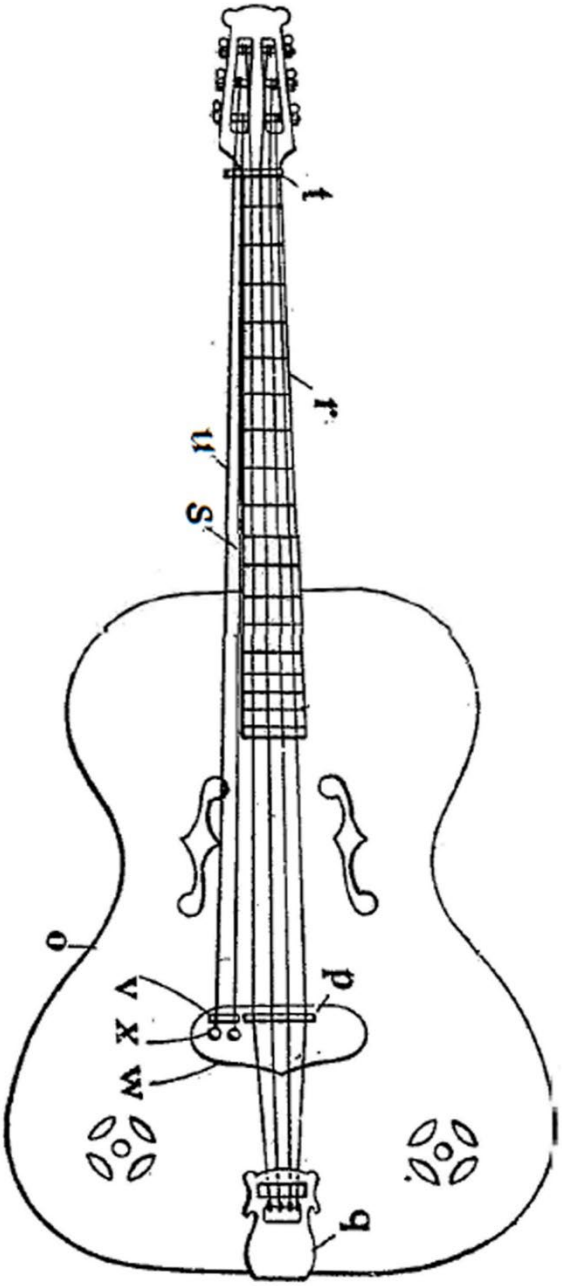
The Len Shevill Patent Combination Guitar

Gregg Miner



In early 2026, the above instrument surfaced in London at the Gardiner-Houlgate auction house and soon made the rounds on a few Facebook Groups. Speculation was typical for this type of thing:

“You don’t see many harp tenor guitars these days.”

“I can only describe as a six-string tenor guitar, or I guess a harp-tenor or extended range tenor?”

“I don't wholly understand the thought process with this one, as the two 'extra' strings are the same scale length as the four main ones, so it doesn't really seem to offer any advantage over just playing a six-string guitar.”

“Two strings are not frettable so they are drone strings.”

Well, the truth of it is even stranger!

Firstly, extremely few fretted instruments other than certain modern “sitar guitars” actually have “drone strings.” Such unfretted “floating” strings are invariably there for a more specific reason. Here, having two open strings – *however* they might be tuned – next to a 4-string fretted neck does seem silly. And such an instrument would indeed be a “harp tenor guitar.”

Above is the sole true “harp tenor guitar” known, a modern Knutsen-inspired instrument built by Canadian luthier Michael Dunn as a “creative surprise” gift for a friend. In reality, it would serve a musical purpose, but perhaps only for a musician that *only* ever played a tenor guitar.[1]

OK, so if not a “harp tenor,” *what is Shevill’s instrument?!*

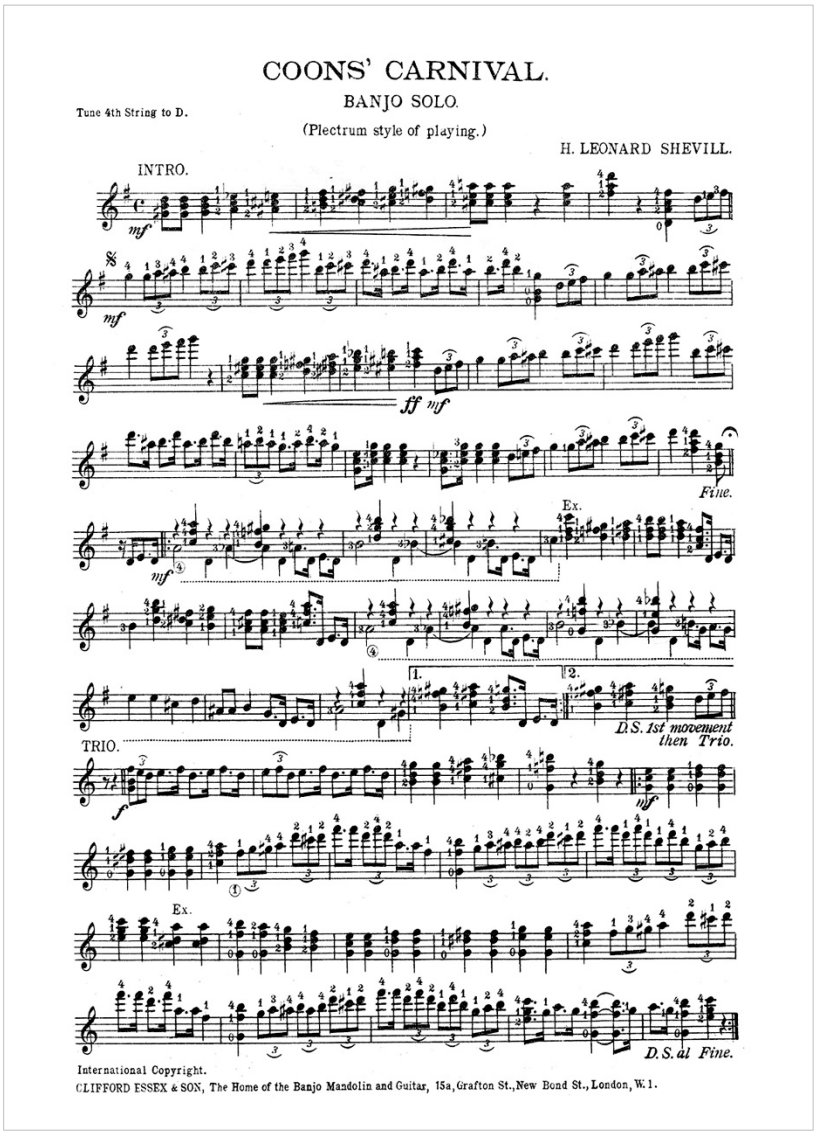
[1] And indeed, Shevill’s invention could absolutely be utilized in this fashion, with the two “sub-bass” strings plucked like any harp guitar.

