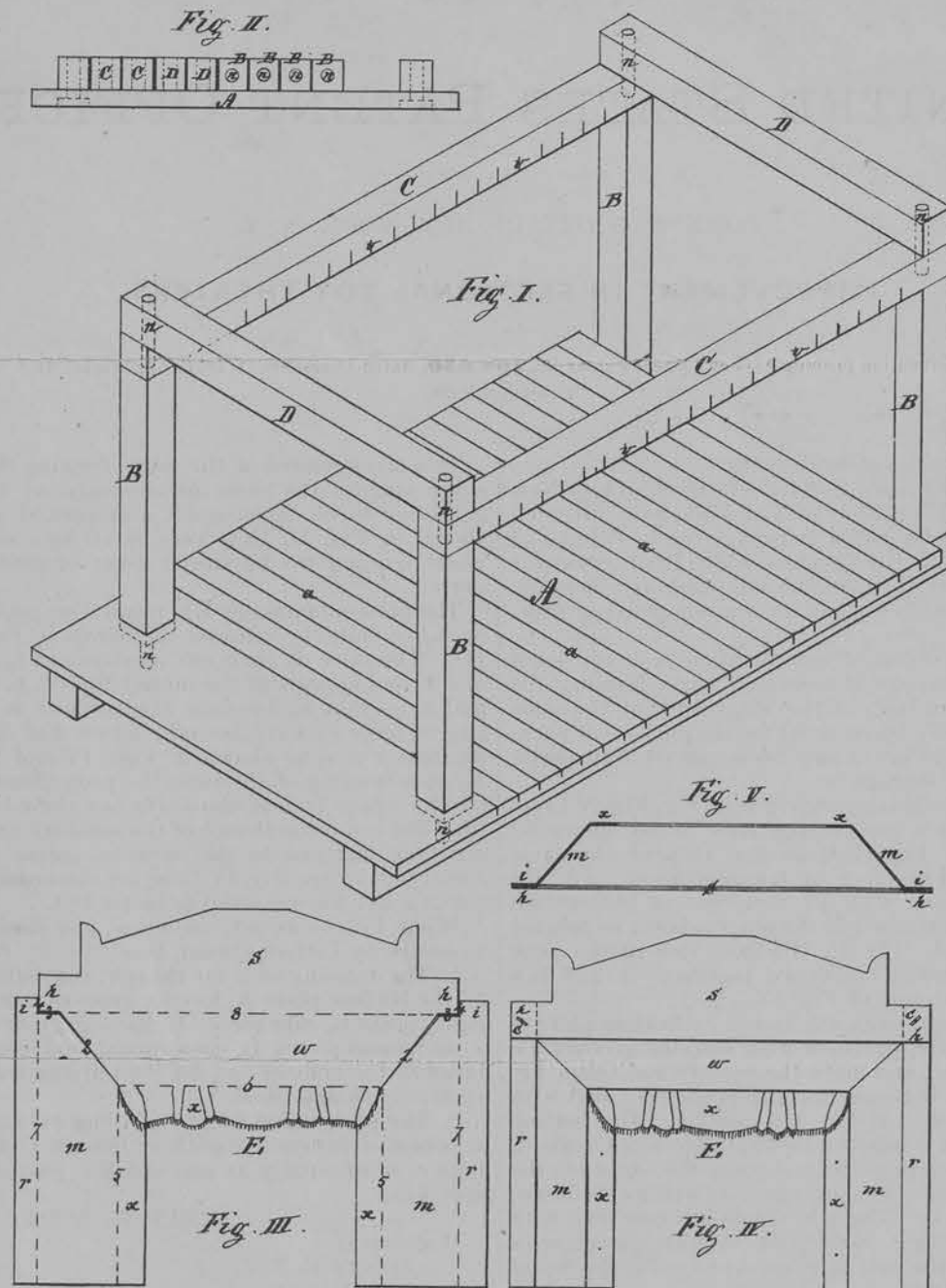


Semi-transparent drop, concealing  
the puppeteer and permitting the  
puppeteer of hand puppets to stand  
directly behind the stage opening  
and see the operation of the pup-  
pets directly in front of the face.

J. W. SCOTT.  
Sectional Toy-Theater.

No. 198,050.

Patented Dec. 11, 1877



Witnesses.  
Charles H. Smith  
William Ehrst

Inventor.  
John W. Scott  
per Henry E. Roeder  
attorney.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN W. SCOTT, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

IMPROVEMENT IN SECTIONAL TOY THEATERS.

Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 198,050, dated December 11, 1877; application filed October 6, 1877.

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN W. SCOTT, of New York, in the State of New York, have invented a new and useful Improvement in Folding or Sectional Toy Theaters, which improvement is fully set forth in the following specification, reference being had to the accompanying drawing.

The object of my invention is to construct and arrange the several parts forming the frame or body of the stage so that the same are easily taken apart for the purpose of packing them into a small compass for transportation or storage.

In the accompanying drawing, Figure I represents a perspective view of my improved stage. Fig. II is an end view of the same packed together for transportation. Fig. III is a front view of the front or proscenium scene attached to the stage, shown as printed and cut. Fig. IV is a front view of the same as folded and fastened together. Fig. V is a cross-section of Fig. IV.

A represents the board or bottom plate of the stage, provided with suitable grooves *a a* to insert and move the scenery and acting figures. *B B* are upright posts, provided with studs *n n* at top and bottom. The bottom studs are inserted into suitable holes made in the bottom plate, and upon the top studs the side pieces *C C* are fixed, as well as the cross-ties *D D*. The side pieces are provided with grooves *v v*, corresponding with the grooves *a a* in the bottom plate *A*, to guide the top of the side scenes.

This arrangement of the parts forming the stage enables the same to be easily put together or to be taken apart and packed, as shown in Fig. II, in a very small compass when required to be stored away or transported.

The proscenium scene *E* is printed on paper or other suitable material, as shown in Fig. III. The same is then cut, as shown at 2, 3, and 4, and creased at the dotted lines 5, 6, 7, and 8, so that by bending the surfaces *m w* the surfaces *r r s* are brought forward of the surfaces *x x x*, as shown in Figs. IV and V. By this bending of the same the projections *i* on the upper end of the surfaces *r* come behind the end projections *h* of the surface *s*, and are then fastened to the same by means of metal tags *c*, (see Fig. IV,) and are thus easily taken apart when desired to be packed.

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

1. The framing of a toy theater, consisting of the bottom plate *A*, having grooves *a*, upright posts *B*, side pieces *C*, having grooves *v*, and cross-pieces *D*, constructed and combined in the manner and for the purpose substantially as described.

2. The proscenium scene *E*, having cuts 2 3 4, bent and fastened together through metal tags *c*, substantially as and for the purpose specified.

JOHN W. SCOTT.

Witnesses:  
HENRY E. ROEDER,  
J. B. NONES.



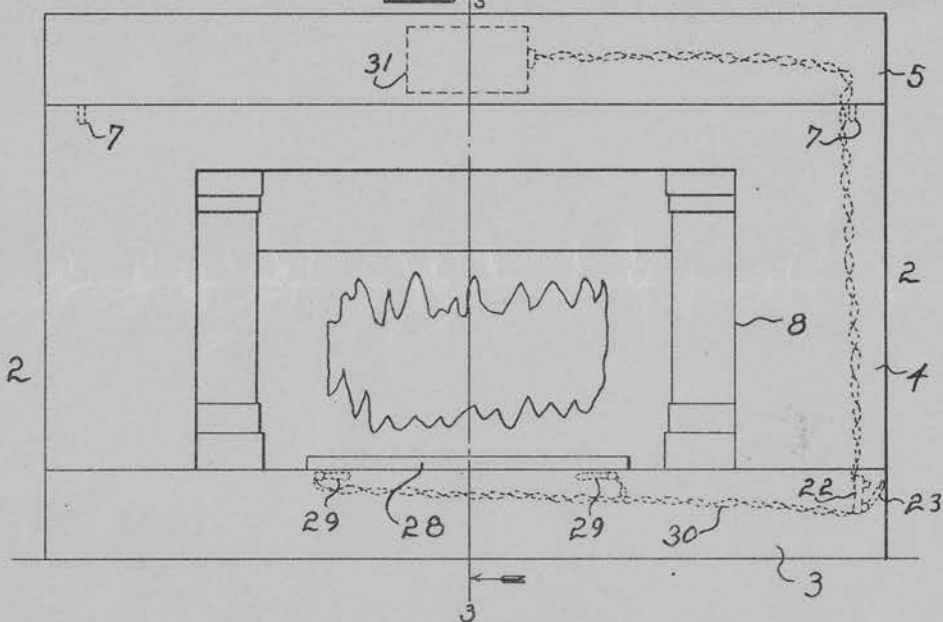
W. S. MARTIN.  
TOY THEATER.  
APPLICATION FILED OCT. 16, 1917.

1,281,623.

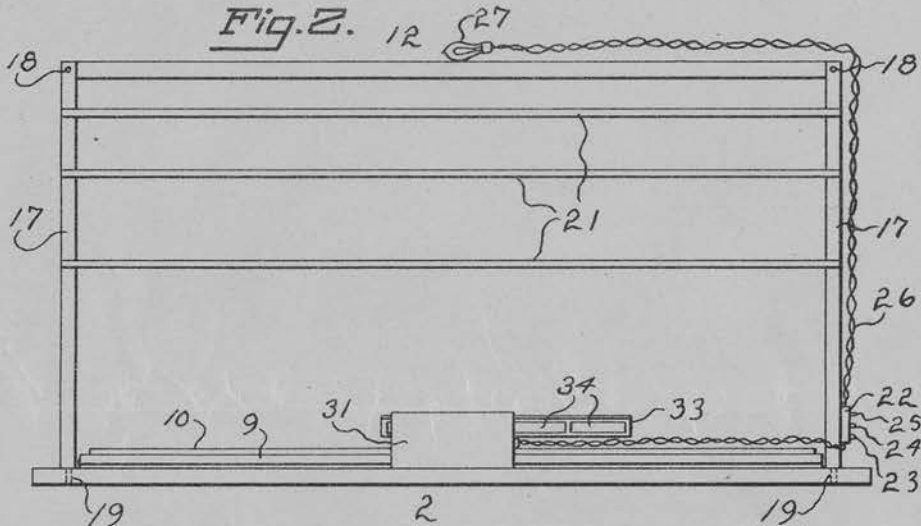
Patented Oct. 15, 1918.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.

*Fig. 1.*



*Fig. 2.*

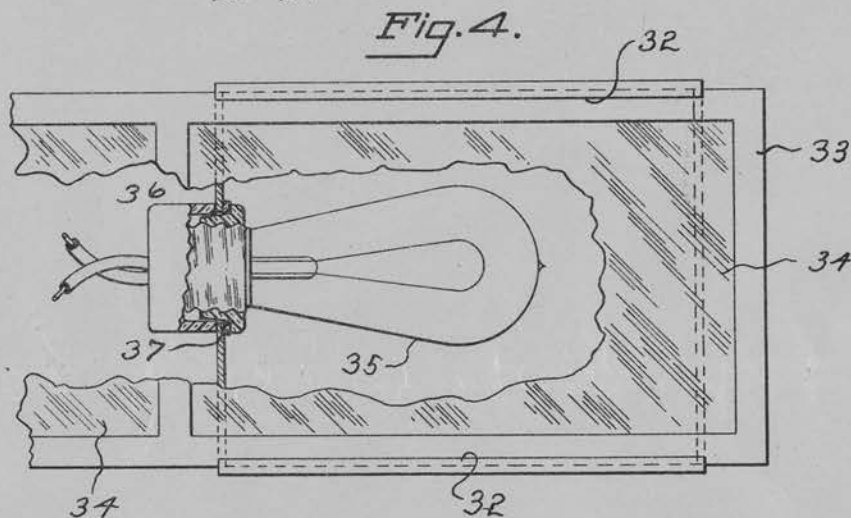


*William S. Martin* Inventor  
*By Hunt & Lusk* Attorney

APPLICATION FILED OCT. 16, 1917.

Patented Oct. 15, 1918.

2 SHEETS—SHEET 2.



Inventor  
William S. Martin  
By Heath S. Hubbard  
Attorney

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

WILLIAM S. MARTIN, OF WILLIMANTIC, CONNECTICUT, ASSIGNOR TO THE MARTIN STUDIOS, INCORPORATED, OF HARTFORD, CONNECTICUT, A CORPORATION OF CONNECTICUT.

