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MELODY ALARM TIMEPIECE

The present invention relates to a melody alarm timepiece.

Alarm timepieces designed to sound an alarm in the form of a melody are known. For example, Japanese Utility Model Post-Exam Publication No. 63-13513 discloses an alarm timepiece designed so that the user in advance selects by pressing a push button one of a plurality of melodies incorporated therein. When the set alarm time is reached, the melody selected by the user is played. This alarm timepiece is arranged such that if the user presses the push button during the performance of a selected melody, the next melody is played from its beginning.

The above-described prior art timepiece is thus designed to play a melody as an alarm and to enable different melodies to be played if the user presses the push button during the performance of a melody. However, this arrangement cannot simply be applied to an alarm timepiece that plays a melody as an alarm and that enables a sequence of different melodies, corresponding to set times (e.g., one o'clock, two o'clock, etc.) to be selected such that at each of the set times, the specific selected alarm melody of the sequence, corresponding to that set time, is played as a time signal.

The present invention seeks to provide an improved alarm timepiece and as a specific embodiment seeks to provide a melody alarm timepiece which is designed so that different melodies corresponding to set times are selected sequentially where at each of the set times an alarm melody is to be played as a time signal, so that if the set times and the selected melodies become out of synchronism with one another as a result, for example, of a correction of the time being made during the timekeeping operation of the timepiece, the

melodies are automatically reset at a predetermined time, so as to allow a predetermined melody subsequently to be played at the corresponding hour at which this melody is to be played as a time signal.

5 According to the present invention there is provided an alarm timepiece comprising:

an alarm control circuit for holding a plurality of distinctive alarm signals in a specified sequence;

a first switch to detect the set times at each of
10 which an alarm signal is due to sound;

means for sounding one of said alarm signals when a set time is detected; and wherein

the alarm control circuit is arranged sequentially to select the next alarm signal in a said specified
15 sequence at each successive set time detection by the first switch;

characterised in that the alarm timepiece further includes a reset switch for detecting a designated time for controlling the alarm control circuit to then
20 select the first alarm signal in said sequence to be the next alarm signal to be sounded upon the next set time detection by said first switch.

In the preferred embodiment the distinctive alarm signals are different melodies.

25 For a better understanding of the present invention, and to show how it may be brought into effect, reference will now be made, by way of example, to the following drawings in which:

Figure 1 is a fragmentary plan view showing one
30 embodiment of the present invention;

Figure 2 is an enlarged vertical sectional view of an essential part of the embodiment of Figure 1;

Figure 3 is an enlarged front view of an essential part of the embodiment of Figure 1; and

35 Figure 4 is a circuit diagram.

As shown in Figures 1 and 2, a printed circuit

board 2 is secured inside a lower case 1 of a timepiece movement A. The printed circuit board 2 has wiring patterns formed on the upper side thereof. Circuit elements such as a transistors, resistors, capacitors, etc. (not shown) are connected to their respective predetermined positions, on the printed circuit board 2. An integrated circuit (IC) 3 is connected to an approximately central portion of the printed circuit board 2 and is covered with a potting resin 3a. the IC 3 has a timepiece circuit and an alarm control circuit 30 shown in Figure 4. An hour wheel 4 is rotatably supported on the lower case 1, and a reset lever 5 is located at the upper side of this hour wheel 4. Between the hour wheel 4 and the lower case 1 an hour wheel spring 4d is interposed so as to bias the hour wheel 4 toward the reset lever 5.

As Figure 2 shows, a minute tube or pipe 6 extends through an hour pipe 4a of the hour wheel 4 and a hole 5a in the reset lever 5. The inner end portion of the minute pipe 6 is formed with a radially projecting angle minute cam 6a and a minute pinion 6b as integral parts thereof. In addition, a minute wheel 7 is attached to the inner end portion of the minute pipe 6 through a slip mechanism (not shown).

Fixed or proximal portions of a pair of contact members 8 and 9 for detecting a correct hour are connected at predetermined positions, respectively, to the printed circuit board 2. The free or distal end portion of the contact member 8 extends so as to be engageable with the minute cam 6a. In a normal state, the free or distal end portion of the contact member 9 extends as far as a position where it is separated from the distal end portion of the contact member 8 and unable to engage with the minute cam 6a but where it is within the range of elastic deformation of the contact member 8. Accordingly, when the contact member 8 is

deflected to the two-dot chain line position shown in Figure 1 by being pressed by the minute cam 6a near the twelve o'clock position and then released to return by virtue of its resilience, the contact member 8 contacts the contact member 9 instantaneously, thus closing a switch S2 for detecting a correct or accurate hour position so as to generate a correct hour signal. The proximal portion of the contact member 8 extends to define an output terminal 8a. An output terminal 10 is connected at its inner fixed or proximal portion to a predetermined position of the printed circuit board 2. Both the output terminals 8a and 10 are exposed through the lower case 1. An externally provided member, for example, a speaker Sp, is connected to the output terminals 8a and 10.