Believe it or not, it is a combination tenor guitar and *Hawaiian guitar.*

He explains it in his patent, if poorly. And its tuning is similarly difficult to deduce. So, before we look at the *three* surviving Shevill combo guitars (so far), perhaps we should go over his patent, along with the inventor, himself.

Leonard Shevill was a little-known banjo teacher in London in the 1920s-30's.

At right, one of his advertisements from the April 1927 *Keynotes*.[2]



COONS' CARNIVAL.

BANJO SOLO.

Tune 4th String to D.

(Plectrum style of playing.)

H. LEONARD SHEVILL.

INTRO.

TRIO.

D.S. 1st movement then Trio.

D.S. al Fine.

International Copyright.

CLIFFORD ESSEX & SON, The Home of the Banjo Mandolin and Guitar, 15a, Grafton St., New Bond St., London, W. 1.

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A GREAT NUMBER
Of Enthusiastic
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In all parts of the World
Who are desirous of Acquiring
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But Who Cannot Obtain
Adequate Local Tuition ! !

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A player also, he recorded his own composition, ("banjo solo with piano") in 1925.[3]

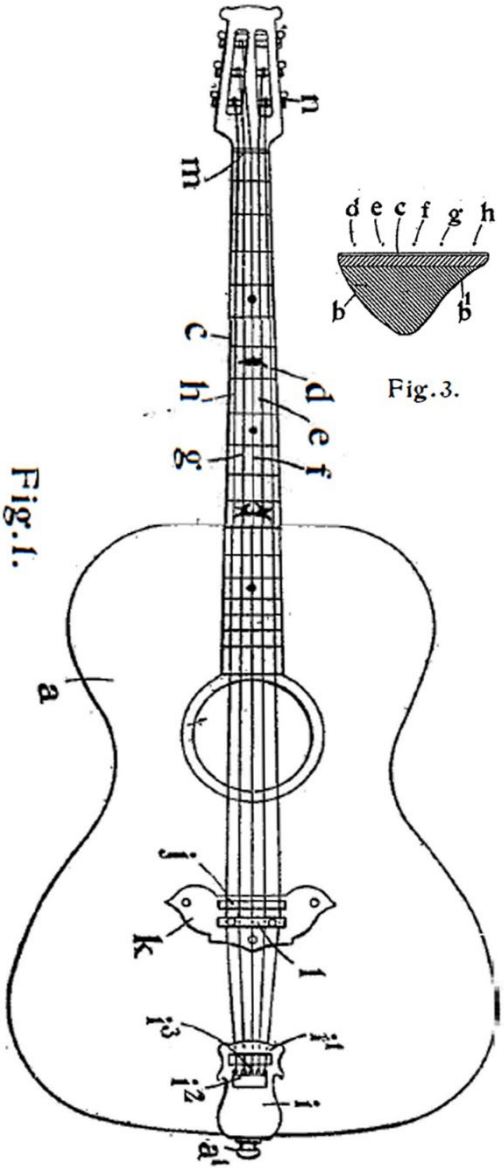
The unfortunately-titled piece was published in the February 1925 issue of BMG Magazine (at left).[4]

In addition to his teaching, composing and performing, he designed his own "Len Shevill Special" tenor banjo, contracting well-known maker J. G. Abbott to build them.

[2] https://www.classic-banjo.com/files/JOURNALS_AND_ALBUMS/Keynotes_1927_04.pdf, accessed February 26 2026.

[3] Aco-G-15526, B side; his tune was called "The Coon's Carnival" (apologies for his period racism). https://www.discogs.com/release/15486903-Wag-Abbey-Leonard-Shevill-Xylophone-Rag-The-Coons-Carnival, accessed February 26 2026.

[4] https://www.classic-banjo.com/files/BMG_MAGAZINES/1925/1925_02.pdf, accessed February 26 2026.

