

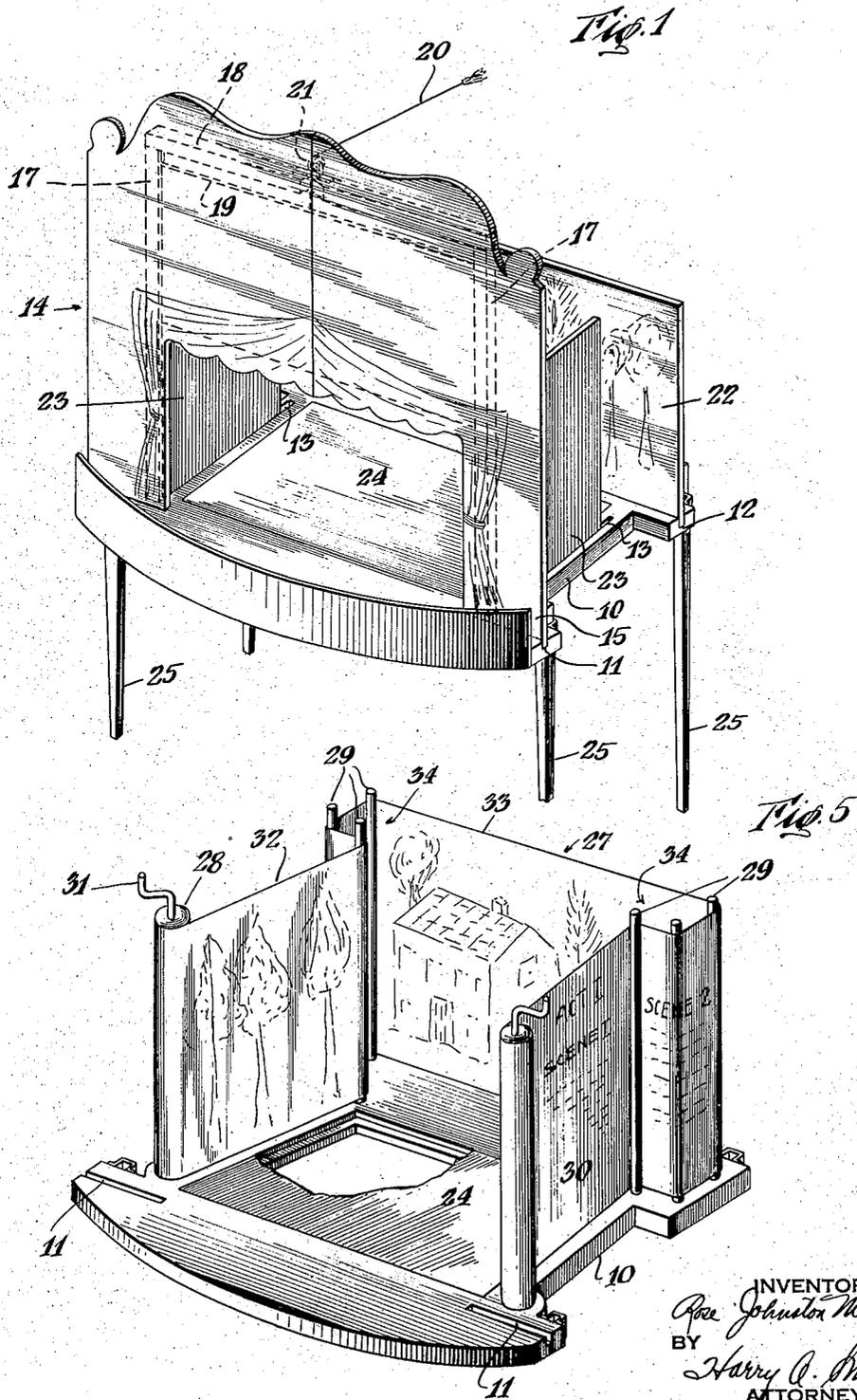
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R. J. MORROW
MINIATURE THEATER