## TOY THEATER.

1,281,623.

Specification of Letters Patent.

Patented Oct. 15, 1918.

Application filed October 16, 1917. Serial No. 196,784.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, WILLIAM S. MARTIN, a citizen of the United States, residing at Willimantic, in the county of Windham and State of Connecticut, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Toy Theaters, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to toy theaters. I have several motives in view. One of them is the provision of a structure which can be readily knocked down and as easily set up and the scenery of which can be mounted and dismounted with the same facility, in view of which latter circumstance scenes of different characters as may be required in various playlets are positioned for exhibition. Another object I have in view is the provision of effective lighting means, whereby for example the stage from below and above and from back if necessary or called upon in any specific case may be illuminated.

In the drawings accompanying and forming part of the present specification I have shown in detail one convenient form of embodiment of the invention which to enable those skilled in the art to practice the same will be set forth fully in the following description. I do not necessarily limit myself to this particular disclosure; I may depart therefrom in several respects within the scope of the invention defined by the claims following said description.

Referring to said drawings:

Figure 1 is a front elevation of a toy theater involving the invention.

Fig. 2 is a top plan view of the same.

Fig. 3 is a cross section on the line 3-3 of Fig. 1, looking in the direction of the arrow, the dotted lines showing how certain sections are movable.

Fig. 4 is a rear view of an illuminating device partly broken away.

Like characters refer to like parts throughout the several views.

The plays to be produced are of such character primarily and generally to appeal to juveniles, although this may not always be necessary. These plays involve one or more figures and like adjuncts which are moved in desired fashion upon the stage. These accessories in themselves, however, form no part of the invention and therefore need not be herein shown. The organization comprises in its make-up a front as 2, this front

as certain other parts being made of suitable material such as wood. As represented it comprises the base section 3, the intermediate section 4 and the top section 5. As shown the intermediate section 4 is connected as by hinges 6 with the base section 3, so that when desired the intermediate section can be folded down upon the stage which will be hereinafter described and as shown by dotted lines in Fig. 3. The top or upper section 5 is removably connected with the intermediate section 4, and for this purpose said top section 5 may be provided on its lower edge with dowel pins as 7 to enter dowel openings in the upper edge of the intermediate section 4, the pins and their openings or seats being located as shown near the lateral edges of the front. This front is ornamented generally with paper or some other suitable material and the paper entirely covers the several sections of the front. Obviously it does not extend across the joint between the top section 5 and the intermediate section 4. As shown this intermediate section 4 has an enlarged opening 8 which as shown is rectangular and through which the stage hereinafter described can be seen when the curtain or curtains are elevated. As shown there are two curtains, a front one 9 and a rear one 10, they being supported upon spring rollers both denoted by 11 on the rear upper side of the intermediate section 4.

The back is denoted in a general way by 12 and it comprises a base section 13 and an upper section 14, the two being united as by one or more hinges 15, in view of which condition the upper section 14 when desired can be swung down onto the stage 16 as shown by dotted lines in said Fig. 3. In this view as will be understood, the front intermediate section 4 and the upper section 14 are shown as in the act of being either swung down or up by dotted lines. The stage 16 is usually rigidly secured between the two base sections 3 and 13 in any desirable manner, and it will be clear that the sections 4 and 14 are respectively connected to the base sections above the upper surface of the stage, so that they can properly fold down thereon when it is desired to store the appliance.

In addition to the several members comprising the frame, there are two top side members as 17 which are connected suitably



to the sections 4 and 14 for instance by dowel pin construction. As shown the upper section 14 of the rear is provided on its upper edge near opposite sides thereof with dowel pins as 18 adapted to removably enter seats in the adjacent ends of the upper side members 17, which ends rest as will be understood, on said section 14. Said members 17 in addition have at their front ends dowel pins 19 which are adapted to removably enter openings or seats in the upper portion of the intermediate section 4 near opposite sides thereof.

It will be assumed that the parts are set up for instance as shown by Figs. 1 and 2 and by full lines in Fig. 3. It becomes a simple matter to knock them down assuming that no drops are positioned. To do this, the top section 5 is dismounted, after which the upper side members 17 are taken from place when the sections 14 and 4 can be folded down in superimposed relation upon the stage 16.

The scenes of which there may be one or more generally consist of drops as 20 of some suitable material as paper or light cloth fabric which are connected to and flexibly depend from the bars 21 usually of wood and which are laid upon the upper side members 17. These drops or scenes 20 may be ornamented in very many different fashions. The length of the bars 21 as shown is greater than the width between the upper side members 17, in view of which circumstance the drops 20 can readily be of a length greater than the width of the opening 8.

As shown the base section 3 carries a switch block or base 22 provided with the switches 23, 24 and 25. From the switch 25 the flexible cord 26 extends and is furnished with a lamp 27 which can be readily moved to the back of the structure so as to show behind the rearmost drop 20 if there be several, or the only drop if but merely one be used. This freely movable lamp 27 can be carried across the back of the structure so as to direct its rays forwardly as may be desired. The switch 22 can be manipulated to cause the lamp 27 to flash or be extinguished as may be desired by the user. At the front of the stage 16 is an overhanging sheet 28 which may be of sheet metal and which may be united to the front 2 in any desirable manner. Usually it extends from the lower edge of the opening 8 forward of which are the lamps 29 connected as by wiring 30 to the middle switch 24 through the operation of which these two front lamps 29 may be lighted or extinguished.

The top section 5 of the front supports as shown a shell 31 constituting a suitable reflector, the back of the shell being circular and having ends. The back of the

reflector is furnished with inturned flanges 32 adapted for the slidable reception of the screen 33 which has transparent sheets as 34 generally of different colors. The edge portions of this screen are slidably guided by the inturned flanges 32 in view of which fact the screen may be slid back and forth as may be desired to cause the direction of different colored lights against the scenes or other objects above the stage 16, the reflector or shell 30 being at an inclination to secure this result. This reflector in the present case is secured in some convenient manner to the top section 5. One of its end walls, the one on the left in Fig. 4, supports the socket of the lamp 35 connected to the switch 23 and through the action of this switch this lamp 35 may be lighted or extinguished. The socket member 36 of the lamp 35 extends through an opening 37 in its supporting wall of the reflector or shell 30 and the sections of it clamp said wall. The lamp, therefore, can be easily disconnected from the reflector, which in turn presents a convenient support for the lamp when it is desired to use the lamp. I have mentioned the fact that there is a screen as 33. This screen, as I have also noted, is furnished with one or more transparent sheets as 34. These screens are generally of some translucent material. As a matter of fact they are practically transparent. They may be of any suitable material, such as celluloid, mica, or even glass.

What I claim is:

1. A toy theater comprising a front and a back, the front including a base section and a section hinged to the base and having an opening, and the back having a base section and a section hinged thereto, a stage supported between the two base sections below the hinges thereof, side bars connected removably by dowel pins with the hinged sections, and one or more crossbars removably supported by the side bars and provided respectively with a drop or drops.

2. A toy theater comprising a front and a back, the front including a base, an intermediate section hinged to the base and a top section connected removably by pins with the intermediate section, the latter having an opening, a back comprising a base section and an upper section hinged thereto, a stage supported between the two base sections below the hinges thereof, and side bars removably connected with the two swinging sections.

3. A toy theater comprising a front and a back, the front including a base, an intermediate section hinged to the base and a top section connected removably by pins with the intermediate section, the latter having an opening, a back comprising a base section and an upper section hinged thereto, a stage supported between the two base

sections below the hinges thereof, side bars removably connected with the two swinging sections, a bar removably supported between the side bars and provided with a drop, and a reflector supported by the upper 5 section of the front and provided with a lamp to project its rays downwardly and rearwardly.

4. A toy theater comprising a front, a 10 back and a stage, a switch block supported by the front below the stage and comprising three switches, lamps extending from the

three switches, one of the lamps being supported by the front above the stage, the other lamp being supported at the front 15 and practically the level of the stage, and the other being located back of the stage.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in the presence of two witnesses.

WILLIAM S. MARTIN.

Witnesses:

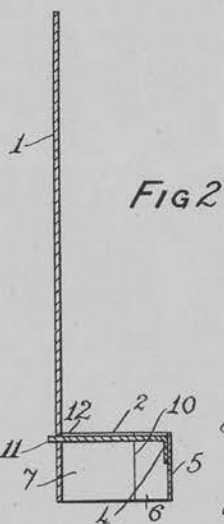
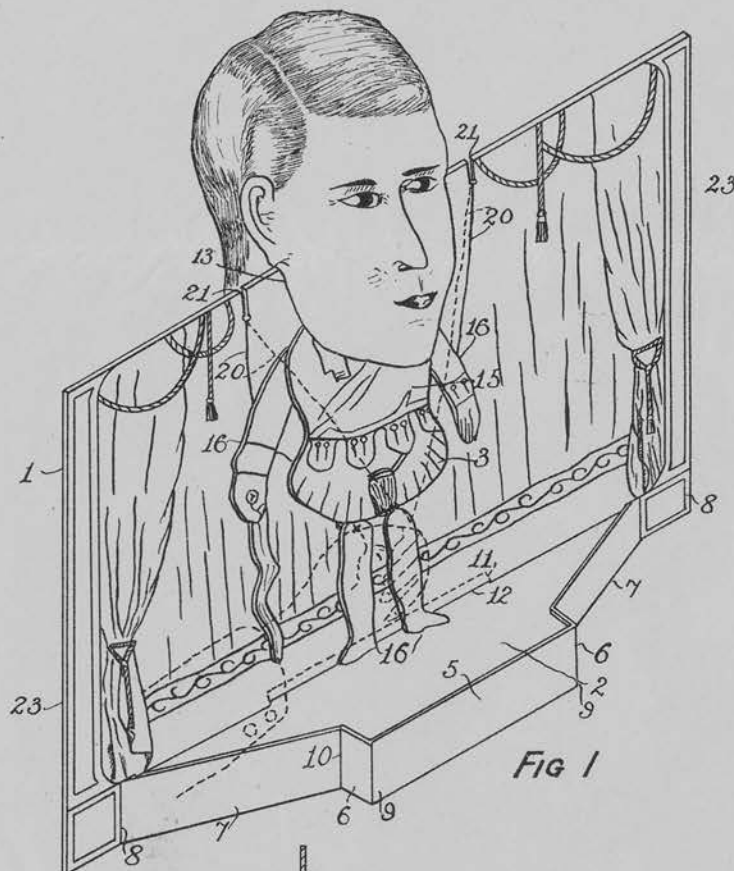
HEATH SUTHERLAND,  
JOHN BUCKLEY.

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

T. MATHEWS.  
 PUPPET OR MARIONETTE SHOW.  
 APPLICATION FILED JUNE 14, 1920.

1,403,514.

Patented Jan. 17, 1922.  
 2 SHEETS—SHEET 1.



Inventor  
 Thomas Mathews,  
 Gloucestro  
 Atty



T. MATHEWS.  
PUPPET OR MARIONETTE SHOW.  
APPLICATION FILED JUNE 14, 1920.

1,403,514.

Patented Jan. 17, 1922.  
2 SHEETS—SHEET 2.