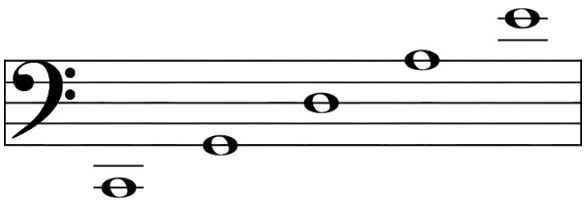


Shevill's Inventions

Horatio Leonard Shevill first filed a patent on October 15 1928 for a very clever **5-string guitar** which tenor banjo players could utilize for a lower pitched guitar sound (at left).[5] This was *not* the common tenor guitar that we're all familiar with today. In fact, I suspect that Shevill had never even seen such an instrument, and considered his invention something quite unique.[6]

His patent clearly describes this as an instrument akin to the Spanish guitar (the common 6-string) that *tenor banjoists* could play while retaining all their familiar *chord shapes* (left hand fingerings). Players could thus use those same shapes on the top four strings *or* the lower four strings.

Unlike typical tenor guitars, Shevill chose to use a full-size guitar body with a guitar's range and tone. In fact, he manages to *increase* the guitar's range by three notes with his simple tuning; low-to-high, it is C-G-D-A-E. The guitar's first string is still that high *E*, while the tenor banjo's notes are tuned one octave below. I like to think of this as a single-course mandocello/octave mandola combo.



Note the neck profile in his illustration. He profiled it for that added low string so that banjo players will still "feel" their tenor banjo neck. What an accommodating guy![7]

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[5] See the full patent in the Appendix.

[6] This may not be as surprising as it sounds, as American makers Gibson and Martin had only begun offering the high-pitched 4-string tenor guitar tuned in fifths about a year before.

[7] If you noticed the six tuners, good eye! However, like London's zither-banjos, he is simply using readily-available 3-on-a-plate guitar tuners, leaving the 3rd string position empty.

Five months after filing his groundbreaking "5-course octave tenor guitar" (my term, and a good one), Shevill added a whole new invention – a "Part 2" – to his patent application. This would be granted on January 15 1930. Two of the three extant specimens are unmarked, the other is stamped "Prov. Pat."[8]

This is his remarkable **combination tenor guitar** (still considered a banjo neck, however) **and Hawaiian guitar**.

Fascinating and absolutely silly, it seems like it should nevertheless function perfectly well.

What the initial photo above did not clearly show is that both the nut and saddle are *raised underneath the two open string*s. This is of course so that a steel bar can be used to play just those two strings Hawaiian "slide" style, without the 4 fretted strings interfering.

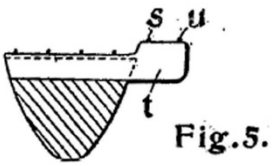
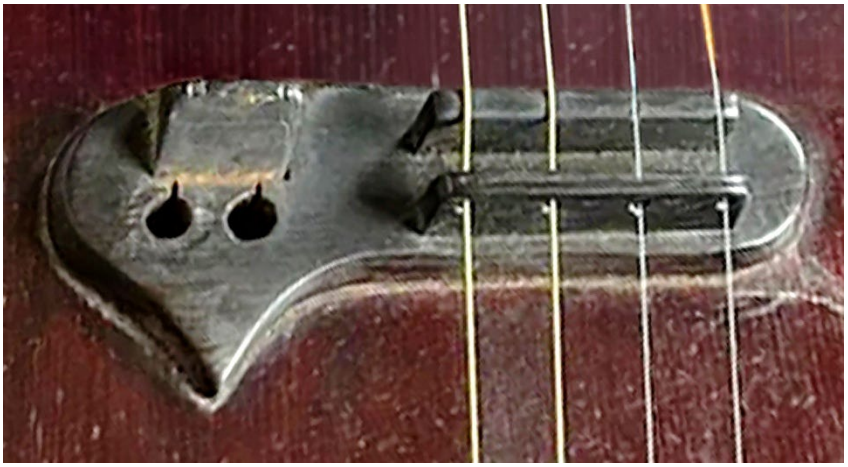


Fig.5.

As seen in his cross-section drawing (at left), the neck still has a tenor banjo neck profile, while the other strings' nut protrudes out into space. In practice, the builder (Abbott, or more likely, a local guitar builder) used buttons on the nut to raise these two strings (below).

Similarly, the bridge includes a raised wooden saddle for the two steel guitar strings, which terminate there with standard pins (below).

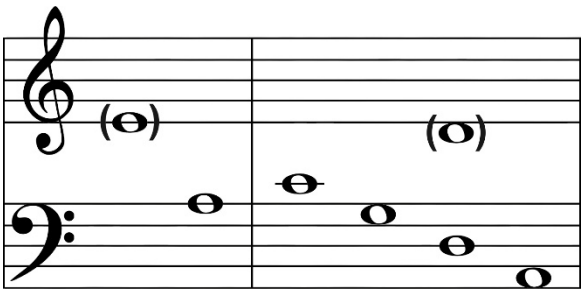


The four fretted strings go over a wooden saddle and through lower holes in the secondary rail to the tailpiece.

[8] Meaning that it was built under a Provisional Patent, putting its construction between March 1929 and January 1930.

This “Combination Guitar” can only be an *either-or* instrument, the idea being that one could play their tenor banjo chords, then flip the instrument onto their lap whilst grabbing a steel bar to play a Hawaiian melody on the two open strings that are raised for clearance. OK, I *suppose* it might save time (and stage space) to have this option rather than a second instrument, but still!

While the patent drawing shows two Hawaiian strings – and all three extant specimens are the same – Shevill’s patent describes only a single string, with a second one optional. Which brings us to…the tuning!



Here, I’m completely fascinated, if a little lost. If we are to take Shevill’s patent description literally, then what we end up with is this (at left).

Again, I am notating this left-to-right while facing the upright instrument (6th string to 1st string), whereas Shevill gives his tunings always from the *first* string. And what he gives is the same tenor banjo tuning of “A, D, G, C” (C-G-D-A) that he gave his first instrument – but here, instead of descending in fifths from the first string *A*, he *ascends* in fourths! While this results in the same “notes” and the “chord shapes” he wants to retain, the *octave of each note* must be switched to accomplish this, significantly altering the four-note inversions of any chords being played. Further – perhaps for better voicings – he suggests that the second string *(D)* should be raised an additional octave (shown in parentheses).

