

No. 614,775.

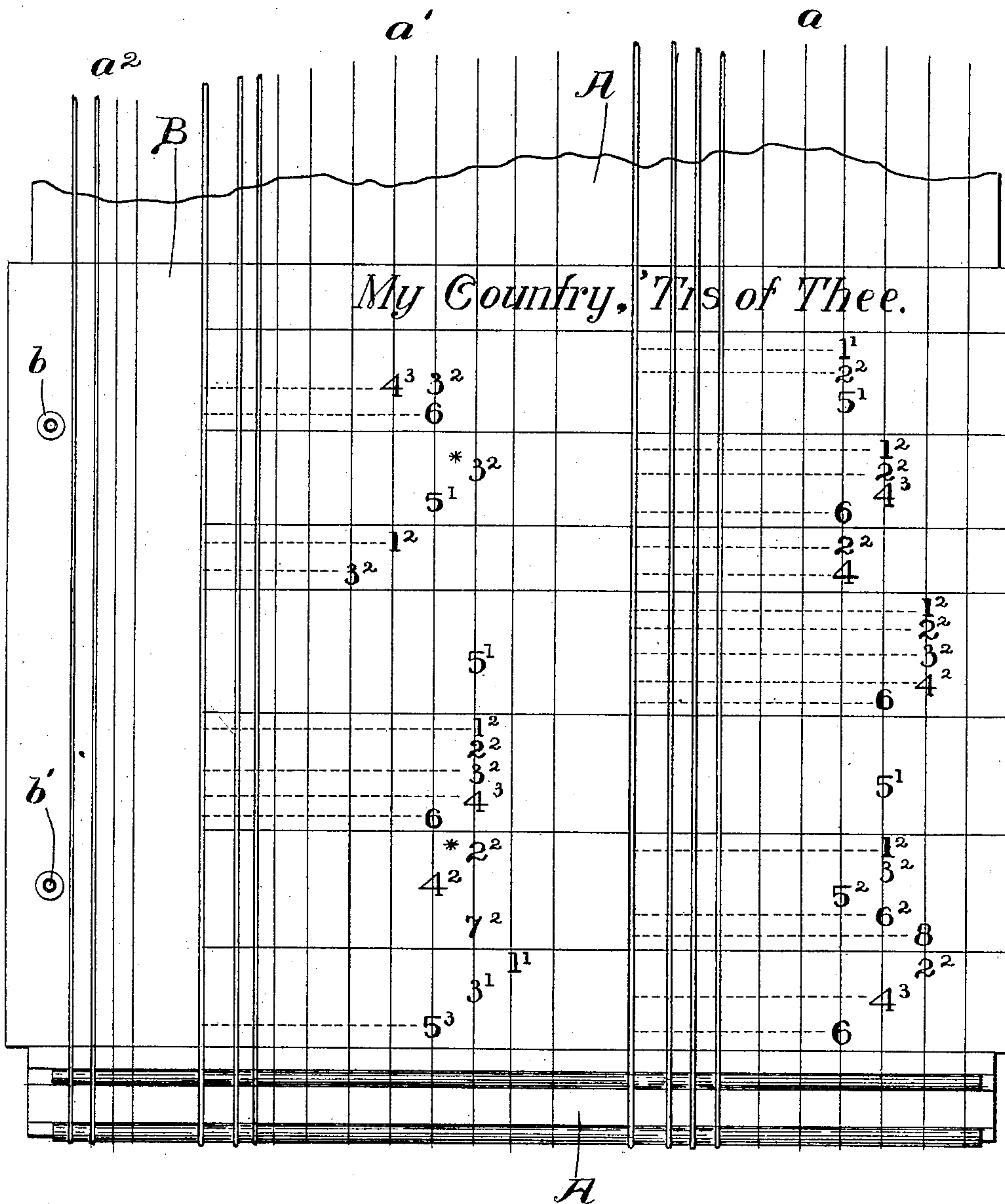
Patented Nov. 22, 1898.

J. C. ST. JOHN.

INDICATOR FOR STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

(Application filed July 31, 1897.)

(No Model.)



Witnesses.
Charles D. Hooker.
John R. Snow.

Inventor.
John C. St. John
by his attorneys
Maynard & Mitchell.

UNITED STATES PATENT OFFICE.

JOHN C. ST. JOHN, OF BOSTON, MASSACHUSETTS, ASSIGNOR TO THE FLAGG MANUFACTURING COMPANY, OF PORTLAND, MAINE.

INDICATOR FOR STRINGED MUSICAL INSTRUMENTS.

SPECIFICATION forming part of Letters Patent No. 614,775, dated November 22, 1898.

Application filed July 31, 1897. Serial No. 646,605. (No model.)