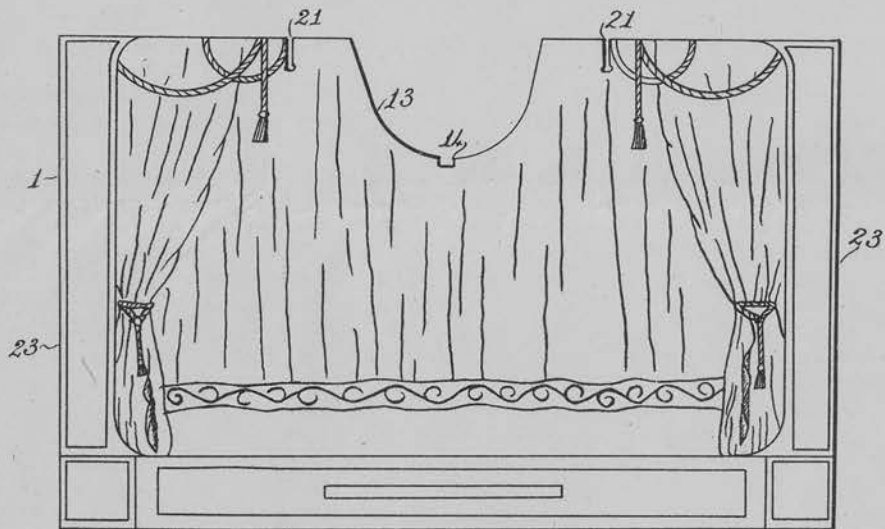


Fig 3

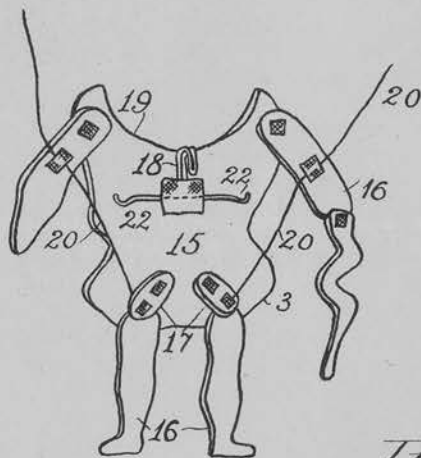


FIG 4

*Inventor*  
Thomas Mathews,  
by Connolly, Potts  
Attorneys

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

THOMAS MATHEWS, OF LEICESTER, ENGLAND; ANNIE MATHEWS AND HARRY W. BUCKINGHAM EXECUTORS OF SAID THOMAS MATHEWS, DECEASED.

## PUPPET OR MARIONETTE SHOW.

1,403,514.

Specification of Letters Patent. Patented Jan. 17, 1922.

Application filed June 14, 1920. Serial No. 388,982.

(GRANTED UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE ACT OF MARCH 3, 1921, 41 STAT. L., 1313.)

### *To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, THOMAS MATHEWS, subject of the King of Great Britain, residing at Leicester, in the county of Leicester, England, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in or Relating to Puppet or Marionette Shows, (for which I have filed an application in England Nov. 13th, 1917, which has since become Patent No. 114,400,) of which the following is a specification, reference being had therein to the accompanying drawing.

This invention relates to toys of the marionette or puppet type and consists of a construction and arrangement by which puppets of various types or characters may be interchangeably employed in connection with a scenic or other background adapted at the upper part for the performers or operator's head to be visibly projected thereover immediately above the body and legs of the puppet, the latter being caused by wires or strings to perform various movements or evolutions.

The invention is preferably made out of cardboard or the like and consists of an upright member or background with or without wings and which may be printed or painted in colours or otherwise to represent stage scenery of any suitable character. A proscenium, platform or stage may be hinged to the upright member so that it can be collapsed flat to same when not in use. Or the proscenium, platform or stage may be printed or painted on the upright member.

The upright member is fashioned along its upper edge so that the chin of the operator can rest therein with his face exposed over the said member, and connected detachably to the fashioned edge is the headless body of a puppet having jointed limbs.

The head of the operator appears to form the head of the puppet, and the limbs of the latter are actuated by cords, strings or wires which pass through slots in the top edge of the upright member.

In further describing the invention reference will be made to the accompanying drawing, wherein:—

Figure 1 is a perspective view representing, in use, a puppet show device constituting a concrete example of the invention.

Figure 2 is a central vertical section of the upright or background member and hinged platform.

Figure 3 is a front view of an upright member or background having a painted or printed platform.

Figure 4 is a rear view of the puppet shown in Figure 1.

In the convenient example shown in Figures 1 and 2, the toy comprises an upright member 1 which forms a general background and may consist of a piece of cardboard suitably printed or got up as indicated, a forwardly projecting platform or stage 2, and a puppet or figure 3.

The platform or stage is hingedly attached at 4 to a vertical front piece 5 which by means of short sides 6 is carried by the parts 7 these being vertically hinged at 8 on the back 1. The sides 6 are hingedly connected at 9 and 10 to the front piece 5 and parts 7 respectively so that when the platform is raised as indicated by the arrow in Figure 2, the structure consisting of the members 5, 6 and 7 will fold flat against the back by the hinged sides 6 and parts 7 turning in the manner indicated by arrows in Figure 1. The platform has on its rear edge a tongue 11 which fits into a slot 12 in the back 1 for the purpose of supporting the rear part of platform in the horizontal position when the device is opened for use. It will be understood that to collapse the device the platform is raised and with the folding of the front 5, 6, 7 as already described lies flat against the face of the member 1. To open the device for use the platform is pressed downwards until the tongue 11 enters the slot 12 the downward movement of the platform forcing forward the front 5. The platform may be arranged in any other convenient manner or may be omitted altogether as indicated in Figure 3 where the back member 1 consists of a flat board suitably printed or got up.

The upper edge of the back member 1 (Figures 1 and 3) has formed in it an opening 13 of suitable shape to admit of the insertion therein of the operator's chin in the manner shown in Figure 1. At the bottom of the opening 13 a notch 14 is formed for a purpose hereinafter appearing.

The puppet may be made of cardboard or

other sheet material suitably printed. It may comprise a headless body 15 Figures 1 and 4 to which the limbs 16, 17 are loosely jointed in some convenient manner. The body has attached to the rear thereof a simple hook 18 by which the puppet may be detachably connected to the upright member 1 by hanging it upon the edge of the opening 13, the hook being received in the aforesaid notch 14 which prevents sideways displacement while the operator's chin fitting into the opening prevents upward displacement of the puppet. The body part 15 has a shaped upper edge 19 to fit under the operator's chin.

Cords, strings or wires 20 attached to the limbs 16, 17 of the puppet pass upwardly from the puppet in front of the member as shown in Figure 1 and are carried in open ended slots 21 or passages, afterwards passing down behind the member 1 where they may, as indicated by the dotted lines, be manipulated by the hand of the operator to move the limbs of the puppet. To provide freedom of movement for the limbs, the body of the figure or puppet is held away from the face of the upright member 1 by small projecting loops 22 of wire (Figure 4) which conveniently may be formed with the hook 18.

The hook 18 constitutes a convenient means for supporting or suspending the puppet upon the member 1 as it admits of the figures being already changed. The open ended slots 21 also allow the cords, strings or wires to be easily inserted and removed when the figures are changed. Other means may however, be used for supporting the puppet.

Puppets or figures of various types and characters having movable limbs may be interchangeably used with the main part 1, and when the figure is the representation of any animal, bird or other similar character, a detachable mask of corresponding facial likeness may be worn by the operator.

The upright member or background 1 may have wings hingedly connected to its sides 23. These may fold flat upon the said member or be opened to angle relatively thereto to assist in supporting it for use.

What I claim then is:—

1. A toy of the marionette type preferably made of cardboard and comprising an upright background member suitably printed, and a figure adapted to be detachably supported from the upright member, said figure having loosely jointed limbs operable by strings, and the background member being adapted at the upper part for the operator's head to be visibly projected thereover immediately above the figure.

2. A toy of the marionette type preferably made of cardboard and comprising an upright background member suitably printed,

a figure consisting of a body and loosely jointed limbs the latter being operable by strings, and means to support said figure on the front of the background member, the latter being fashioned along its upper edge so that the chin of the operator can rest therein above the figure.

3. A toy of the marionette type preferably made of cardboard and comprising an upright background member suitably printed and having an opening in its upper edge to receive the operator's chin, a figure consisting of a body and loosely connected and jointed limbs operable by strings, and a hook on the back of said figure for attachment to the opening in the background member to support the figure underneath the operator's chin.

4. A toy of the marionette type preferably made of cardboard and comprising an upright background member suitably printed and having an opening in its upper edge to receive the operator's chin, a figure consisting of a body shaped at the top to fit under the operator's chin and having loosely jointed limbs movably connected thereto, strings for operating said limbs, and a hook on the back of the body adapted to engage the opening in the background to carry the figure in the front thereof, the strings from the limbs of the figure being carried in open ended slots in the background member so as to be operable behind the latter for moving the limbs.

5. A toy of the marionette type preferably made of cardboard and comprising an upright background member suitably printed and having a shaped opening in its upper edge to receive the operator's chin, a platform hinged to said member so that it can be collapsed to a flat condition when not in use, a figure consisting of a body and loosely jointed and connected limbs operable by strings from behind the upright member, and means to detachably carry said figure on the front of the upright member.

6. A toy of the marionette type preferably made of cardboard and comprising an upright background member suitably printed and having a shaped opening in its upper edge to receive the operator's chin, a folding front piece hingedly attached to the background member, a platform hingedly attached to the front piece and adapted to engage the background member when in use, said front piece and platform collapsing to a flat condition when not in use, a figure consisting of a body and loosely jointed and connected limbs operable by strings from behind the upright member, and means to detachably carry said figure on the front of the upright member.

7. A toy of the marionette type comprising a flat upright background member of sheet cardboard, printed to represent a pro-



scenium and stage and having a shaped opening in its upper edge to receive the operator's chin, a flat cut out figure of printed cardboard consisting of a headless body having a shaped opening at the top to correspond with that in the background member and fit under the operator's chin, loosely jointed limbs pivotally connected to said body and operable by means of strings pressed through open ended slots in the upper edge of the background member so as to be operable behind the latter, a wire hook rigidly attached to the back of the figure body and adapted to engage with a notch in the shaped opening of the background member to support the figure on the front of the latter.

8. A toy of the marionette type comprising a flat upright background member of sheet cardboard printed to represent a proscenium and stage and having a shaped opening in its upper edge to receive the operator's chin, a flat cut out figure of printed

cardboard consisting of a headless body having a shaped opening at the top to correspond with that in the background member and fit under the operator's chin, loosely jointed limbs pivotally connected to said body and operable by means of strings pressed through open ended slots in the upper edge of the background member so as to be operable behind the latter, a wire hook rigidly attached to the back of the figure body and adapted to engage with a notch in the shaped opening of the background member to support the figure on the front of the latter, and projecting loops of wire on the rear of the figure to hold the latter away from the face of the background member to provide freedom of movement of the limbs.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature in presence of two witnesses.

THOMAS MATHEWS.

Witnesses:

R. W. C. TAYLOR,  
GEORGE LESTER.

Aug. 26, 1924.

1,505,942

E. O. BLANTON

ART OF PRODUCING MANIKIN ACTORS

Filed April 21, 1921

3 Sheets-Sheet 1

Fig. 1

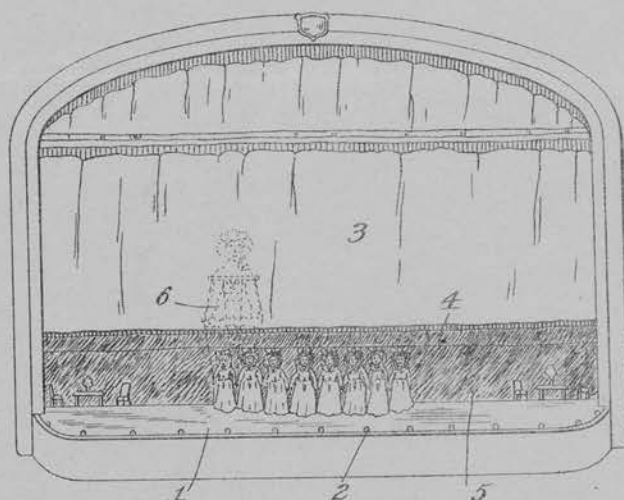
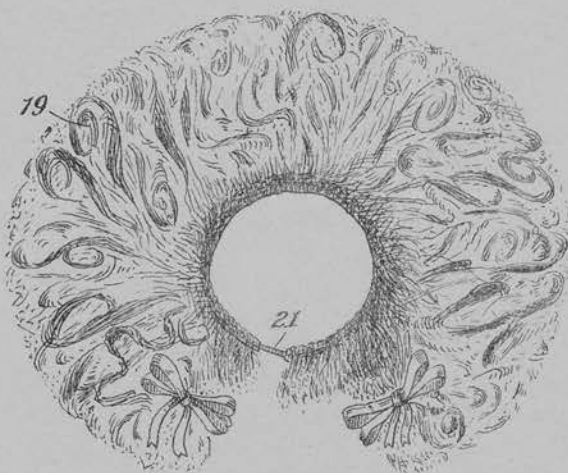


Fig. 4.



Inventor:

Elma O. Blanton,

By

*E. O. Blanton Jr.*

Attorney

Aug. 26 , 1924.