The only way his instructions work is if we use the (true) pitches shown in the right-side section of my example above. In other words, we are tuning the neck *backwards* – and if choosing that high D, then “backwards re-entrant,” if that’s even a thing![9] I have no idea why Shevill would choose such a thing to go along with his one or two steel guitar melody strings; it’s not like both instrument sections could even be played at the same time.

He gives the single fifth open Hawaiian string as *A*, an octave above the first string, as I have notated in the left section above, while allowing that it can be tuned as desired. When his optional sixth string is added, it is simply tuned to another note of the player’s choosing of the standard “Hawaiian guitar,” which of course existed in *many* tunings, so doesn’t help us at all. I’ve arbitrarily assigned it to *E*, the guitar’s normal first string, figuring that a higher slide melody would be the goal.

Of course, even if originally strung and sold that way, no later secondhand discover of such an odd instrument would’ve ever *believed* such a thing, so strung them to whatever they liked.[10]

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[9] *Do* let me know if you come up with a different interpretation from the patent text.

[10] i.e.:, a “harp tenor guitar.”

Specimens

Here are the three surviving specimens I have so far found:

Sold in March 2026 at Gardiner-Houlgate, this was the first that I became aware of this unique instrument.[11]

[11] Hammer price (without premium or taxes): £320. Specs: Spruce top (revarnished), mahogany back & sides, ebony fb. Scale length 650 mm (~25.6”); body height 525mm; width 416mm (~16-3/8”); depth 105mm; fretboard nut width 35mm; total nut width 105mm.

I soon located more images of this same instrument.[12]

I'm thinking that serial number "5174" may really be code for "No. 4." Here we see the U.K. version of America's "pat. pend.," the nut missing one button, the bridge with a missing pin, the raised 2-string bridge, and…is that a Nut Height Extender for slide playing stuck onto the bridge rail?! (as if stored for later use?). Could a previous owner have known or guessed about the "Hawaiian guitar" angle and wanted to try a 6-string set-up? Fascinating.

Note the tailpiece, which someone said was the same as what G. O. Windsor used on his banjos, but built for Shevill's instrument (a fancy Windsor at right).[13]

Another said "the inlays are definitely by Abbott."[14] I show these on the next page; two are identical, while the third has plain inlays and is also missing the "PROV. PAT." stamp.

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[12] From an old post on the Banjohangoutforum, from member "Bunker73."
[13] Photo from Stephen John Prior, also on the same forum.
[14] Forum member "banjowilly22."

The blonde instrument in the middle appears otherwise exactly the same in every way; in fact, it was even sold at the same Gardiner-Houlgate auction house![15]

[15] On September 14 2017, and by coincidence, for the exact same hammer price that the other specimen would get nine years later! (£320 hammer price without premium or taxes.)

Whomever built these for Shevill in this brief period did a very consistent job.

The third specimen (owner anonymous) has a lovely mahogany red shade to the top. Someone later added a floating pickguard (over a previously added and removed attached pickguard) and a pickup – but only for the two open strings!

I hope you've enjoyed this little exploration of this unlikely experimental "Combination Guitar."

Let's conclude with: Appendix: The Full Shevill Patent

PATENT SPECIFICATION

324,070

Application Date: Oct. 15, 1928. No. 29,710/28.

" " March 14, 1929. No. 8347/29.

One Complete Left: July 15, 1929.

Complete Accepted: Jan. 15, 1930.

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION.

No. 29,710, A.D. 1928.

Improvements in or relating to Guitars and like Musical Instruments.

I, HORATIO LEONARD SHEVILL, of 143, Herbert Gardens, London, N.W. 10, of British Nationality, do hereby declare the nature of this invention to be as follows:—

This invention relates to guitars and like instruments, and has for its object to provide a construction of guitar, the fingering of which approximates to the fingering of the tenor banjo.

At the present time there are indications that the six-stringed Spanish guitar is becoming popular as an instrument for especially featuring rhythm and/or accompanying and, while at the same time it is not yet an instrument generally required in dance bands and like combinations these indications tend to show that the guitar may eventually either partially or completely displace the Tenor banjo in its capacity as a rhythmic and/or accompanying instrument. Therefore Tenor banjoists anticipating the increased demand for the guitar and at the same time fearing the displacement of the Tenor banjo are attempting to learn the guitar in increasing numbers. The playing of the guitar by a player of the tenor banjo, however, presents difficulties, inasmuch as the neck and finger-board of the banjo to which the player is accustomed is considerably less in width than the neck and fingerboard of the guitar, with the result that the player finds the guitar comparatively clumsy and difficult to handle. Again, the Spanish guitar is provided with six strings, whereas the tenor banjo is usually provided with four, and the strings of the guitar are tuned to notes different from those to which the strings of the banjo are tuned, and therefore the interval or musical distance between adjacent strings entirely differs from that between adjacent strings of the banjo. Thus, the finger shape or position for every chord played upon the guitar is entirely different from those that are required upon the banjo, with the consequence that the banjoist is called upon to re-learn the entire fingerboard before it is possible for the guitar to be played with any degree of proficiency.

The invention therefore has for its object to provide a guitar of such construction that the banjoist may readily play it without the necessity of learning to any considerable extent a new fingering.