As shown in Figures 1 and 3, the reset lever 5 has a pivot portion 5d about which the lever 5 pivots, the pivot portion 5d being pivotably supported by a bearing 11 projecting from the lower case 1. An engagement portion 5e extends from the reset lever 5. The proximal portion of a reset member 12, which constitutes a reset switch S3, is connected to a predetermined position of the printed circuit board 2. The distal end portion of the reset member 12 is divided into three branches, one of which extends over the engagement portion 5e of the reset lever 5 to define an engagement portion 12c that biases the engagement portion 5e downwardly. The other two branches are formed as movable contacts 12a and 12b which are capable of resiliently contacting reset switch wiring patterns on the printed circuit board 2.

As shown in Figures 1, 2 and 3, as a mechanism for pivoting the reset lever 5, cam pawls 4b and 4c which define slanting surfaces in the direction of rotation of the hour wheel 4 are provided on the upper side of the hour wheel 4 at respective positions which are

spaced 180° apart from each other and at different radial distances from the center, and the lower side of the reset lever 5 is provided with corresponding cam grooves 5b and 5c positioned such that the cam grooves 5b and 5c are capable of being engaged or entered by the cam pawls 4b and 4c, respectively. Since the reset lever 5 is subjected to downward biasing force from the engagement portion 12c of the reset member 12, the lower surface of the reset lever 5 is in resilient contact with the upper surfaces of the cam pawls 4b and 4c of the hour wheel 4. When the hour wheel 4 rotates, the cam pawls 4b and 4c slide on the lower surface of the reset lever 5 such that the cam pawls 4b and 4c face the cam grooves 5b and 5c once in a 12-hour period. When the cam pawls 4b and 4c face the cam grooves 5b and 5c, they engage with each other. In consequence, the reset lever 5 is enabled to pivot downwardly to allow the movable contacts 12a and 12b of the reset member 12 to contact with the wiring patterns on the printed circuit board 2, thus closing the reset switch S3 to generate a reset signal. It should be noted that the arrangement is such that when the reset switch S3 is closed or on, the correct hour detecting switch S2 does not turn on.

As shown in Figure 2, the minute pipe 6 is rotatably supported by the hour pipe 4a and a middle plate 13, and a second wheel 15 is rigidly secured to the inner end portion of a second shaft 14 extending through the minute pipe 6. The second wheel 15 is rotatably supported by the middle plate 13 and an upper case 16. The rotation of a rotor 17 is transmitted to the second wheel 15 through a driving wheel 18, and the rotation of the second wheel 15 is transmitted to the minute wheel 7 through an intermediate wheel 19. The rotation of the minute wheel 7 causes the minute pipe 6 to rotate through the slip mechanism, and the rotation

of the minute pinion 6b is transmitted to the hour wheel 4 through a transmitting wheel 20.

Figure 4 shows the melody alarm control circuit 30. More specifically, the alarm control circuit 30 that controls the melody alarm is fabricated on the printed circuit board 2. The alarm control circuit 30 is arranged in advance to incorporate, for example, twelve melodies corresponding to twelve different hours, from one o'clock to twelve o'clock. When supplied with a correct hour signal by closure of switch S2, melody output terminals Out1 and Out2 alternately cause generation of currents of a melody output signal to turn on transistors Tr1 and Tr2 alternately. When the transistor Tr2 is on, an electric current I1 flows in a direction in which a capacitor C is charged, whereas, when the transistor Tr1 is on, an electric current I2 flows in a direction in which the capacitor C is discharged. The currents I1 and I2 are different in direction from each other. The currents I1 and I2 allow a melody alarm to be generated from the speaker Sp. R1 denotes a resistance of feedback circuit, and MTI an input terminal for feedback. A switch S1, which is a program select switch, is connected to a select terminal ST. By manually turning on/off the select switch S1, it is possible to set melodies sequentially, for example, such that the melody of one o'clock is played as a first alarm, and the melody of two o'clock as a second alarm.