E. O. BLANTON

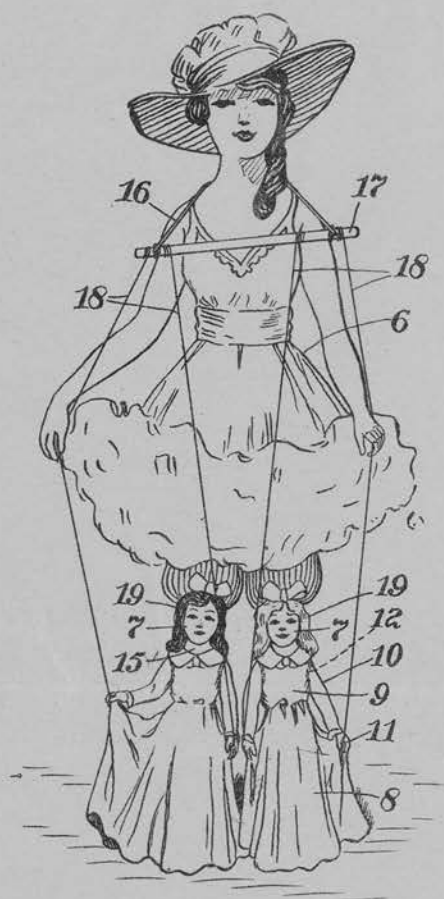
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ART OF PRODUCING MANIKIN ACTORS

Filed April 21, 1921

3 Sheets-Sheet 2

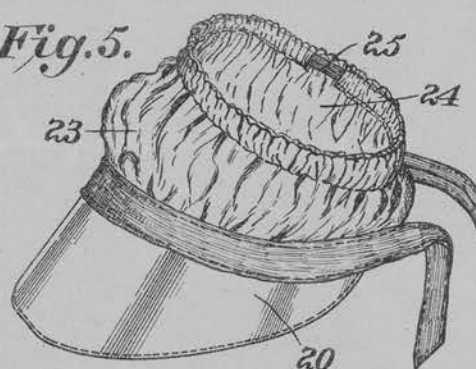
*Fig. 2.*



*Fig. 3.*



*Fig. 5.*



*Inventor:*

*Elma O. Blanton,*  
by *Edmonston* Jr  
Atty.



Aug. 26, 1924.

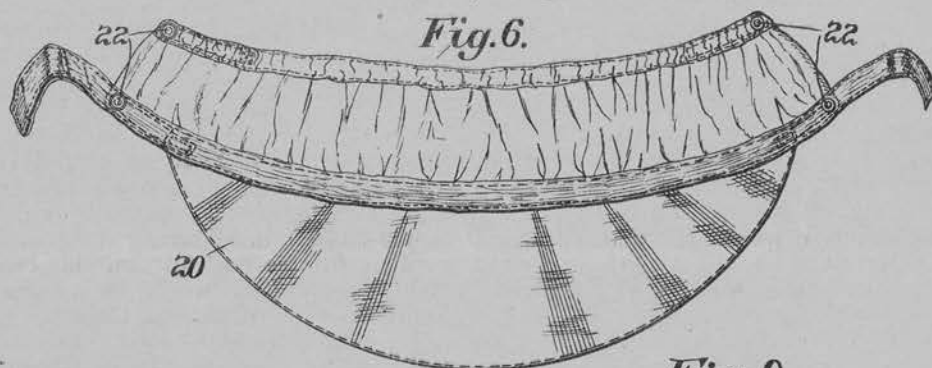
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E. O. BLANTON

ART OF PRODUCING MANIKIN ACTORS

Filed April 21, 1921

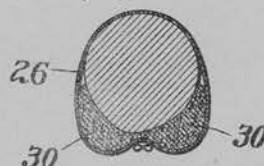
3 Sheets-Sheet 3



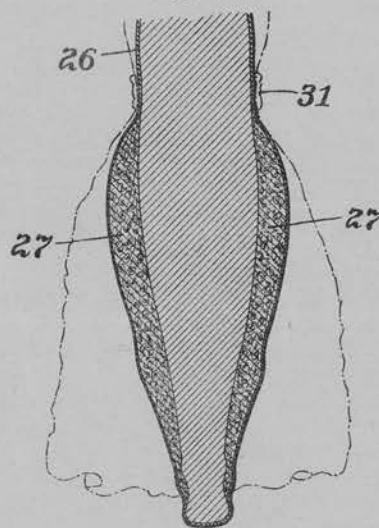
*Fig. 7.*



*Fig. 9.*



*Fig. 8.*



*Inventor:*

*Elma O. Blanton,*  
*by J. E. Mousley, Jr. Atty.*

Patented Aug. 26, 1924.

1,505,942

# UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

ELMA OSBORN BLANTON, OF JACKSONVILLE, FLORIDA.

## ART OF PRODUCING MANIKIN ACTORS.

Application filed April 21, 1921. Serial No. 463,171.

*To all whom it may concern:*

Be it known that I, ELMA OSBORN BLANTON, a citizen of the United States, residing at Jacksonville, in the county of Duval and State of Florida, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in the Art of Producing Manikin Actors, of which the following is a specification.

This invention relates to theatricals, and more particularly to the art of producing manikin characters for acting in pantomime roles in vaudeville sketches.

One of the essential features of this invention resides in the production of manikin pantomime theatricals by dressing the operators' legs and leaving the operators' arms free to manipulate the universally movable arms of the manikin so that they may be caused to gesticulate or make other movements characteristic of the human being.

Other very essential features of this invention will appear as the following specification is read in connection with the accompanying drawings which form a part of the application, and in which:

Figure 1 is a front view of a stage showing several operators with their legs dressed to produce the manikin figures and with the curtain broken away to show one of the operators,

Figure 2 is a full view of one of the operators showing the method of operating the arms of the manikin figures,

Figure 3 is a perspective view of one of the dresses removed and with parts in section so as to disclose the construction of the arm and neck portions,

Figure 4 is a top plan view of one of the wigs which are utilized,

Figure 5 shows a perspective view of a cap or hat which may be used with any of the costumes,

Figure 6 is a modified form of hat,

Figure 7 is a perspective view of the leg of an operator showing the same dressed in such manner that a dancer in tights is represented, and

Figure 8 is a vertical section taken through the leg of the operator in a plane normal to the line of vision in Figure 7.

Figure 9 is a transverse sectional view taken through Figure 8 at the bust line.

In the drawings, 1 indicates the ordinary stage, and 2 the usual foot lights. 3 represents a curtain of any suitable design, but

I preferably employ a curtain with a phantom edge such as is indicated at 4 so that it will not appear that the lower edge is resting upon the heads of the little manikin actors. There is also employed in the production of the sketches relatively dark or black background 5 which obscures the arm-operating cables or cords which will be hereinafter described.

Stage furniture of any suitable character may be employed and such scenery as is desirable will, of course, be supplied, but as this specification does not deal with these features they are not described specifically herein.

In the production of these sketches relatively thin operators are obtained in order that the diameter of the leg immediately above the calf will not be large and thereby secure a relatively small neck, as will be hereinafter understood, for the manikin actors or actresses as the case may be.

Each operator, indicated by the numeral 6, has her knees painted to indicate the face 7 of the actor or actress; that is, the eyes, nose, mouth and eyebrows are painted either directly on the skin of the knee cap or are painted upon a stocking at a point which will cover the knee cap as will be understood, the stocking, of course, to be flesh colored and to be rouged at the point where the cheeks would appear on a miniature human figure.

I shall first describe a dress to be employed for a manikin actress, and these each consist of a skirt 8, a waist or body portion 9 and sleeves 10 to which artificial hands 11 are attached. These hands may be made of any suitable material but are preferably made of some malleable metal which can be bent or moved to assume various positions or to hold various articles such as horns, tambourines, or with both hands holding trays or other such articles, all of which will be readily apparent to those versed in the theatrical art. The sleeves which are attached to the waist or body portion of the garment are constructed at the armholes with rigid rings 12 of wire or any other suitable material so as to prevent falling away and flattening of the garment at this point and the sleeves are padded as shown at 13 with some flexible type of padding so that the arm may be universally moved.

It will be clearly understood that the



skirt, waist and arm portions of the garment may be constructed in any suitable manner and the costumers will, of course, be called upon to devise such garments or costumes as may be most appropriate for the sketches which these little actors or actresses are made to perform, but each garment is supplied with an elastic neck band 14 adapted to constrict around the leg of the operator immediately below the knee in such manner that the leg of the operator immediately above the neck-band may represent the neck 15 of the manikin actor.

The face of the manikin operator being painted directly upon the flesh of the operator's leg and the neck being the flesh of the operator's leg the illusion produced to the audience is most real and if the operators have any real muscular control over the knee cap the facial expression of the manikin acts may be considerably changed at will. Each operator has, of course, both legs dressed up in this manner so that two manikin actors are produced for each operator and the hands 11 are manipulated in the following manner: Suspended from the operator's neck by a cord or other suitable device 16 is a bar 17 to which are attached strings or fine cables 18 in order that their upper ends may be properly supported and that they may be conveniently reached by the operator. The lower ends of these cords are attached directly to the hands and being black or of a dark color are invisible against the background 5. The operator by grasping these cords may manipulate the hands to perform various different gesticulations or may so manipulate them that they will carry various articles such as trays which may be placed upon tables forming a part of the stage furniture. In other words, by proper manipulation of the cords or cables the manikin actors may be caused to use their hands in a manner very much similar to human beings. In fact, fans secured to the hands may be caused to be operated to fan the manikin actor or actress in a very natural manner.

The upper ends of the cords or cables 18 are supported upon the rods 17 in separated relation as shown so that the operator may grasp and operate any one cord or a multiplicity of cords without having to hold all of them in his or her hands at one time which would make it difficult to operate any particular one or any particular two.

Each manikin actor or actress is provided with a wig 19 and if desirable with a hat 20 which are adapted to fit above the knee of the operator and are constructed in the following manner. The wig is built around a resilient band 21 which may be continuous as shown in Figure 4 or open and with snap fasteners or hook and eye 22 as shown in Figure 6 so that instead of slipping it

over the leg in the manner of an ordinary garter as is done in the case of the wig shown in Figure 4, it can be placed around the leg and fastened with the snap fasteners or hook and eye as is found most desirable. In each case, however, the band upon which the wig 19 is formed is made of some elastic or stretchable material which, constricting around the leg, supports the wig in proper position above the knee.

The hat is constructed in a similar manner; that is, the frame 23 has an opening 24 in the top defined by an elastic band 25 adapted to constrict around the leg of the operator so as to support it in position above the wig and over the same in the manner of an ordinary hat. This band may be continuous as is the band of the wig shown in Figure 4 or it may be open and fastened in the manner of the wig shown in Figure 6, all of which will be readily understood.

In dressing the manikin actors or actresses the hat, if one is used, is placed upon the leg of the operator first in the manner of a garter immediately above the knee and the wig is placed upon the leg also in the manner of a garter immediately below the hat or cap and partially under the same. The dress is then applied by slipping the foot through the elastic neck band 14 and allowing the same to constrict around the leg immediately below the knee, the face of the manikin operator being painted directly upon the flesh of the knee of the operator or upon a flesh-colored stocking at the knee. The dress is complete and the actor ready for the sketch.

When the curtain is raised to a point immediately above the operator's knee the actors appear to the audience to be miniature people and by taking short steps the operator may so simulate the movements of the miniature actors that it is impossible for the audience to know that the actual operator is a full grown person.

In Figure 7 the operator wears a short silk stocking 26 of flesh color which terminates immediately below the knee of the operator. In this stocking pads 27 representing the legs of the miniature dancer are placed on opposite sides of the legs of the operator and a division piece 28 is run down the front of the leg of the operator and which is preferably black or some color contrasting with the stocking so as to produce the effect of two legs for the manikin actor. The shoe of the operator, 29, may be also painted to produce an illusion of two shoes as will be readily understood and as is shown in Figure 7. Also inside the stocking suitable bust pads 30 are utilized and surrounding the leg of the operator immediately below the bust pads is a belt 31 which gives a waistline effect. In this fig-



ure it will be noticed that the actress is represented as being in tights and her body is then covered with some diaphanous material with the sleeves attached thereto in the usual  
 5 manner as above described and with a constricting neck-band adapted to fit around the leg of the operator as previously described. This dress may be made in many folds and the hands preferably hold sticks  
 10 that can be waived in various manners so as to produce a dance similar to that performed by La Louie Fuller.

There is nothing in effect broadly speaking different in the construction of the parts  
 15 and the method of operating in Figure 7 than there is in Figure 1, but this figure and the dress disclosed therein is simply illustrated to show one of the many variations which may be employed in costumes  
 20 for use on these manikin actors.