According to the invention an instrument is provided having a body of a Spanish guitar so as thus to ensure the correct depth and volume of tone, and it is provided with five strings which are tuned at intervals of a perfect fifth throughout, the uppermost string being tuned to the same note and the same pitch as that of the Spanish guitar, that is to say, the note E. The complete tuning of the new instrument is therefore E, A, D, G, C.

According to the invention, moreover, the fingerboard and neck is advantageously provided of a cross-section substantially corresponding with that of the tenor banjo, but in view of the fact that the instrument is fitted with five strings the portion forming the face or fingerboard is extended laterally of the neck to provide a sufficient width of surface to take the five strings. In better class instruments the fingerboard, which is provided of ebony, will be extended laterally of the piece of wood forming the neck, and the laterally extending portion is advantageously bevelled or cut away so that the laterally projecting portion of the fingerboard joins the neck with a smooth curve or plane. In the case of cheaper makes of instruments the fingerboard and neck may be formed in one piece of a cross-section such as that which results from the cutting away of the fingerboard in the manner before described with reference to the better class instrument.

[Price 1/-]

According to the invention, again, in view of the fact that the instrument is intended to be played with a plectrum it is possible for the strings to be disposed closer together than is the case in the Spanish guitar, and thus a greater reduction of width of the fingerboard is secured than is indicated by the change of the number of strings from 6 to 5.

By the construction of instrument in the manner according to the invention and the particular tuning of the strings which is adopted, it is to be observed that all the finger shapes and positions for every kind of chord are precisely the same as for the tenor banjo which also is tuned in perfect fifths throughout. Again, the four lower strings are tuned to the same notes as on the tenor banjo, but an octave lower in pitch, while the four upper strings are tuned to the same notes as those of the violin, but an octave lower in pitch. It is further to be observed that the first and third strings of the new instrument are tuned to the same notes and pitch as the first and fourth strings of the Spanish guitar, and that the upper string of both instruments is tuned to the same note, while the lowest string on the new instrument is a major third or four semi-tones lower than that of the Spanish guitar. The new instrument has thus with five strings a compass which is a major third greater than that of the Spanish guitar with six strings.

In view of the reduction in the number of strings from six to five and the closer positioning of the strings, it is possible to reduce the width of the fingerboard in the new instrument as compared with that of the Spanish guitar by approximately 3/8ths inch to 5/8ths inch. The neck of the instrument is preferably provided of a cross-section substantially the same as that for the tenor banjo which is fitted with four strings, so that the handling of the neck is not unfamiliar to the player, the additional width required by the five strings being secured by the lateral extension of the fingerboard which is advantageously bevelled in the manner before described, but may merely project laterally from the neck.

With the new instrument therefore a banjoist is able with facility to obtain the actual tone, volume and pitch of notes as on the Spanish guitar without the necessity for learning a new fingering other than that required to secure familiarity with the fact that the note of the upper string is a perfect fifth higher than that of the banjo to which he is accustomed.

The advantages of the new instrument could, however, be to a great extent secured by providing only the top four strings (instead of all five) hitherto described as being tuned to the same as those of the violin (viz. E, A, D, G), but an octave lower in pitch, or alternatively, by providing only the bottom four strings (instead of all five) hitherto described as being tuned to the same notes as the tenor banjo (viz, A, D, G, C), but an octave lower in pitch.

It will be understood that the details of construction of the instrument are immaterial to the invention and may be varied without departing from the invention.

Dated this 15th day of October, 1928.
EDWARD EVANS & Co.,
27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. 2,
Agents for the Applicant.

PROVISIONAL SPECIFICATION.

No. 8347, A.D. 1929.

Improvements in or relating to Guitars and like Musical Instruments.

I, HORATIO LEONARD SHEVILL, of 143, Herbert Gardens, London, N.W. 10, of British Nationality, do hereby declare the nature of this invention to be as follows:—

This invention relates to guitars and like musical instruments of the kind described in the specification of my application for Letters Patent No. 29,710 of 1928, and has for its object to provide for the stringing of the instrument in such manner that the instrument may be used for the purpose of producing what are known as Hawaiian effects, such as are secured by the use of the Hawaiian guitar.

According to the invention the instrument is provided with the body of a Spanish guitar and with a finger-board and neck adapted for the reception of five strings, as in the instrument described in the specification of my application before referred to.

According to the invention, however, the instrument is modified in respect of the stringing of the fifth string by ex-

tension of the transverse bar at the upper end of the neck laterally and outwardly of the finger-board so that the fifth string is raised above the finger-board slightly away therefrom, while the bridge is also provided to carry the fifth string in a raised position outwardly with respect to the remaining four strings of the finger-board.

According to the invention, moreover, the tuning of the five strings is effected in such manner that the first four strings are tuned to the same notes as the Tenor banjo, that is to say, A, D, G, C, but in ascending fourths instead of descending fifths, while the fifth string, being the string positioned with respect to the finger-board in the manner before described, is advantageously tuned to the octave note above the first string. Moreover, the second string instead of being tuned to a fourth above the first string, may be tuned to an octave and a fourth above the said string. With regard to the fifth string, while it is preferred that this should be tuned to A, the tuning is optional, the string, however, corresponds with the string of the Hawaiian instrument which is usually tuned to E. The first four strings of the instrument serve for the production of accompaniments and chords, while the fifth string serves for single string effects or melodies.

In carrying the invention into effect in accordance with a particular construction, the instrument is provided with a body similar to that of a six-stringed Spanish guitar and with a neck substantially corresponding in cross-section with the neck of a tenor banjo but extended laterally on the side upon which the thumb of the left hand of the player is disposed, the finger-board which also is similar to that of the tenor banjo, being of a width to correspond and to permit the disposition of five strings thereon. The strings are attached to a tail piece secured to the side wall of the body at the bottom by means of an angle piece in such manner that it may extend with clearance over the front of the body, the strings being carried below an upper positioning member at the upper end of the tail piece and looped around downwardly inclined pins carried by a cross-bar extending across an opening in the tail piece.