2,086,728

Filed May 14, 1936

2 Sheets-Sheet 1



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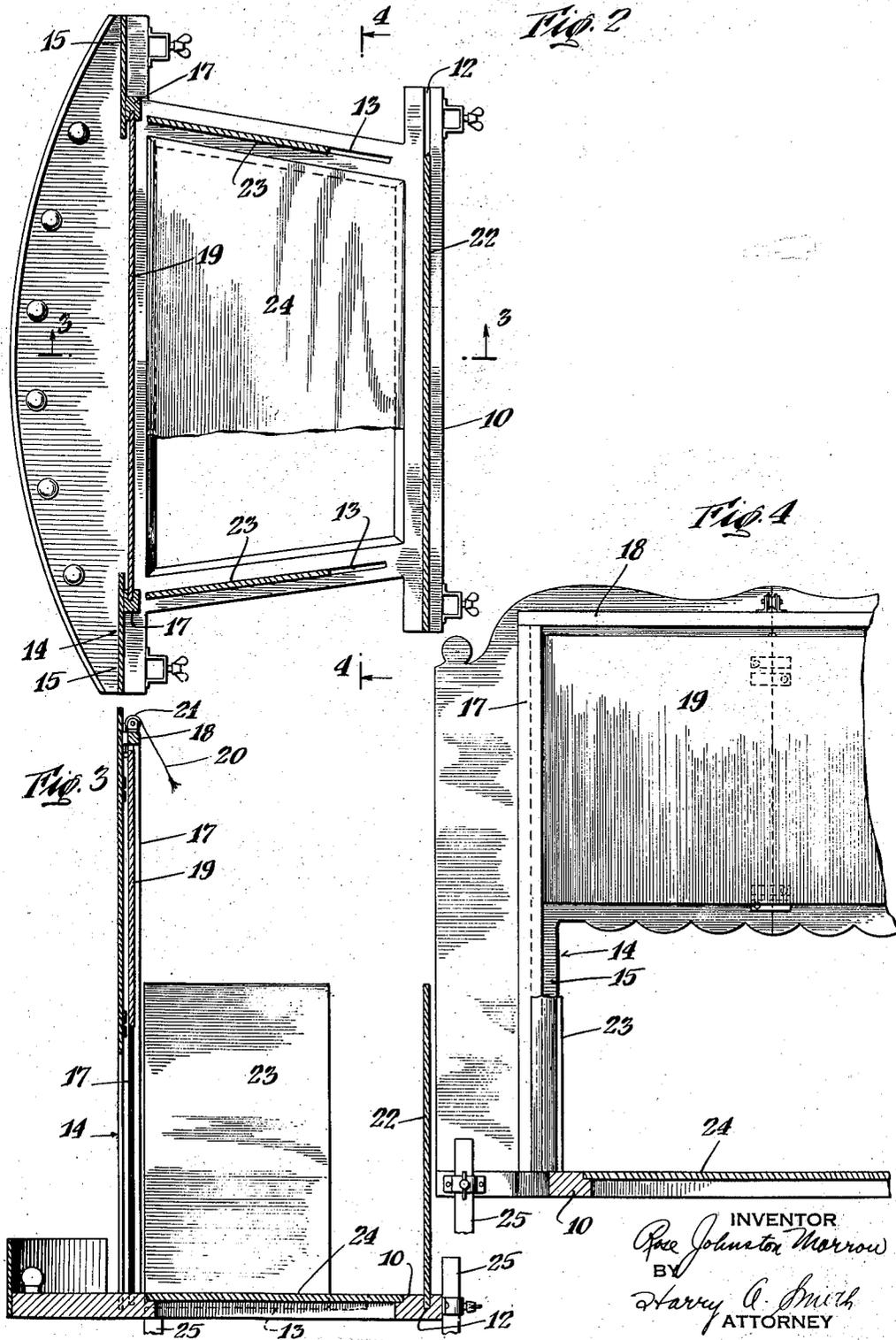
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MINIATURE THEATER

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Application May 14, 1936, Serial No. 79,690

8 Claims. (Cl. 46-13)

This invention relates to miniature theaters and the like, and, more particularly, to such theaters of the type constructed to accommodate the performances of stringed marionettes or hand puppets.

Heretofore such devices have been somewhat cumbersome, greater stress having been applied to refinements and improvements in the marionettes and puppets themselves, little attention having been given to developments in the theater and accompanying scenery. For example, the arrangement of the scenery was such as to necessitate a maximum number of pieces to give the proper scenic effect, and particularly no provision was made for a rapid changing of scenes for more than one play consisting of a connected number of acts. These and other difficulties have been overcome by the present invention.

A general object of the invention is to provide such a device which readily and compactly can be assembled and disassembled, simplified yet sturdy in its construction, easily and conveniently operated and manipulated and economical of manufacture.