While all of the garments here shown have been for representing female manikin actresses it will be readily understood from a reading of the description of Figures 7 and  
 25 8 that male manikin actors may be produced in a similar manner and the faces of the actors or actresses may be either those for white actresses or for black-faced comedians, as is desired, and the operator may so manipulate his or her legs that the actors or  
 30 actresses may move about on the stage in pairs or one preceding the other. In fact, either one of the operators' legs may be dressed up and the other one in solid black so that only one actor is operated by each  
 35 operator, the other black leg not being seen against the black background of the stage.

All of these details and the various duties which the manikin actresses or actors perform it would, of course, be understood is  
 40 within the knowledge of the theatrical manager and have no part herein.

From the foregoing description and the accompanying drawings those versed in the  
 45 art should be able to readily understand the

construction and operation and the possibilities to which this invention can be put. I, however, do not wish to be limited to the specific construction herein shown which is only one embodiment showing the broad  
 50 principle of the invention.

Having thus described the invention, what I claim is:

1. The art of producing a manikin actor which consists in first painting face features  
 55 on the knee cap of the operator and then dressing the leg of the operator in suitable clothes characteristic of a manikin and concealing that portion of the operator which is not dressed as a manikin. 60

2. The art of producing a manikin actor which consists in painting face features on the knee of an operator, dressing the leg of the operator below the knee with suitable  
 65 clothes, characteristic of a manikin affixing a manikin wig to the leg of the operator above the face features and concealing that portion of the operator which is not dressed as a manikin.

3. The art of producing a manikin actor 70 which consists in painting face features on the knee of an operator, dressing the leg of the operator below the knee with suitable clothes characteristic of a manikin affixing  
 75 a wig and a hat to the leg of the operator above the face features, and concealing that portion of the operator which is not dressed as a manikin.

4. The art of producing an animate manikin actor which consists in painting face  
 80 features on the knee of a human operator, supporting suitable clothes characteristic of a manikin on the legs of the operator which carry flexible arms, providing the operator with means for manipulating the  
 85 arms, and concealing that portion of the operator which is not dressed as a manikin.

In testimony whereof I affix my signature.

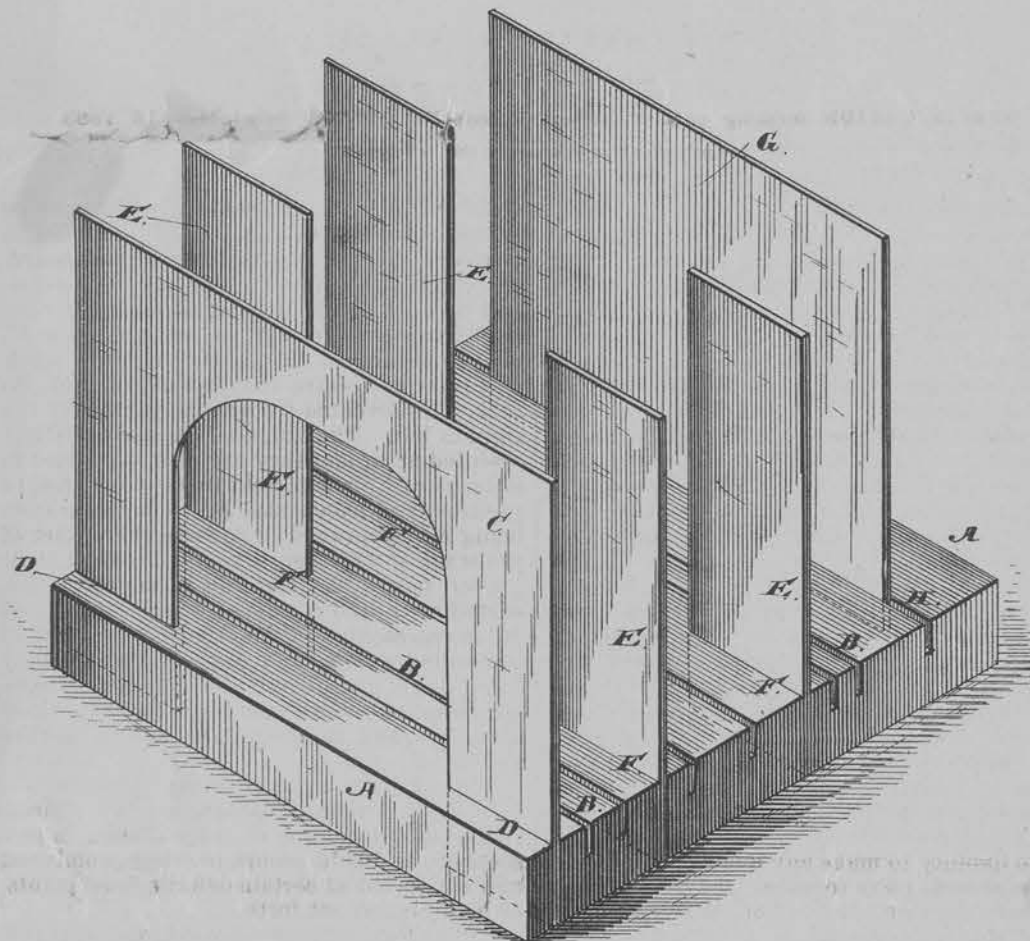
ELMA OSBORN BLANTON.

(No Model.)

J. H. SINGER.  
TOY THEATRICAL STAGE.

No. 277,798.

Patented May 15, 1883.



Witnesses  
Fred G. Dieterich  
Boyd Eliot

Inventor  
Jasper H. Singer

N. PETERS, Photo-Lithographer, Washington, D. C.

## UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JASPER H. SINGER, OF NEW YORK, N. Y.

### TOY THEATRICAL STAGE.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 277,798, dated May 15, 1883.

Application filed February 12, 1883. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JASPER H. SINGER, of the city, county, and State of New York, have invented certain new and useful Improvements in Toy Theatrical Stages, of which the following is a specification.

This invention pertains to that class of devices intended to represent theatrical stages for children's toys, and in which there is a foundation to represent the floor of the stage, formed of a piece of wood of the proper size to represent the floor, say twelve inches square, for that matter, and of sufficient thickness to receive grooves for the support of the scenes, or various portions of the scenery, to be held in proper position to represent the scenery as set.

This invention, however, consists in forming some of said grooves or slots, especially those intended for the side scenes or wings, in each end of said block or foundation, of the exact distance required for the said scenes to be located when in proper position to represent the views they are intended for, and a similar set of grooves, like mortises, are formed in the front edge to support the arch or proscenium, the result of which construction is that there is no liability to make any mistake in putting the several parts together, and also support them in their proper position, so that they are not liable to be shifted or moved out of the way, in shifting or operating the rest of the scenes, which are moved to and fro in grooves in the ordinary manner.

The drawing represents in perspective the foundation and a portion of the scenery as located for setting a stage, A being a block, which serves as the floor, and in which the grooves for the scenes are shown at B, extending entirely across, so that the scenes that are intended to be shifted can be moved from one side of the stage to the other as desired. At

C is the arch or proscenium, which is made of thin sheets of wood and painted with any views desired, or preferably of pasteboard, on which lithographic views may be pasted, and the lower ends of this arch are inserted in slots cut in the block A, as represented at D, and which are cut to only the required depth necessary to receive the feet of the arch, so that it is prevented from shifting either to the right or left. The wings or side scenes are represented at E, and they are also supported in slots, as at F, which hold them in an upright position, and which also prevents them from being moved inward or toward the center of the stage any farther than required for their proper position. The back scene is represented at G, and is supported in a groove at H, as represented in the drawing, which is of the ordinary form. These various scenes may have views of different kinds on their opposite sides, as in the present well-known form of such toys, and therefore need not be further explained.

What I desire to claim as my invention is—

1. As an article of manufacture, a toy theatrical stage consisting of a foundation, a proscenium, and side scenes or wings, combined and supported at certain definite fixed points, as hereinbefore set forth.

2. The foundation for a toy theatrical stage, formed with grooves running the entire length for the shifting scenes, and with intermediate slots extending only the required distance to receive and support the wings, as hereinbefore set forth.

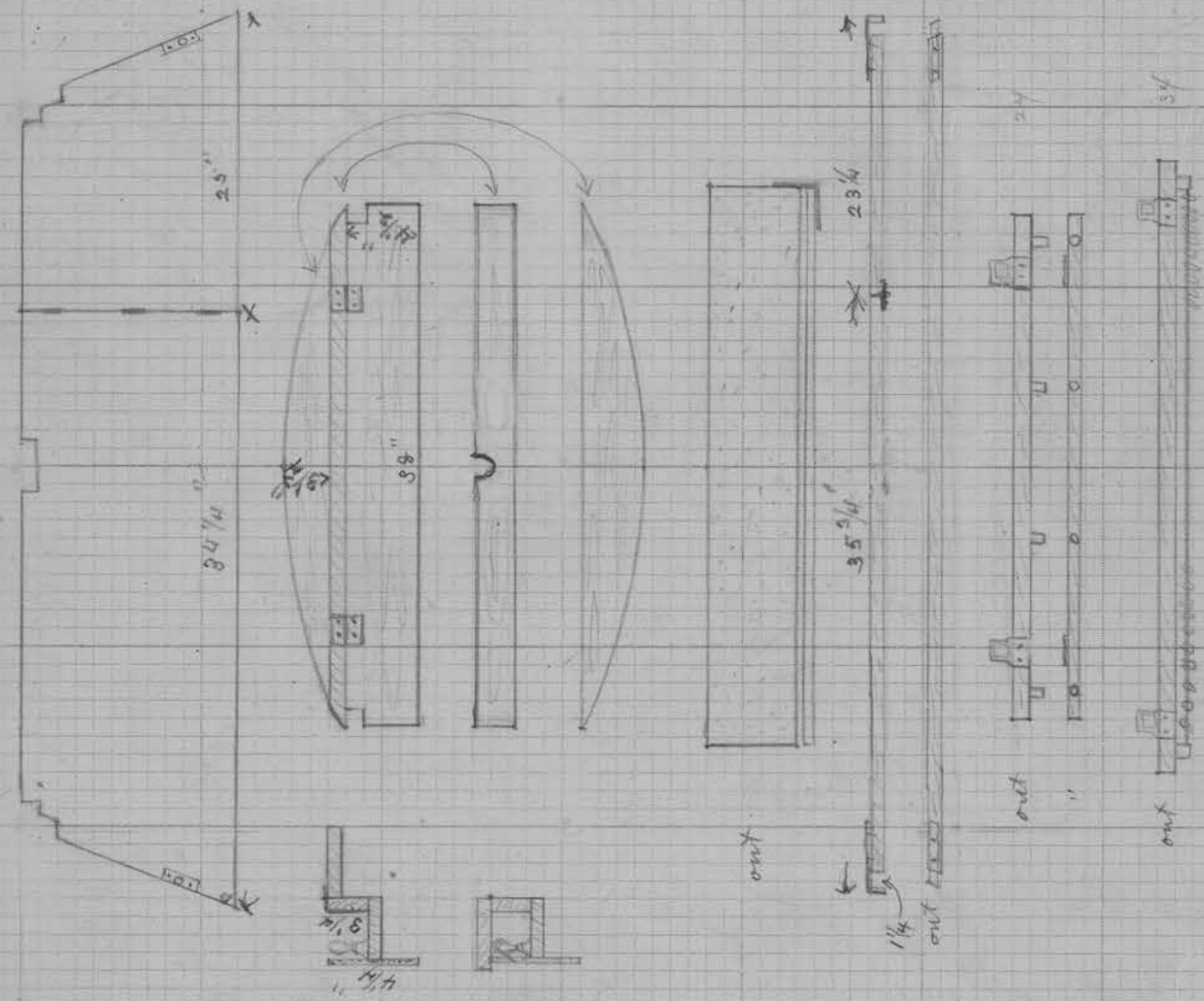
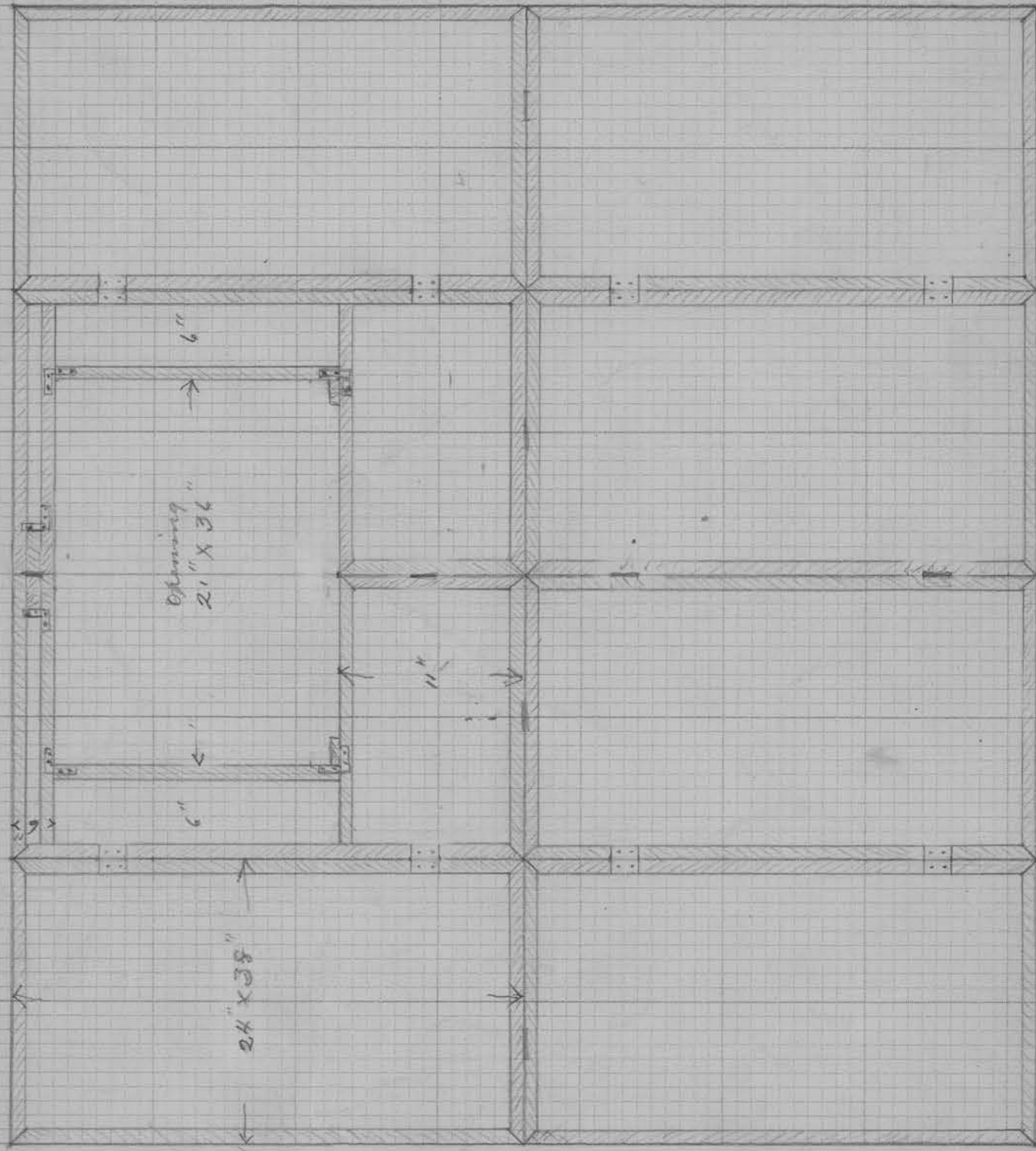
Witness my hand in the presence of two subscribing witnesses.