The bridge of the instrument is carried by a fitting or plate secured to the front of the body below the waist, the said fitting also serving to carry below the bridge a bar for depressing the strings before they pass over the bridge, which bar is secured in position by screws upon two abutments or studs provided upon the fitting referred to before.

At the upper end of the neck the strings are carried over a transverse bar and are tensioned by means of pegs advantageously adjusted by means of worms and worm wheels provided in the head or enlarged portion of the neck.

In order to secure the said disposition of the fifth string the transverse bar at the upper end of the neck is extended laterally beyond the finger-board, while it is also extended outwardly to raise the string above the plane of the other strings. For this purpose the transverse bar is not only of greater length than the width of the finger-board, but is also curved or formed at the one end with a projection to support the fifth string. Similarly, the bridge of the instrument is either provided with a projecting portion suitably disposed to carry the fifth string in the desired relation to the other strings, or is provided with a stud or the like for this purpose.

It will be understood that the invention is not limited to particular features of construction of the instrument.

Dated this 14th day of March, 1929.
EDWARD EVANS & Co.,
27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. 2,
Agents for the Applicant.

COMPLETE SPECIFICATION.

Improvements in or relating to Guitars and like Musical Instruments.

I, HORATIO LEONARD SHEVILL, of 143, Herbert Gardens, London, N.W. 10, of British Nationality, do hereby declare the nature of this invention and in what manner the same is to be performed, to be particularly described and ascertained in and by the following statement :—

This invention relates to guitars and like instruments, and has for its object to provide a construction of guitar, the fingering of which approximates to the fingering of the tenor banjo.

At the present time there are indications that the six-stringed Spanish guitar is becoming popular as an instrument for especially featuring rhythm and/or accompanying, and, while at the same time it is not yet an instrument gener-

ally required in dance bands and like combinations, these indications tend to show that the guitar may eventually either partially or completely displace the Tenor banjo in its capacity as a rhythmic and/or accompanying instrument. Therefore Tenor banjoists anticipating the increased demand for the guitar and at the same time fearing the displacement of the Tenor banjo are attempting to learn the guitar in increasing numbers. The playing of the guitar by a player of the Tenor banjo, however, presents difficulties, inasmuch as the neck and fingerboard of the banjo to which the player is accustomed is considerably less in width than the neck and fingerboard of the guitar, with the result that the player finds the guitar comparatively clumsy and difficult to handle. Again, the Spanish guitar is provided with six strings, whereas the Tenor banjo is usually provided with four, and the strings of the guitar are tuned to notes different from those to which the strings of the banjo are tuned, and therefore the interval or musical distance between adjacent strings entirely differs from that between adjacent strings of the banjo. Thus, the finger shape or position for every chord played upon the guitar is entirely different from those that are required upon the banjo, with the consequence that the banjoist is called upon to re-learn the entire fingerboard before it is possible for the guitar to be played with any degree of proficiency.

The invention therefore has for its object to provide a guitar of such construction that the banjoist may readily play it without the necessity of learning to any considerable extent a new fingering.

According to the invention, an instrument is provided having a body which is that of a Spanish guitar so as thus to ensure the correct depth and volume of tone and having the neck and fingerboard of a Tenor banjo, the instrument so provided being strung preferably with five strings which are advantageously tuned at intervals of a perfect fifth throughout, the uppermost string being tuned to the same note and the same pitch as that of the Spanish guitar, that is to say, the note E. The complete tuning of the new instrument is therefore E, A, D, G, C.

The fingerboard and neck are provided of a cross-section substantially corresponding with that of the Tenor banjo, but in view of the fact that the instrument is preferably fitted with five strings the portion forming the face or fingerboard is extended laterally of the neck to provide a sufficient width of surface to take the five strings. In better class instruments the fingerboard, which is provided of ebony, may be extended laterally of the piece of wood forming the neck, and the laterally extending portion is then advantageously bevelled or cut away so that the laterally projecting portion of the fingerboard joins the neck with a smooth curve or plane. In the case of cheaper makes of instruments the fingerboard and neck may be formed in one piece of a cross-section such as that which results from the cutting away of the fingerboard in the manner before described with reference to the better class instrument.

According to the invention, again, in view of the fact that the instrument is intended to be played with a plectrum it is possible for the strings to be disposed closer together than is the case in the Spanish guitar, and thus a greater reduction of width of the fingerboard is secured than is indicated by the change of the number of strings from six to five.

By the construction of the instrument in the manner according to the invention and the particular tuning of the strings which is adopted, it is to be observed that all the finger shapes and positions for every kind of chord are precisely the same as for the tenor banjo which also is tuned in perfect fifths throughout. Again, the four lower strings are tuned to the same notes as on the tenor banjo, but an octave lower in pitch, while the four upper strings are tuned to the same notes as those of the violin, but an octave lower in pitch. It is further to be observed that the first and third strings of the new instrument are tuned to the same notes and pitch as the first and fourth strings of the Spanish guitar, and that the upper string of both instruments is tuned to the same note, while the lowest string on the new instrument is a major third or four semi-tones lower than that of the Spanish guitar. The new instrument has thus with five strings a compass which is a major third greater than that of the Spanish guitar with six strings.