Specific objects of the invention are to provide a device having a stage frame in which a single set of wings angularly disposed to view may be utilized in connection with a single back drop, a proscenium having a superstructure which will aid in concealing the operator of the device as well as a rigid front drop or curtain thereof, the wings and back drop being in spaced relation and movable with respect to each other and to the proscenium so as to provide a natural entrance and exit for the performing characters when of the stringed marionettes variety; to provide a removable stage platform and adjustable legs appropriately to raise the device so as to accommodate the performance of hand operated puppets through the opening left by the removal of the stage platform; and, to provide, as a modification of such wings and back drop, a scenic roll of flexible material similarly arranged and having at least one complete play thereon with corresponding instructions to the operator of the device and which readily and quickly can be moved into position as the performance progresses.

Other objects of the invention will in part be obvious and will in part appear hereinafter.

The invention accordingly comprises the features of construction, combination of elements, and arrangement of parts, which will be exemplified in the construction hereinafter set forth

and the scope of the invention will be indicated in the claims.

For a fuller understanding of the nature and objects of the invention reference should be had to the following detailed description taken in connection with the accompanying drawings, in which:

Fig. 1 is a perspective view of a completed form of the invention;

Fig. 2 is a transverse sectional plan view of Fig. 1 with a portion of the removable stage platform and back drop broken away and further illustrating the arrangement of various parts;

Fig. 3 is a transverse sectional end elevational view taken along the lines 3-3 of Fig. 2 and looking in the direction of the arrows;

Fig. 4 is a rear elevational view partly in section and with parts broken away; and

Fig. 5 is a perspective view of a preferred modification of the scenery illustrating an integral arrangement of wings and back drop movable with respect to each other.

Referring more particularly to the drawings it will be seen that there is provided a stage frame 10 provided with grooves or slots 11 in its fore part and a similar slot 12 in its rear part. Angularly disposed with respect thereto is a similar groove or slot 13, 13 on each side of the stage frame. A proscenium structure indicated generally at 14 and preferably made in two sections is adapted, at its base, removably to fit snugly into slots 11 as at 15. Fastened on the back of the proscenium in any convenient manner are two vertical stiles 17, 17 connected by a crossbeam 18 removably secured to the stiles in any convenient manner. Slidably mounted in similar suitable grooves or slots is a rigid front drop or curtain 19 which is manipulated by a string 20 passing over a roller 21 mounted centrally of the crossbeam 18. It should be noted that the superstructure of the proscenium is of unusual height and serves the purpose of concealing the curtain when in raised position and is also an aid in concealing the operator of the device.

A back drop 22 and wings 23, 23 are adapted similarly to fit into the grooves 12 and 13, 13 respectively. It should be noted however that the length of the wing slots is greater than the base dimensions of the wings so that they may be spaced apart any suitable distance from the back drop or proscenium as occasion requires. These spaces provide a convenient means to allow stringed marionettes to make a natural entrance and exit to and from the stage and eliminates the necessity of lifting the characters bodily over

the wings or back drop. While these pieces of stage property are readily changeable with various other scenes, not more than one wing on each side of the stage need be used because of the angular arrangement thereof. Also, the resulting perspective obtained provides the necessary scenic effect which is ordinarily obtained by the use of a greater number of wings.

The present invention is also provided with a stage platform 24 which when removed from its position in the stage frame accommodates the use of hand puppets through the opening left therein. In this case the entire device may be raised to the height desired by adjusting legs 25 and thumb screws 26. It is to be understood, of course, that the removal of the stage platform can be accomplished in other ways as, for example, by hinges and a snap clasp arrangement in which event the platform could be dropped to hanging position behind the front legs and act as a screen to aid in concealing the operator. Additional screening of the operator could also be obtained by similarly extending the proscenium structure.

As a modification of the wing and back drop arrangement a rolling web of scenery indicated generally at 27 may be utilized to great advantage (Fig. 5). A roll of such material as linen paper or the like has sequentially arranged thereon by printing, painting or in any convenient manner suitable scenes for a series of plays to supplement the performance of the characters; on the reverse side are instructions and other information denoting the nature of the play, act and scene for the further convenience of the operator. This is wound up on a carrying roll or cylinder 28 and passed around spacing guide rollers 29 to a receiving roller 30 and as a play progresses may be moved in a step by step manner, or otherwise, by means of crank handles 31.