JASPER H. SINGER.

Witnesses:

HERMAN T. C. KRAUS,  
EUGENE N. ELIOT.







## Marionette Theater

For puppets operated by strings, the section with stage opening is below and crest is placed on the other section.

The brace-drop-stick D is placed further to the rear on the section with stage opening. Its brass hook ends engage the brass plates near the corners of the wings.

The shelf E has four hafts. Open these and place two over the staples on the stage and lock them by slight turn of the staples. The hafts at the shelf corners engage hooks in the outer frames of the wings.

Side drops may be suspended from the hooks in the swinging arm at either side.

Properties are held in position by <sup>the</sup> slot along <sup>edge</sup> rear of stage.

Scenery drops hang by suspension rings (a Dennison Mfg. Co. product) from hooks in brace-drop-stick, and should be semi-transparent, as cambric. They are housed, suspended from hooks in the left panel of the lower section, folded <sup>lightly</sup> so all rings of one drop go on the same hook and locked <sup>on</sup> by a turn of the hook.

The extension cord is woven from side to side over four hooks in panel under stage opening.

Phone 624

229 So. Second Street

## HINTZ DRUG COMPANY

In Account With

M

Cedar Rapids, Iowa

192

STATEMENT

## Directions

### For Erecting Theater

Open <sup>upper</sup> section <sup>(that</sup> with stage opening) front restains straight - wings angling. Open lower section and place the rear side of other section, where theater is to be placed.

Remove erect, A, from its housing in lower section and place in position on top of upper section.

Raise upper section to top of lower section - (left hand grasping upper edge of stage opening and right holding right wing, handle with care.)

Fasten the faster hooks that unite the sections.

Place the brace-drop-stick, D, on top of upper wings, - hook to the rear.

Place shelf, E, in position with posts on frame firmly

Through holes in brass plate. The shelf fixes the proper angle of wings and the brace-drop-stick may be

adjusted accordingly. Unbutton <sup>leaf curtain</sup> ~~remove~~ curtain stick, by loosening harp from screw eye and lifting off staple at other end. Hang on hooks double pulley to the right. Adjust <sup>if necessary</sup> curtain cord, which runs through tall screw eyes on frame supporting shelf.

Place foot lights and stage in the opening. Hold footlights out to spread the notches. Holding one end up place lower notch in position and lower other to position. Make



M.....

In Account With

2**HINTZ DRUG COMPANY**

wiring connecting of the footlights  
 by adjusting the cord connector  
 See that all lamps are screwed down  
 firmly.

Place headlights, C, behind  
 the upright brass plate on  
 B. ~~See wiring between end of B~~  
 See that all lamps are screwed  
 down firmly.

Adjust lamps only when electric  
 current is turned off.

Connect theater by extension  
 cord to lamp socket or wall  
 receptacle.

Headlights and footlights  
 operate through separate switches

**Collapsing Theater**

Reverse process in collapsing  
 theater. Note the letters indicating  
 positions in housing the accessories.  
 The screw eyes to fasten into bars  
 and the hooks in slots in the sticks are  
 a guide. Note the curtain rod is near-  
 est the panel frame and curtain sticks  
 back of the curtain stick.

THE DEBORAH MEADER

PUPPET SHOP

1147 Lincoln Avenue

ST. PAUL, MINN.

Directions

Erecting Theater

Open upper section (that with stage opening), - front panels straight, - wings angling.

Open likewise lower section, and place on rear side of upper section where theater is to be placed.

Remove crest, A, from its housing in lower section and place in position on top of front panels of upper section.

Standing in the rear, raise upper section to top of lower section. Left hand grasping upper edge of stage opening and right hand, holding right wing, hauls it easily.

Fasten the four hooks that unite the sections.

Place the brace-drop-stick, D, on top of upper wings, about six inches from corners - hooks to the rear.

Place shelf, E, in position with parts on frame firmly through holes in brass plates. The shelf fixes the proper angles of the wings. Adjust ~~the~~ D, accordingly.

Place footlights and stage in the opening. Hold footlights out to spread the notches. Holding one end up, place lower notch in position and lower other end to position. Make wiring connection of the footlights by adjusting the cord connection. See that all lamps are screwed down firmly.

Unbutton lead curtain weights from elastic cord and remove curtain stick, B, by loosening screw eyes from hump and lifting off staple at other end. Hang on hooks above opening, double pulley to the right. Adjust, as necessary, the curtain cord, which runs through the tall screw eyes on frame supporting shelf.

Place headlights, C, behind the upright brass plate on B. See that all lamps are screwed down firmly.

Adjust lamps only when electric current is turned off.

Connect theater by extension cord to lamp socket or wall receptacle.

Headlights and footlights operate through separate switches.

### Collapsing Theater

Reverse erecting process in collapsing theater. The letters indicate positions in housing the accessories. The screw eyes fastening into hasps and hooks through slots in the sticks are a guide. Note that the curtain rod is towards the panel frame, and the curtain stretches back of the curtain stick.

### General

Properties are held in position by the slot along the rear edge of the stage.

Scenery drops hang by suspension rings (Dennison Mfg. Co. product) from hooks in brace-drop-stick, and should be semi-transparent, as Cambric. Drops are housed suspended from hooks in the left panel of lower section, folded lightly, so all rings of one drop go on the same hook and locked on by a turn of the hook.

The extension cord is woven from side to side on four hooks in panel under stage opening.



THE DEBORAH MEADER  
PUPPET SHOP

1147 Lincoln Avenue  
ST. PAUL, MINN.

Directions Cont'd

Marionette Theater

For Theater for puppets, operated by strings. The section with the stage opening is below and the crest is placed on top the other section.

The brace-drop-stick, D, is placed further to the rear on the section with stage opening. Its brass hook ends engage the brass plates near the corners of the wings.

The shelf, E, has four hasps. Open all these and place two over the staples on the stage and lock them by slight turn of the staples. The hasps at the rear shelf corners engage hooks in the outer frames of the wings.

Side drops may be suspended from the hooks in the swinging arm at either side.

## A Puppet Theater

A theater may be built as follows:

Use a manufactured building board, 4 ft. wide and at least 6 ft. 6 in. long for the front, in which is the stage opening, 27 in. wide 17 in. high, the bottom of which is 53 in. from the floor.

From the front is a wing on each side, hinged to the front. These wings enable the whole to stand firmly on the floor.

The front is 6 ft. 1 in. in height at the sides and slope from each side upwards to the center 6 ft. 6 in. high.

The wings are the same height as the outer edges of the front. Nail strips of white pine 1 x 2 in. around the border of the front and wings. The strips at the top of each wing is  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. below the upper edges of wings to serve as supports for the ceiling, made of pine boards, preferably flooring, held together by cleats nailed on top. The ceiling must conform to the spread of the wings desired. Angle irons, procurable at ten cent stores, are screwed to the top surface of the ceiling, one at each end in such manner as to permit it to extend down over the upper edges of the wings, but not screwed to them, thus holding them firmly to the ceiling. The lower surface of the ceiling will be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. above the stage opening.

Nail through the ceiling into the edge of a strip of clear white pine  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. x 1 in., 36 in. long back from the front  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. The front surface of this strip is to support the curtain rod. Nail a similar strip back 11 in. from the front, the rear surface to support a back curtain to conceal the face of the puppeteer, but thin enough for the puppeteer to see the outline of puppets in performance. Between these two strips nail a third. These three strips serve as supports to scenery attached to them by thumb tacks or otherwise by screw and hook. Scenery may also be attached to the inner edge of the stage and to the back curtain. A narrow curtain may be attached to the front side of the middle strip to conceal the wood of the ceiling and rear strips.

The stage is a 1 in. white pine board 3 ft. long,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide. It is notched at each end to permit it to slip through the stage opening  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in., leaving 1 in. extending to right and left of the opening with its outer corners rounded back to the front. Bore holes in each end of the 27 in. extension of the stage at the inner surface of the front and slip in nails to prevent the stage slipping forward. Nail a quarter round strip 27 in. long along the lower outer edge of the opening, nail to the under side of stage to further support the stage.

Around the opening picture railing or picture frame moulding may be fitted down to the stage board, squarely on each side. Inside the front nail a 3 inch strip of white pine across the front at the lower edge of the stage opening. A hook from this into a screw-eye on the bottom side of the stage holds the stage firm.

For operating the curtain, place a screw-eye at one end and beyond the end of the curtain rod. Place two screw-eyes beyond the opposite end of the curtain rod, and two screw-eyes (slightly opened for inserting and removing the cord) about 27 in. below these upper screw-eyes and a few inches apart in the border strips of front and wing. Thread these five screw-eyes with a firm cord, joining the ends at the middle of the curtain rod. Attach the supporting ring at the edge of one curtain, where the cord is joined and the ring at the edge of the other curtain to the other line of cord opposite. When one line of the vertical extension of the cord is pulled down the curtains open. When the opposite line is pulled down the curtains close. Small pulleys may be substituted for screw-eyes.