In view of the reduction in the number of strings from six to five and the closer positioning of the strings, it is possible to reduce the width of the fingerboard in the new instrument as compared with that of the Spanish guitar by approximately 3/8ths inch to 5/8ths inch. The neck of the instrument is provided of a cross-section substantially the same as that for the tenor banjo which is fitted with four strings, so that the handling of the neck is not unfamiliar to the player, the additional width required by the five strings being secured by the lateral extension of the fingerboard which is advantageously

bevelled in the manner before described, but may merely project laterally from the neck.

With the new instrument therefore a banjoist is able with facility to obtain the actual tone, volume and pitch of notes as on the Spanish guitar without the necessity for learning a new fingering other than that required to secure familiarity with the fact that the note of the upper string is a perfect fifth higher than that of the banjo to which he is accustomed.

The advantages of the new instrument could, however, be to a great extent secured by providing only the top four strings (instead of all five) hitherto described as being tuned to the same as those of the violin (viz, E, A, D, G), but an octave lower in pitch, or alternatively, by providing only the bottom four strings (instead of all five), hitherto described as being tuned to the same notes as the tenor banjo (viz, A, D, G, C), but an octave lower in pitch.

The stringing of the instrument may be modified in such manner that the instrument may be used for the purpose of producing what are known as Hawaiian effects, such as are secured by the use of the Hawaiian guitar.

According to the invention, therefore, the instrument may be modified in respect of the stringing of the fifth string by extension of the transverse bar at the upper end of the neck laterally and outwardly of the finger-board so that the fifth string is raised above the fingerboard slightly away therefrom, while the bridge is also provided to carry the fifth string in a raised position outwardly with respect to the remaining four strings of the fingerboard.

According to the invention, moreover, the tuning of the five strings, according to the modified stringing, is effected in such manner that the first four strings are tuned to the same notes as the tenor banjo, that is to say, A, D, G, C, but in ascending fourths instead of descending fifths, while the fifth string, being the string positioned with respect to the fingerboard in the manner before described, is advantageously tuned to the octave note above the first string. Moreover, the second string, instead of being tuned to a fourth above the first string, may be tuned to an octave and a fourth above the said string. With regard to the fifth string, while it is preferred that this should be tuned to A, the tuning is optional, the string, however, corresponds with the string of the Hawaiian instrument which is usually tuned to E. The first four strings of the instrument serve for the production of accompaniments and chords, while the fifth string serves for single string effects or melodies.

Where it is desired to improve the facilities for producing Hawaiian effects the instrument may be provided with a sixth string mounted in the same manner as the fifth string hereinbefore described and advantageously adjacent thereto, such string being tuned to any desired interval from the note of the fifth string, which interval may be one that is given by two strings of the Hawaiian guitar.

It will be understood that the details of construction of the instrument are immaterial to the invention and may be varied without departing from the invention.

The accompanying drawings illustrate two constructions of guitar according to the invention, by way of example.

Figure 1 is a front view of a guitar having five strings arranged so that the fingering is that of the tenor banjo.

Figure 2 is a side view of the guitar shown in Figure 1.

Figure 3 is a cross-section of the neck of the guitar shown in Figures 1 and 2, to an enlarged scale.

Figure 4 is a front view of a guitar having modified stringing according to the invention, in which the fifth string is adapted for the production of Hawaiian effects and a sixth string is provided for the same purpose.

Figure 5 is a cross-section of the neck of the guitar shown in Figure 4.

Referring to Figures 1 to 3 of the accompanying drawings, the instrument is provided with a body *a* similar to that of a six-stringed Spanish guitar and with a neck *b* substantially corresponding in cross-section with the neck of a tenor banjo but extended laterally as at b^1 on the side upon which the thumb of the left hand of the player is disposed, the fingerboard *c*, which also is similar to that of the tenor banjo, being of a width to correspond and to permit the disposition of five strings *d*, *e*, *f*, *g*, *h* thereon. The strings are attached to a tail piece *i* secured to the side wall of the body *a* at the bottom by means of an angle piece in such manner that it may extend with clearance over the front of the body, the strings being carried below an upper positioning member i^1 at the upper end of the tail piece and looped around downwardly inclined pins i^2 carried by a cross-bar i^3 extending across an opening in the tail piece.

The bridge *j* of the instrument is carried by a fitting or plate *k* secured to the front of the body *a* below the waist, the said fitting also serving to carry below the bridge a bar *l* for depressing the

strings before they pass over the bridge *j*, which bar *l* is secured in position by screws upon two abutments or studs provided upon the fitting *k*.

At the upper end of the neck *b* the strings are carried over a transverse bar *m* and are tensioned by means of pegs *n* advantageously adjusted by means of worms and worm wheels provided in the head or enlarged portion of the neck.

The bottom of the body *a* is advantageously provided with a stud a^1 by which it may be supported when rested upon a surface.

The strings *d*, *e*, *f*, *g*, *h* respectively tuned to the notes E, A, D, G, C, as hereinbefore described.

In carrying the invention into effect in accordance with the particular construction represented in Figures 4 and 5, the body *o*, bridge *p* and mounting, and tail piece *q* are substantially similar to those of the instrument hereinbefore described, but the neck *r* is provided only of sufficient width to receive the first four strings.

In order to secure the required disposition of the fifth string *s* the transverse bar *t* at the upper end of the neck is extended laterally beyond the fingerboard, while it is also extended outwardly as shown in Figure 5, to raise the strings *s* above the plane of the other strings. Similarly, a sixth string *u* is supported by the lateral extension of the bar *t*. The transverse bar may not only be of greater length than the width of the fingerboard, but may also be curved or formed at the one end with a projection or projections to support the fifth or fifth and sixth string. At the bridge end the strings *s* and *u* are carried over a bridge member *v* provided on the bridge plate *w* and are respectively fastened by pegs *x* mounted on the bridge plate. Similarly, the bridge of the instrument may either be provided with a projecting portion suitably disposed to carry the fifth or fifth and sixth strings in the desired relation to the other strings, or alternatively may be provided with one or more studs or the like for this purpose.