It should be noted that those portions of the web forming the wings 32 are similarly angularly arranged with respect to that portion forming the back drop 33 in accordance with the same invention heretofore disclosed and that the spacing rollers 29 form alcoves indicated generally at 34 in order that here also a natural entrance and exit for marionettes can be made to and from the stage.

It will thus be seen that the objects hereinbefore set forth are efficiently attained and since certain changes may be made in the above construction and different embodiments of the invention could be made without departing from the scope thereof, it is intended that all matter contained in the above description or shown in the accompanying drawings shall be interpreted as illustrative and not in a limiting sense.

It is also to be understood that the following claims are intended to cover all of the generic and specific features of the invention herein described, and all statements of the scope of the invention which, as a matter of language, might be said to fall therebetween.

Having described my invention, what I claim as new and desire to secure by Letters Patent, is:

1. A miniature theater adapted to accommodate the performance of stringed marionettes comprising a stage provided with appropriately arranged slots temporarily to receive and hold a proscenium structure equipped with a slidably mounted rigid front drop, wings and back drop, said wings being angularly disposed to view with respect to said proscenium and back drop and in

spaced relation thereto to provide a natural entrance and exit for said marionettes.

2. A miniature theater comprising a stage provided with appropriately arranged slots temporarily to receive and hold a proscenium having a superstructure adapted to conceal a rigid front drop when not in use as well as the operator of said device, wings and a back drop, said wings, back drop and proscenium being in spaced relation with respect to each other.

3. A miniature theater comprising a proscenium having a slidably mounted rigid curtain, a stage adapted to receive and hold a cylinder carrying a roll of linen paper or the like material having sequentially arranged acts and scenes painted thereon and a motivating cylinder to receive the same, said roll of material being spaced to provide wings and back drop for said theater.

4. A miniature theater comprising a proscenium, a stage adapted temporarily to receive and hold a cylinder carrying a roll of linen paper or the like material having distributed thereon at least one complete play with sequentially arranged acts and scenes to supplement the performances of stage characters used in conjunction therewith and a motivating cylinder to receive said roll of material to receive the play as it is completed, said roll of material being spaced to provide wings and back drop for said theater.

5. A miniature theater comprising a proscenium, a stage adapted to receive and hold a cylinder carrying a roll of linen paper or the like material having sequentially arranged acts and scenes on its obverse side and corresponding script and other information on its reverse side as an aid to the operator of said device and a motivating cylinder to receive the same, said roll of material being spaced to provide wings and back drop for said theater.

6. A miniature theater constructed to accommodate stringed marionettes comprising a proscenium having a vertically slidable rigid curtain, a stage adapted to receive and hold a cylinder carrying a roll of linen paper or the like material having at least one complete play with sequentially arranged acts and scenes on one side with corresponding script and other information on its other side, a motivating cylinder to receive the same, said roll of material being spaced by a series of guide rolls to provide wings, back drop and an alcove therebetween as a natural entrance and exit for said marionettes.

7. A miniature theater constructed to accommodate both stringed marionettes and hand operated puppets comprising, a stage frame slotted temporarily to receive and hold a proscenium having a superstructure adapted to conceal an operator of said device, a vertically slidable rigid curtain which when in raised position is concealed by said proscenium, wing slots disposed angularly with respect to said proscenium, wing members to fit into said slots, a back drop slot disposed parallel to said proscenium and spaced rearwardly of said wings, a back drop to fit into said slot, the spacing between said wings and back drop providing a natural entrance and exit for stringed marionettes; and, said stage frame being equipped with a removable stage platform and adjustable legs to convert said device into a theater for hand operated puppets.

8. A miniature theater constructed to accommodate both stringed marionettes and hand operated puppets comprising, a stage frame slotted temporarily to receive and hold a proscenium having a superstructure adapted to conceal an oper-

ator of said device, a vertically slidable rigid curtain which when in raised position is concealed by said proscenium, and endless web of linen paper or the like carried by a rotatable cylinder and connected to a receiving cylinder rotatably mounted on either side of said stage concealed by said proscenium, said web having scenery arranged thereon for at least one complete play to supplement the action of the performing characters with printed direction for their perform-

ance on the reverse side and spaced by guide rollers to provide angularly disposed wings and back movable in a step by step manner in accordance with the progress of a play and having alcoves formed thereby for a natural entrance and exit for said marionettes; and, said stage frame being equipped with a removable stage platform and adjustable legs to convert said device into a theater for hand operated puppets.

ROSE JOHNSTON MORROW.