Nail a strip to the inside of each wing, 38 in. above the floor to support a shelf 12 in. wide. On the upper edge of the shelf at each end fix an angle iron to extend over and down between the supporting strip and the wing surface, to hold the shelf in place and further bind the wings firmly together.

When constructed as above the theater may be collapsed for storage or transportation. The stage is slipped out by unhooking it and taking the nails from the holes. After removing the cord from the open screw-eyes the ceiling may be lifted from the wings - likewise the shelf, then the wings will fold on the front.

If it is desired to have the theater out on a table, the front and wings may be shortened by the height of the table.

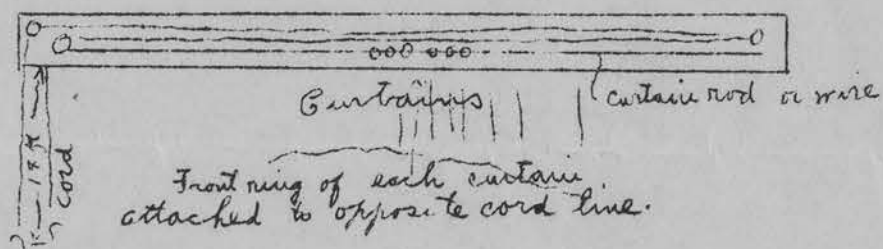
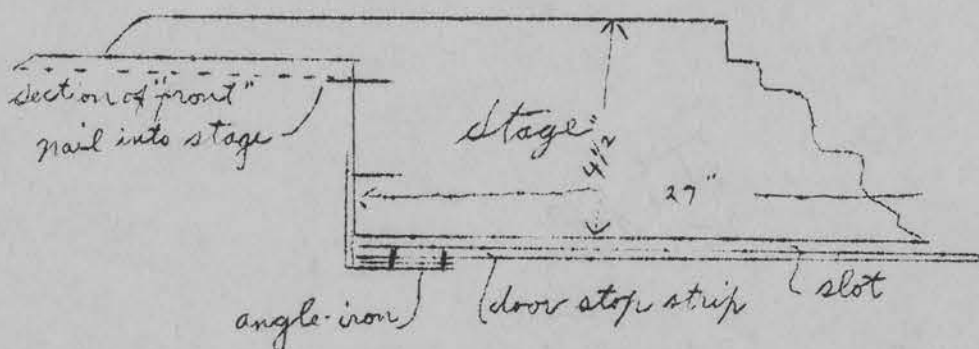
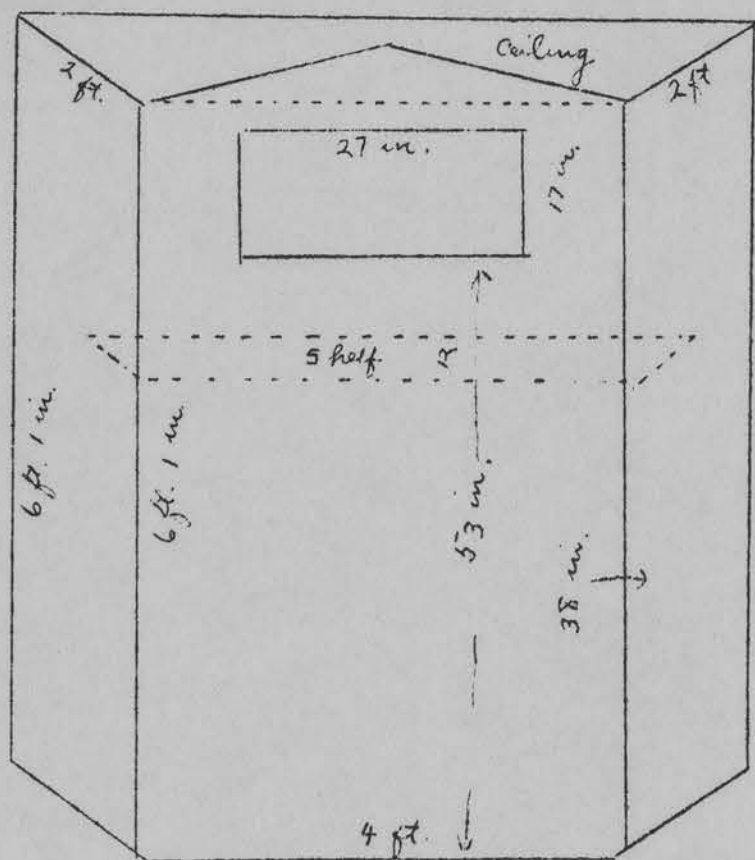
The stage is more efficient by adding a strip of white pine  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick and the length of the stage (a strip of "door-stop" would be tight) to the rear of the stage by angle irons, such as before mentioned, one at each end of the strip and extending along the surface of the ends of the stage and screwed to this stage so as to leave a slot, along the length of the stage the width of cigar box wood, into which properties on the stage may be wedged to hold them upright and firm.

Scenery, painted on cloth preferably, may be attached to strips of wood  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch square and these strips attached to the ceiling by screw-eyes and hooks. When not in use they may be hung on hooks in the edge of the shelf.

In hinging the wings to the front, place the hinges at the inner edge of the strips on the "front," so that when the wing is spread a wide crack will not appear between the front and wing.

Footlights and overhead lighting may be devised by adopting Christmas tree lights.

### Puppet Theater





The present invention relates to a miniature theater for use with hand puppets or marionettes.

The art of puppetry is an extremely ancient one, and puppets have been used in most of the countries of the world for centuries. However, in spite of the long continued and widespread use of hand puppets and marionettes, little advance has been made in the art of either, except in refinements in the figures themselves and in the means of manipulating them.

An object of the present invention is to make an improved miniature theater.

In order to attain this object, there is provided, in accordance with one feature of the invention, a pair of foldable frame structures adapted to be mounted one upon the other, one of the foldable frame structures having a stage opening therein and the frames being so constructed that either may be placed in superposed position above the other and secured in such position.

When the foldable frame having the stage opening therein is placed above the other frame structure, the device is adapted for use as a hand puppet theater, while, when the frame having the stage opening therein is placed below the other, the device is adapted for use as a marionette theater. In either case, the frame not provided with the stage opening serves to mask the body of the operator from the audience.

The foldable frames are preferably constructed with shallow wall recesses in which various accessories are arranged and securely housed when the structure is folded for storage or transportation.

These and other features of the invention will be more fully brought out in the following description and the accompanying drawings, wherein:

Figure 1 is a rear view of two superposed, foldable frame structures in extended position showing various accessories housed therein.

Figure 2 is a horizontal sectional view through the stage opening of the device when arranged as illustrated in Figure 8 for the use of marionettes.

Figure 3 is a rear elevation of one frame structure of the device as used for hand puppets, a semi-transparent back drop and a transverse top bracing member being removed to more clearly display the construction of the device.

Figure 4 is a view in perspective of the front of a theater, embodying the present invention, as set up and in use as a hand puppet theater and also shows the two frames which comprise the theater, folded, and a footlight housing and stage floor member folded for storage or transportation.

Figure 5 is a view in front elevation of the superposed frames in extended position, showing an ornamentally curved top member raised slightly from its normal position to show means for fastening this member to the top of the framework.

Figure 6 is a top edge view of one of the foldable frames, showing the hinge arrangement by which it is folded.

Figure 7 is a vertical, sectional view through the theater, set up for use as a hand puppet theater, an operator, holding a puppet in operative position, being indicated in dotted lines.

Figure 8 is a view similar to Figure 7, showing the theater set up for use with marionettes, an operator being also indicated in this view in dotted lines.

Figure 9 is an enlarged sectional view on the line 9-9 of Figure 3.

Figure 10 is an enlarged sectional view on the line 10-10 of Figure 3.

Figure 11 is a view in perspective of a piece of theatrical property showing a strip connected to the rear thereof for mounting said property in a slotted opening in the stage floor.

Figure 12 is an enlarged sectional view through one end of a curtain support member showing a method of securing the

curtain support member in the frame when not in use.

Figure 13 is a sectional view through a lighting strip support member when secured in the frame for storage or transportation, showing an offset screw which is used to removably secure the strip in this position; and

Figure 14 is a sectional view of a modified form of frame section.

Referring to the drawings in detail, a pair of foldable frame members A and B are each constructed of a plurality of frame sections, hingedly connected together so as to be foldable, one upon the other. The foldable frame A comprises frame sections 1, 2, 3, and 4, and the frame structure B also comprises four sections 5, 6, 7, and 8. All of the sections of both frames A and B, except the two center sections 2 and 3 of the frame A, are constructed in the form of rectangular frames having longitudinal side members and transverse end members, preferably of light, strong construction. These rectangular frames are covered on their outer sides by a substantially opaque material such as duck. The construction of these frames is not material to the invention, however, and it would be feasible to construct these frame members of sheet metal with inturned channeled edges, as indicated at 1a in the modified form shown in Figure 14.

The two central sections of the frame A are constructed with complementary, rectangular notches 9 and 10 therein, to form a stage opening. A pair of blocks 11 and 12 are permanently mounted, one in each of the lower corners of the stage opening, to support a stage floor and footlight housing member C in raised position from the lower edge of the stage opening, so as to permit the insertion in this opening of an electrical contact plug 13 by means of which the footlights may be connected to a source of electrical current.

The combined stage floor and footlight housing member C comprises a bottom member 14 which may be of wood, having a curved outer edge and with a piece of sheet material 15, secured around its



curved outer edge to extend upwardly therefrom to mask the rays of footlights 16 from the audience and to act as a reflector to direct the rays of the footlights into the stage opening. The straight, rear edge of the bottom member 14 is secured to a vertical member 17. A stage floor member 18 is hingedly connected to the upper edge of the vertical member 17 and the floor member 18 is preferably notched out as at 19 and 20 to receive vertical frame members 21 and 22 therein to secure the member C against displacement in the frame. A pair of metal angle members 23 and 24 are secured to the rear corners of the stage floor 18 and a strip 25 which is preferably of hardwood is secured interiorly of these angle members to extend across the rear edge of the stage floor in spaced relation therefrom. This provides an elongated, slotted opening 26 across the entire rear edge of the stage floor. Various pieces of stage property, which may be employed, are constructed with means extending downwardly therefrom to enter this slotted opening. A table constructed in this manner is indicated in Figure 11. The table, comprises a base portion 127 and a top portion 128. The base 127 has secured thereto a downwardly projecting strip 129 of a thickness to be frictionally engaged by the sides of the slot 26 when inserted therein.

When the device is used for hand puppets, a shelf 27, made in two sections 28 and 28, hingedly connected together to permit folding this member for storage in one frame section, is mounted transversely across the lower portion of the frame member A. The foldable shelf is cut out at its forward corners and center to fit around the frame members at the two forward angles and center of the frame A. A pair of pins 30 and 31, see Figure 1, are mounted in the side sections of the frame A and a pair of openings 32 and 33 are provided in the sides of the shelf 27 to fit over these pins and support the shelf and to firmly brace the frames A and B in position.

When the device is to be used for marionettes, this shelf 27 is mounted rearwardly and in horizontal alignment with the

upper surface of the stage floor 18 to form an extension of said floor. A pair of staples 34 and 35 are provided on the rear corners of the upper surface of the stage floor and a pair of hasps 36 and 37 are mounted on the forward edge of the shelf 27 to fit over these hasps as one means to secure the forward edge of the member 27 in position. When used thus, the rear corners of the member 27 are secured to hooks 38 and 39 on the rear vertical frame members of the sections 1 and 4, which hooks are engaged by extended hasps as one means of effecting support for the shelf 27.

A transverse bracing member 40 is provided with angle members 41 and 42 of metal, mounted one on each end thereof. This bracing member is hinged as at 43 to permit inserting it in one of the frame sections for housing. The end portions of the angle members 41 and 42 are spaced outwardly from the ends of the bracing member 40 sufficiently to receive the upper edges of the sections 1 and 4 therein. A pair of metal securing strips 44 and 45, adapted to receive the ends of the angle members 41 and 42, are mounted, one near each of the rear upper corners of sections 1 and 4.