To all whom it may concern:

Be it known that I, JOHN C. ST. JOHN, of Boston, Suffolk county, Massachusetts, have invented a new and useful Indicator for
5 Stringed Musical Instruments, of which the following is a specification, reference being had to the accompanying drawing, in which the figure represents part of a cithern with one of my indicators.

10 My invention is applicable to a cithern or like instruments in which the strings are arranged in groups, (one or more,) each group being tuned to the intervals of a common chord; and the object of my invention is to
15 render it possible for a person unacquainted with musical notation and with the tuning of the instrument to play a tune upon the instrument, and not only play the simple melody, but also to play chords in connection
20 with the melody, which chords make the music much richer and more effective.

To this end my invention consists in a sheet with characters, which in themselves signify sequence, arranged with reference to definite
25 points on the sheet in columns, which columns are arranged relatively to correspond to the relative arrangement of the strings in a group of strings tuned to the intervals of a common chord, and with supplemental characters in connection with certain of the sequence characters, which supplemental characters, when each supplemental character is taken in connection with its sequence character, show when, as well as which, other
30 strings are to be sounded simultaneously with the string indicated by the sequence character—that is, a sequence character and its supplemental character together form a compound character, which shows not only what
35 strings are to be sounded together, but also when those strings are to be sounded together.

In the drawing, A represents a cithern, and B one of my indicators. The indicator B is
45 adjusted by means of the perforations b and the pins b' on the instrument, and when so adjusted the figures "1," "2," "3," &c., are directly under the first, second, third, &c., strings to be picked, for the relation of the
50 figure "1" to the perforations b is the same

in substance as the relation of the string indicated by that figure to the pins b' , and so as to all the other figures on the indicator and all the other strings in the two sets a and a' .

As it would be inconvenient to use high
55 numerals, it is preferable to arrange the numerals in sets, as shown, making the division at some natural pause or division in the music.

Certain of the numerals (for example, "1,"
60 "2," "4," and "6" in the first set) are accompanied by a line, and this compound character (as numeral and line) indicates that several strings are to be picked in rapid succession or by a single motion of the plectrum across
65 those strings. Certain other numerals (for example, "3" in the second set) are accompanied by another distinguishing mark to indicate that the strings in set a^2 are to be sounded together with the string under which that
70 figure so distinguished comes.

In the instrument shown in the drawing the strings in set a are tuned to the intervals of a chord, and the strings in set a' to the intervals of another chord, instead of to
75 a diatonic or chromatic scale; and this is necessary in order that a compound character shown as a numeral to indicate sequence and a dotted line to indicate the strings to be played with the string indicated by the nu-
80 meral may be used on a string instrument without a damper or the like, which would be necessary were the strings tuned to scale.

The smaller figures on the indicator serve to give the time—as, for example, after play-
85 ing the first string count two before playing the second, the same after playing the second and third strings, count three after playing the fourth, one after the fifth, and so on. This feature is desirable in some cases; but
90 usually these smaller figures are not needed, as the player times the tune by memory or by ear.

I am aware that a music-sheet which indicates by number or letter the string to be
95 played and the sequence in which they are played is not new with me, being shown in the patent to J. Dodd, No. 452,995, dated May 26, 1891, and I am also aware that supplementary figures to indicate the time are not
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new, being shown in the German patent to Meinhold, No. 63,702, of 1892, and I disclaim these features, used separately or together; but neither the Dodd nor the Meinhold patent contains any suggestion of columns of characters arranged relatively as are the strings in a group of strings tuned to the intervals of a common chord, nor any suggestion of a character which taken in connection with a sequence character constitutes a compound character indicating the sounding simultaneously of a group of strings in the proper sequence, and while neither of these ideas alone constitutes my invention, (for neither alone will enable an unskilled person to play at sight a stringed instrument whose strings are arranged in groups, the strings of each group tuned to the intervals of a common chord,) yet each of these ideas is new with me, and in combination they make an indicator which will enable any unskilled person to play both melody and harmony at sight in a fairly acceptable manner on such an instrument.

What I claim as my invention is—

An indicator composed of a sheet of paper or the like with columns of characters, each of which character in itself indicates sequence, arranged relatively to correspond to certain strings of a group of strings tuned to the intervals of a common chord, and with additional characters corresponding with other strings arranged under those strings in lines transverse to the strings, contiguous to certain of the sequence characters, whereby the sequence characters without contiguous additional characters indicate when strings are to be sounded singly, and when each is to be sounded, while the additional characters and sequence characters taken together indicate groups of strings to be sounded together and also when each is to be sounded.

JOHN C. ST. JOHN.

Witnesses:

WM. MAYNADIER,
JOHN R. SNOW.