The tuning of the strings *s* and *u* may be as desired, but it is preferred that they should be tuned to the corresponding strings of the Hawaiian guitar. As in the latter instrument the strings are stroked with a metal stroking piece to produce the effects required.

It will be understood that in instruments in which the tuning of the strings is changed as, for example, in the case where the tuning is by ascending fourths, the fingering remains identical even though the notes produced be an octave higher or lower.

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

1. A musical instrument comprising the body of a Spanish guitar, the neck and fingerboard of a tenor banjo, and five strings fitted thereto, the said neck and fingerboard being adapted to receive the five strings, substantially as described.

2. A musical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the fingerboard is extended laterally to adapt it to receive the five strings, substantially as hereinbefore described.

3. A musical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the said neck and fingerboard are extended laterally to adapt the fingerboard to receive the five strings, substantially as hereinbefore described.

4. A musical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the five strings are disposed closer together than are the strings of a Spanish guitar, the neck and fingerboard being adapted to receive the five strings so disposed, substantially as hereinbefore described.

5. A musical instrument according to claim 1, wherein the five strings are tuned in intervals of perfect fifths; the uppermost string being tuned to the same note and the same pitch as the uppermost string of a Spanish guitar, substantially as hereinbefore described.

6. A modification of the musical instrument according to claim 1, fitted with four strings tuned to the tuning of the strings of a violin, but an octave lower in pitch, substantially as hereinbefore described.

7. A modification of the musical instrument according to claim 1, provided with four strings tuned to the tuning of of the strings of a tenor banjo, but an octave lower in pitch, substantially as hereinbefore described.

8. A modification of the instrument according to claim 1, wherein the fifth string is raised above the fingerboard in such manner that it may be employed for the production of what are known as Hawaiian effects, substantially as hereinbefore described.

9. A modification of the instrument according to claim 1, provided with six strings, the fifth and sixth of which are raised above the level of the remaining strings and laterally of the fingerboard to permit of the production of what are known as Hawaiian effects, substantially as hereinbefore described.

10. A musical instrument substantially as hereinbefore described with reference

to Figures 1 to 3 of the accompanying drawings.

11. A musical instrument substantially as hereinbefore described with reference to Figures 4 and 5 of the accompanying drawings.

Dated this 13th day of July, 1929.

EDWARD EVANS & Co.,
27, Chancery Lane, London, W.C. 2,
Agents for the Applicant.

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324,070 COMPLETE SPECIFICATION 1 SHEET

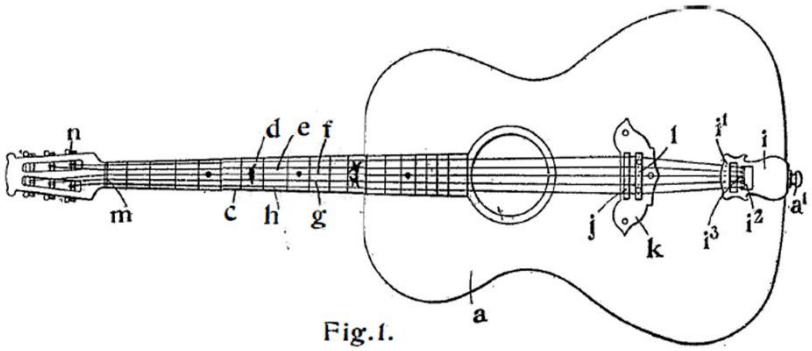


Fig.1.

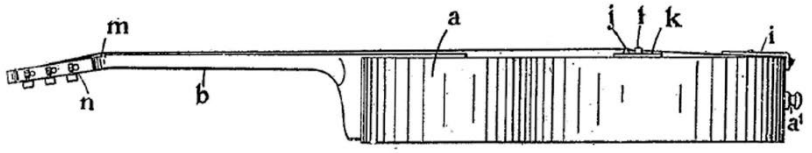
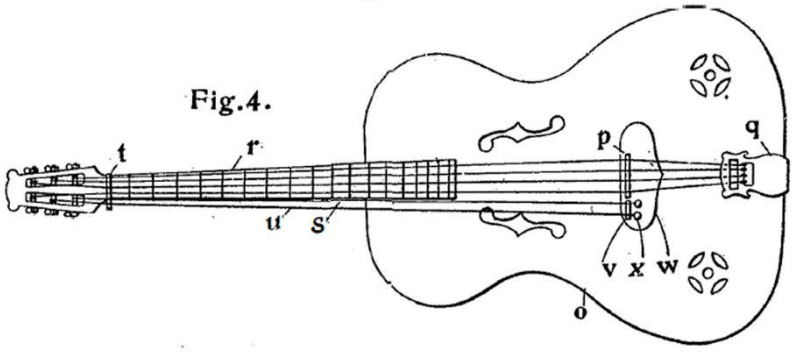


Fig.2.

Fig.4.



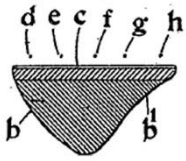


Fig.3.

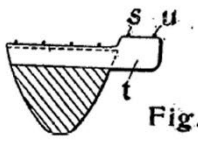


Fig.5.

Charles & Read Ltd. Photo Litho.

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About The Author: Gregg Miner is, at various times of the day, a plucked stringed instrument collector, scholar, recording artist and performer. He is widely considered the world's leading authority on harp guitars. His web sites include Harpguitars.net, Harpguitarmusic.com and Minermusic.com.