



Resonator banjo-ukulele

Date

1917-1925 ca.

Primary Maker

John Bolander, Sr.

Description

John Bolander filed for three patents relating to banjos. All instruments illustrated on the patents are banjo-ukuleles, as opposed to other styles of banjos. One was applied for on June 25, 1917 and was awarded US patent 1378212A on May 17, 1921. It encompassed an improved means of attaching the head and a method for inserting the lower ends of the strings into the rim. Another was applied for on December 3, 1917 and was awarded US patent 1454620A on May 8, 1923 encompassing the resonator, a finger guard mounted off the lower bass side of the fingerboard, and a means of attaching the head. A third was applied for on January 28, 1918 and awarded US patent 1365450 on January 11, 1921. This patent covers the resonator, or sound reflector, device. The claim on the ink stamp of this instrument that seven patents were allowed and others pending is not supported by recorded patents of the USPTO. It is likely that Bolander had multiple pending applications, but not all were awarded even at the time of the making of the stamp. Bolander and Alvin Keech, also of San Francisco, are credited with the earliest patents and development of the banjo-ukulele. Bolander was later better known as a violin and bow maker. Neck: maple with rosewood center stripe
Peghead: maple, integral with neck; center stripe continues up from neck; circular hole between top 2 tuners
Fingerboard: integral with neck; center stripe visible; 17 nickel-silver frets; wood behind 5th, 7th, 10th,

and 12th frets stained black; small single raised brass dots behind 5th, 7th, 10th, and 12th frets; single ebony side dots inlaid behind 5th, 7th, 10th, and 12th frets; rectangular piece of brown-painted clear celluloid secured with two steel screws on bass side of neck between 12th and 17th frets [remains of

“sound concentrator; see patent 1,454,620 in file] Heel cap: 2-ply rosewood/maple Head: animal skin Tone ring: gold-painted steel Rim: maple Bracket hooks: 8 gold-painted steel tension screws Shoes: 8 gold-painted steel Tension hoop: none Resonator: thin, curved maple shell secured to rim with 9 steel screws; curves away from rim at top of back to release sound Dowel stick: none Nut: ebony Tuners: 4 nickel-plated brass tension tuners with black-celluloid heads Tailpiece: strings threaded through 4 holes at bottom of rim; brass knob at bottom of instrument may be decorative, or may allow for the optional attachment of a tailpiece Finish: clear lacquer

Dimensions

Total instrument length: 507 mm (19-31/32") Vibrating string length: 323 mm (12-23/32") Fingerboard length: 223 mm (8-25/32") Fingerboard width at nut: 33 mm (1-5/16") Fingerboard width at body: 41 mm (1-5/8") Animal-skin head diameter: 140 mm (5-1/2") Back diameter: 173 mm (6-13/16") Rim and back depth: 88 mm (3-15/32")