

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

LEVI BROWN, OF BALTIMORE, MARYLAND.

GUITAR-BANJO.

[Specification forming part of Letters Patent No. 50,444, dated October 17, 1865.]

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, LEVI BROWN, of Baltimore, in the county of Baltimore and State of Maryland, have invented a certain new and Improved Guitar-Banjo; and I do hereby declare the following to be a full, clear, and exact description of the same, reference being had to the accompanying drawings, making a part of this specification, in which—

Figure 1 is a longitudinal section of my improved banjo, the plane of section being indicated by the line *x x*, Fig. 2. Fig. 2 is a transverse section on the line *y y*, Fig. 1.

My invention relates to a new and improved guitar-banjo, which is so constructed as to produce with a smaller drum a tone superior to that of the finest guitar, and may be used as such. It may also be used as a banjo, without the annoyance of a sheep-skin or calf-skin head, which invariably slackens in damp weather and injures the tone of the instrument to a very great extent.

My improved guitar-banjo is a beautiful and convenient instrument, and is not objectionable on account of its extreme length and great weight or the danger of tearing and soiling dresses by the numerous iron or brass screws, brackets, bands, &c., which are attached to the outside of the drum for the purpose of holding the skin on. This is a difficulty to which I have given much of my attention in order to overcome it without injury to the tone. I have succeeded, not only without injuring it, but with considerable improvement in the tone, and, owing to the particular construction of the improved guitar-banjo, it can be tuned (either as a guitar or a banjo) to concert pitch.

To enable one skilled in the art to construct and use my invention, I will proceed to describe it.

In the accompanying drawings it will be seen that the hoop *A* is twelve inches in diameter and has a covering or face, *B*, made of very thin wood, which is strengthened by means of two bars, *C C*, placed on the inside, the bars running across the grain of the face-board, the center of one bar being placed two and one-half inches from the back edge, and the other bar at the same distance from the opposite or front edge of the face-board. This leaves a space of about seven inches between the two bars. In making the face-board fast to the hoop each end of the bars on the inside of the face-board is neatly set in the hoop in such a manner as to take a strong hold with-

out projecting through to the outside of the hoop, thus forming a complete sounding-board. In order to add to the sweetness of the tone, a very thin back board, *D*, is made fast to the bottom of the hoop. As it is necessary that this back board should be very thin, and yet strong, it is composed of two veneers glued together, the grain of one piece running across the other, and is formed slightly oval by means of the bar *E*, which is made somewhat similar to those on the inside of the sounding-board, and made slightly oval on one side, the oval side of the bar being glued to the inside of the back board, which, by being thus shaped, is not only strengthened, but throws the sound forward, which escapes through openings *F* in the side of the hoop, they being made sufficiently large and numerous to allow the full tone of the instrument to pass through. The above constitutes the drum of the instrument.

In the back part of the drum is a pin, *G*, placed for the purpose of holding the apron-string. To prevent this string from cutting into the back edge of the sounding-board, a small nut, *H*, is inserted. The bridge *I* is three inches in length and five-eighths of an inch high, having small notches in the top edge, at equal distances apart, which serve to keep the strings in their proper places, and one notch, *J*, on the outside of the left foot, near the bottom, which is intended to hold the thumb-string out of the way while the instrument is being used as a guitar. This bridge is placed precisely on the center of the sounding-board and supports the strings at a distance of about twenty-four and one-half inches from the nut, near the end of the staff *K*. Thus it receives a sufficient pressure against the sounding-board to cause a much louder tone than that of any guitar.

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

The construction of the head or drum of the instrument, as described and represented, and consisting of the perforated rim or hoop, imperforated sounding-board, and bulging back, constructed substantially as described.

To the above specification of my improved guitar-banjo I have signed my name this 7th day of September, 1865.

LEVI BROWN.

Witnesses:

EDWARD H. KNIGHT,
CHAS. D. SMITH.