When the device is used as a marionette theater, this frame member is mounted with the angular bent end members 41 and 42 of the bracing strip 40, inserted in the securing strips 44 and 45, while, when used for a hand puppet theater, the angular bent end members 41 and 42 are placed over the upper edge of the sections 1 and 4 to receive the upper edges of these sections between the outer end of the bracing member 40 and the angle members 41 and 42. In addition to acting as a bracing member, the member 40 provides a support for<sup>a</sup> removable back drop 46. The bracing member 40 is provided with hooks 47 and the back drop may be provided with suspension rings 48 along its upper edge, so that the drop may be supported by these hooks when in use. This back drop is preferably made of a semi-transparent material, such as cloth, which will permit the operator, when the device is used for hand puppets, to discern the figures of the puppets through the drop, while the drop at the same

<sup>time</sup>  
A masks the operator from the view of the audience. This is better accomplished by giving the performance in a dimly lighted room. The stage lighting illuminates the figures and the front of the drop and permits the operator to see through the back drop, while the operator, being in a dim or unlighted area, is concealed from the spectators by the drop.

A pair of pivotally mounted wing drop support members 48 and 49 are provided to support wing drops 50 when the theater is used for marionettes. These wing drop support members are provided with hooks 51 projecting downwardly from their lower surface and the wing drops are provided with rings along their upper edges to be engaged by these hooks. When not in use the wing drop supports may be folded back into the frame.

Curtains 52 and 53, see Figure 3, are mounted upon a support member 54 which is provided with two supporting eyelets 55 and 56 which are adapted to engage hooks 51 and 58 mounted above the stage opening. The curtains 52 and 53 are provided with rings on their upper edges which are slidably mounted upon a rod 59, mounted transversely below the support member 54. A curtain operating cord 60 is mounted on pulleys 61 and 62, the pulley 62 being of double roller construction so as to receive both runs of the curtain operating cord, while the pulley 61 is of single roller construction, the cord being looped around this pulley. The curtain operating cord is passed around hooks 63 and 64. The supporting rings of each of the curtains 52 and 53 nearest the center of the stage opening are secured one to each run of the cord, so that upon pulling the cord in one direction, the curtains are opened and on pulling it in the opposite direction, the curtains are closed. Other methods of operating theater curtains may be used, if desired. Each of the curtains is provided with a plurality of buttons 65 along the inside of the lower edge thereof, these buttons preferably being of lead so as to weight the curtains. A resilient band 66 which may be of elastic cord, is threaded through



eyelets 67 mounted along one of the vertical edges of the section 4. When the curtain is in use over the stage opening, this elastic cord remains in the position illustrated in Figure 7, while, when the curtain is stored in the frame, this cord is looped over the buttons on the lower edges of the curtains to hold the curtains in outstretched position within the frame recess and prevent wringing of the curtains. The curtain support member 54 is provided with a metal clip 68 secured to its outer face and positioned to extend upwardly therefrom when the curtain is mounted for use, as illustrated in Figure 3.

A lighting strip 69, preferably of the same thickness as the curtain support member 54, is provided with a plurality of electric light sockets 70 with electric lamps mounted therein. The lighting strip is shown in Figure 1 secured in the frame for storage or transportation, while in Figures 3 and 9 it is shown mounted in operative position above the curtain support strip 54, being held in position thereon by the clip 68. A flexible conductor 71 is connected from the lighting strip to a switch 72 and this switch is in turn connected to contact member 73. The contact member is also connected to a switch 72a which is connected by a conductor 72b to a plug 72c which is adapted to be connected to the plug 13, which is in turn connected to the footlights. A plug 75 adapted to be connected to the member 73 is connected to a long, flexible conductor cord 76 having a socket plug 77 at its other end. This socket plug 77 may be plugged into a wall or other receptacle to energize the overhead and footlights. Any other suitable method of electrically connecting the overhead and footlights to a source of electrical current may be used.

A strip 78 of resilient material, such as elastic webbing, is mounted across the section 5 to retain backdrops and wing drops therein. Hooks 79 projecting forwardly are provided at the upper end of this section, from which to hang the drops. These hooks also serve to support marionettes 80 when not in use, as illustrated

in Figure 8, when the device is in use as a marionette theater.

Pins 81 and 82 are mounted in the sections 6 and 7. These pins are adapted to be inserted between the folded portions of an ornamental curved top structure 83 and the folded portions of the member 27 when these parts are housed in the frame. A hook 84 which is mounted to swivel in the side of the section 6 retains the upper end of the ornamental top member 83, while a hasp 85 is adapted to overlie the member 27 and secure it in position within the frame.

Straps 86, which may be of fabric webbing, are connected one to each of the sections A and B, respectively. These straps are provided with snap fasteners 87 which are adapted to engage posts 88 on the opposite side of each frame to secure the respective frames in folded position, as illustrated in Figure 4. Carrying straps 89 which may also be of fabric webbing are secured to the outer sections of both the foldable frames A and B.

The foldable ornamental top section 83 is provided with pins 90 projecting downwardly therefrom, which are adapted to enter openings 91 in the upper edge of either the frames A or B, depending on whether the device is to be used as a hand puppet or a marionette theater.

Hooks 91 are provided on the upper end of each section, of each of the frames, and pins 92 are mounted on the lower end of each section, so that the frames may be hooked together in superposed position with respect to each other, with either of the frames uppermost. The theater when folded is light and compact and is readily set up and carries, housed within itself, all of the necessary accessories for either a hand puppet or a marionette theater.

It has previously been customary in using hand puppets for the operator or puppeteer to stand below the stage opening and operate the puppets above his head. The structure of the present theater and the use of a semi-transparent back drop makes it possible for the puppeteer to operate the puppets before him in a

natural, comfortable position, and to accurately observe and better control his own movements of the puppet figures.



I CLAIM:

1. A miniature theater, having a plurality of hinged-ly connected frame sections, each of said sections being constructed in the form of a shallow receptacle to house theatrical accessories therein, said frame sections having a stage opening therein, and a stage floor removably mounted across the lower edge of said stage opening.

2. A miniature theater having a plurality of frame sections hingedly connected together to fold into superposed relation with respect to each other, said sections being constructed to have a stage opening therein, a stage floor removably mounted across the lower edge of said stage opening, and a troughed footlight housing member mounted forwardly of the forward edge of said stage floor.

3. A miniature theater, comprising a plurality of recessed frame sections, said sections being constructed to have a stage opening therein, a curtain support member mounted across the upper edge of said stage opening, a curtain mounted thereon and movable to form a closure across said stage opening, and means removably securing said curtain support member and said curtain within one of said recessed sections.

4. In a miniature theater, a frame structure having a stage opening therein, a stage floor mounted across the lower portion of said stage opening, a slotted opening transversely of said stage floor, and stage property having a downwardly extending member connected thereto to enter said slotted opening to support said property therein.

5. A miniature theater having a pair of foldable frames, one of said frames having a stage opening therein, and means to connect said frames together in superposed, edgewise position.

6. A miniature theater having a foldable frame with a stage opening therein, said frame having a shallow recess in the rear thereof to house theatrical accessories therein.

7. A miniature theater having a foldable frame, with a stage opening therein, a footlight housing member mounted across the lower edge of said stage opening, and a stage floor member hingedly connected to said footlight housing member and foldable over said footlight housing member.

8. A miniature theater comprising a pair of foldable frames, one of said frames having a stage opening therein, and means adapted to connect said frames together in superposed, edge-wise position with either of said frames uppermost.

9. In a miniature theater, a foldable frame having a stage opening therein, a stage floor member mounted adjacent the lower edge of said stage opening, said stage floor having a slotted opening therein, and a piece of stage property having a downwardly projecting portion adapted to enter said slotted opening to support said property.

10. In a miniature theater, a stage, a stage floor member terminating short of the rear of said stage, and a resilient strip spaced rearwardly from the rear edge of said stage floor member and adapted to receive a downwardly projecting portion of a piece of stage property therein.

11. In a miniature theater, a foldable frame having a stage opening therein and having a plurality of recesses in the wall thereof, and a plurality of theatrical accessories removably housed in said recesses, and adapted to be mounted in operative position on said frame.

12. In a miniature theater, a frame adapted to mask the body of an operator, a stage opening in said frame, and a semi-transparent back drop positioned rearwardly of said stage opening and forwardly of the position occupied by the body of an operator to mask the body of said operator from an audience to permit said operator to view an object positioned forwardly of said semi-transparent drop and rearwardly of said stage opening.



## A Puppett Theater

A theater may be built as follows:

Use a manufactured building board, 4 ft. wide and at least 6 ft. 6 in. long for the front, in which is the stage opening, 27 in. wide 17 in. high, the bottom of which is 53 in. from the floor.

From the front is a wing on each side, hinged to the front. These wings enable the whole to stand firmly on the floor.

The front is 6 ft. 1 in. in height at the sides and slope from each side upwards to the center 6 ft. 6 in. high.

The wings are the same height as the outer edges of the front. Nail strips of white pine 1 x 2 in. around the border of the front and wings. The strips at the top of each wing is  $\frac{7}{8}$  in. below the upper edges of wings to serve as supports for the ceiling, made of pine boards, preferably flooring, held together by cleats nailed on top. The ceiling must conform to the spread of the wings desired. Angle irons, procurable at ten cent stores, are screwed to the top surface of the ceiling, one at each end in such manner as to permit it to extend down over the upper edges of the wings, but not screwed to them, thus holding them firmly to the ceiling. The lower surface of the ceiling will be  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. above the stage opening.

Nail through the ceiling into the edge of a strip of clear white pine  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. x 1 in., 36 in. long back from the front  $2\frac{1}{2}$  in. The front surface of this strip is to support the curtain rod. Nail a similar strip back 11 in. from the front, the rear surface to support a back curtain to conceal the face of the puppeteer, but thin enough for the puppeteer to see the outline of puppets in performance. Between these two strips nail a third. These three strips serve as supports to scenery attached to them by thumb tacks or otherwise by screw and hook. Scenery may also be attached to the inner edge of the stage and to the back curtain. A narrow curtain may be attached to the front side of the middle strip to conceal the wood of the ceiling and rear strips.

The stage is a 1 in. white pine board 3 ft. long,  $4\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide. It is notched at each end to permit it to slip through the stage opening  $3\frac{1}{2}$  in., leaving 1 in. extending to right and left of the opening with its outer corners rounded back to the front. Bore holes in each end of the 27 in. extension of the stage at the inner surface of the front and slip in nails to prevent the stage slipping forward. Nail a quarter round strip 27 in. long along the lower outer edge of the opening, nail to the under side of stage to further support the stage.

Around the opening picture railing or picture frame moulding may be fitted down to the stage board, squarely on each side. Inside the front nail a 3 inch strip of white pine across the front at the lower edge of the stage opening. A hook from this into a screw-eye on the bottom side of the stage holds the stage firm.

For operating the curtain, place a screw-eye at one end and beyond the end of the curtain rod. Place two screw-eyes beyond the opposite end of the curtain rod, and two screw-eyes (slightly opened for inserting and removing the cord) about 27 in. below these upper screw-eyes and a few inches apart in the border strips of front and wing. Thread these five screw-eyes with a firm cord, joining the ends at the middle of the curtain rod. Attach the supporting ring at the edge of one curtain, where the cord is joined and the ring at the edge of the other curtain to the other line of cord opposite. When one line of the vertical extension of the cord is pulled down the curtains open. When the opposite line is pulled down the curtains close. Small pulleys may be substituted for screw-eyes.

Nail a strip to the inside of each wing, 38 in. above the floor to support a shelf 12 in. wide. On the upper edge of the shelf at each end fix an angle iron to extend over and down between the supporting strip and the wing surface, to hold the shelf in place and further bind the wings firmly together.

When constructed as above the theater may be collapsed for storage or transportation. The stage is slipped out by unhooking it and taking the nails from the holes. After removing the cord from the open screw-eyes the ceiling may be lifted from the wings - likewise the shelf, then the wings will fold on the front.

If it is desired to have the theater out on a table, the front and wings may be shortened by the height of the table.

The stage is more efficient by adding a strip of white pine  $1\frac{1}{2}$  in. wide,  $\frac{1}{2}$  in. thick and the length of the stage (a strip of "door-stop" would be tight) to the rear of the stage by angle irons, such as before mentioned, one at each end of the strip and extending along the surface of the ends of the stage and screwed to this stage so as to leave a slot, along the length of the stage the width of cigar box wood, into which properties on the stage may be wedged to hold them upright and firm.

Scenery, painted on cloth preferably, may be attached to strips of wood  $\frac{1}{2}$  inch square and these strips attached to the ceiling by screw-eyes and hooks. When not in use they may be hung on hooks in the edge of the shelf.