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Musical Instruments from Cigar Boxes

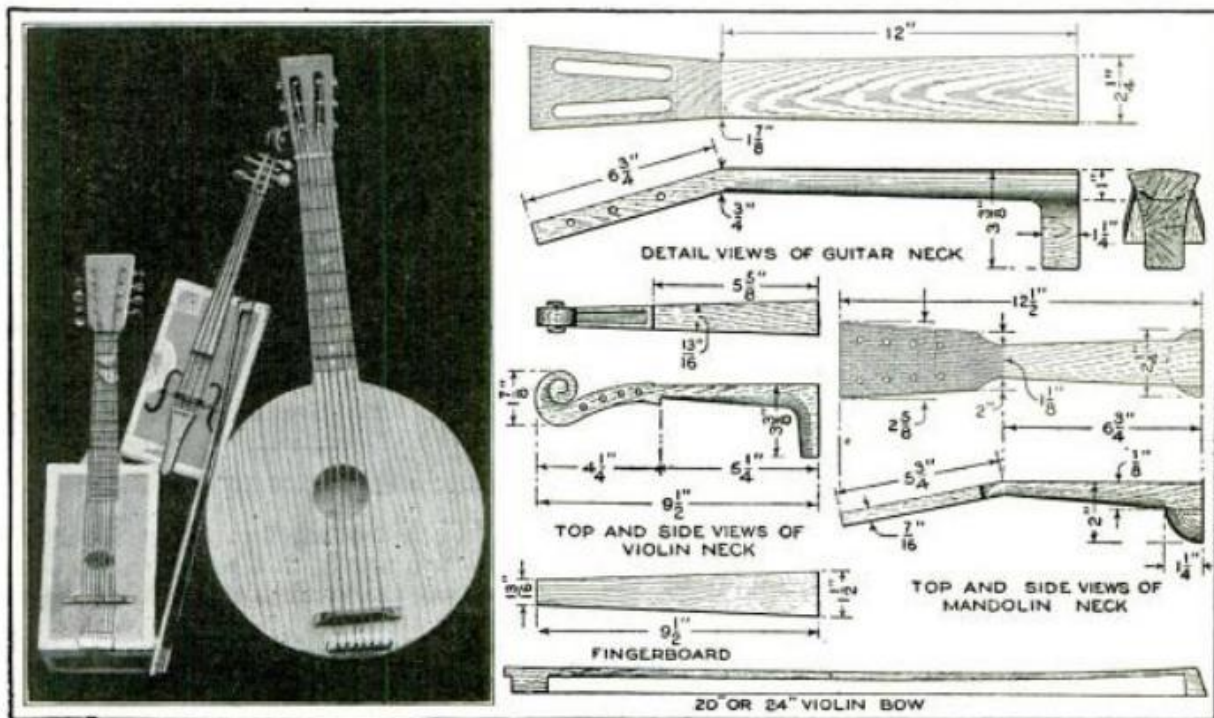
BY W. F. CORD

CIGAR boxes, which may generally be obtained for the asking from any tobacconist—who will be glad to get rid of them—can be used to make very passable violins and mandolins. Of course, it is not expected that a “fiddle” of this variety would possess the tone of a Cremona or Stradivarius, but, in the hands of one knowing how to play such an instrument, very creditable results may be attained.

The drawing shows the dimensions and appearances of the various necks in case it is desired to make them at home. However, if the best results are desired, it is recommended that these, as well as the bridges, tailpieces, strings, and simi-

box, to make it stronger. When the neck has been completed, drill two or three holes through the block and box into the neck for screws; then glue the neck in place, and screw it on tight. Next fasten the fingerboard in place, drill a hole in the rear end and rear block, and glue into it a small peg to hold the tailpiece. The bow is also made of poplar, and the hairs can be obtained from a long-tailed horse or bought from a music store; ordinary thread can even be used, where it is not possible to obtain horse-hair, or to purchase a bow.

For the mandolin, a box about $5\frac{1}{2}$ or 6 in. wide, $2\frac{3}{4}$ to $3\frac{3}{4}$ in. deep, and $9\frac{1}{2}$ in. long, will be best. The lid, as in the



Violin, Mandolin, and Guitar That are Made from Cigar and Cheese Boxes by the Addition of Suitable Necks and Fittings: Anyone Who can Play a Standard Instrument of Either Kind can Produce Music from These

lar fittings, be purchased from a music-supply house. If made at home, poplar should be used.

The cigar-box violin should be made from a box about 3 in. deep, 5 in. wide, and from 9½ to 13 in. long, according to the person for whom it is made. Let the lid form the back of the instrument, but do not nail it down until the work has been completed. Glue a block, ⅜ in. wide by 2½ in. long and the same depth as the box, in the end to which the neck is to be fastened, and a smaller block at the opposite end. Cut the F-shaped sound holes in the top and then drive in a few more nails around the edges of the

made from a single piece of wood, instead of one made up from three-ply veneer, should be selected. Cut the rim down to 3¼ in. in width, and attach the neck at the point where the ends meet, after fastening a ¾ by 3¼ by 3¼-in. block on the inside. The neck, when in place, must stand above the rim a sufficient distance so that, when the top is applied, the neck will be flush with the top. After the neck has been fitted, as described above, the top and bottom can be put on; these pieces may be sawed from pine, poplar,

violin, forms the back and is not fastened down until the remainder of the work is done. The sound hole, which is about at the center of the box, is 1¼ by 1¾ in. in size. Glue a piece of wood, ¼ by ⅝ in. in dimensions, across the box, midway between the sound hole and the end of the box, to keep the bridge and finger-board from pressing in the top. A block, ⅜ in. wide by 3 in. long, and the same height as the box, is glued inside at the neck end. The neck is made as indicated in the drawing, and is attached to the box as described for the violin.

The guitar is made from part of a cheese box instead of a cigar box. A box

or almost any kind of lumber, about ⅛ in. thick. The sound hole is a little above the center and is 2¾ in. in diameter. The top is glued and nailed to the rim and is reinforced by three ¼ by ⅝-in. strips that are glued edgewise across the underside of the top to prevent it from being pressed in. It is also advisable to glue two or three such strips on the bottom before it is attached. A lug, 1¼ in. long by 1½ in. wide, is left on the bottom cover, and fastened to the underside of the neck.

Larger version of diagram on last page.