When a correct hour signal is generated by closure of the correct hour detecting switch S2, comprising the contact members 8 and 9 provided on the timepiece movement A, as described above, this signal is supplied to the select terminal ST to select a melody, and outputs are alternately generated from the output terminals Out1 and Out2. The reset switch S3 comprises

the reset lever 5 and the reset member 12 provided on the timepiece movement A. A reset signal generated from the switch S3 is supplied to a reset terminal R to reset the alarm control circuit 30 so that the next
5 alarm melody which is to be output as a result of a correct hour signal is selected to be the first melody of the sequence of melodies.

The melody generating operation will now be explained. Melodies which are to be played at twelve
10 different hours, from one o'clock to twelve o'clock, are set in advance by actuating the select switch S1, as described above. In Figure 2, the rotation of the rotor 17 causes the minute pipe 6 to make one revolution per hour and the hour wheel 4 to make one
15 revolution per twelve hours through the above-described timepiece wheel train. The minute cam 6a also rotates together with the minute pipe 6, and when the minute hand (not shown) approaches the correct hour position, the distal end portion of the contact member 8 engages
20 with the minute cam 6a, as shown in Figure 1. As the minute cam 6a rotates, the contact member 8 is pressed so as to be deflected, and when the minute cam 6a has passed, the contact member 8 returns by virtue of its resilience, passing the neutral position and
25 instantaneously contacting the distal end portion of the contact member 9, thus causing the correct hour detecting switch S2 to be closed to generate a correct hour signal, which is supplied to the terminal ST. Thus, with the time and melody sequence in synchronism,
30 the melody corresponding to the hour concerned is selected, and outputs are generated from the melody output terminals Out1 and Out2 and supplied to the speaker Sp to play the melody as an alarm.

When the hour wheel 4 further rotates one
35 revolution and the hour hand (not shown) reaches the neighbourhood of a position where it indicates the

designated time, for example half past twelve, the cam
pawls 4b and 4c fit into the cam grooves 5b and 5c, so
that the reset lever 5 is pivoted by the resilient
force applied by the reset member 12, thus causing the
5 engagement portion 5e to lower. As a result, the
movable contacts 12a and 12b come into contact with the
fixed contacts on the printed circuit board 2 to close
the reset switch S3, generating a reset signal, which
is supplied to the reset terminal R. Thus, the alarm
10 control circuit 30 is reset so that the melody which is
to be played when the timepiece reaches the first set
time, for example one o'clock is made to correspond
with the melody selected to be played at that time.
Thus, even when the set times and the melodies become
15 out of synchronism with one another as a result of the
correction of the indicating hands made during the
timekeeping operation of the timepiece, the melodies
are automatically reset to the correct ones at a
designated time, for example a little past twelve
20 o'clock, so that the right melody is played as an alarm
at the set times thereafter.

Although in this embodiment the IC 30 incorporates
twelve melodies, it should be noted that the
arrangement may be such that the IC 30 incorporates six
25 melodies and two cam pawls and two cam grooves provided
in symmetry with respect to the central point so that a
reset signal is generated twice per twelve hours. It
is also possible to arrange the system such that
melodies are repeated at desired smaller intervals of
30 time by increasing the number of cam pawls and cam
grooves.

As explained above, the melodies corresponding to
set times at each of which an alarm melody is to be
played as a time signal are automatically changed
35 sequentially by the alarm control circuit.
Accordingly, it is possible to realise a timepiece

which is pleasant to the user and which allows the user to find out what time it is simply by listening to the melody without looking at the timepiece. In addition, even if the hours and the melodies become out of phase
5 with one another as a result, for example, of correcting of the time during the timekeeping operation of the timepiece, the melodies are automatically reset at a designated time, thereby allowing predetermined melodies to be always played at predetermined set
10 times, respectively. Since a melody corresponding to each set time at which a time signal is to be sounded is played by the alarm control circuit provided on the printed circuit board, it is unnecessary to provide a means for detecting alarm information, for example, a
15 code pattern, and the arrangement is therefore simplified.



CLAIMS

1. An alarm timepiece comprising:
an alarm control circuit (30) for holding a
plurality of distinctive alarm signals in a specified
5 sequence;
a first switch (S2) to detect the set times at
each of which an alarm signal is due to sound;
means (SP) for sounding one of said alarm signals
when a set time is detected; and wherein
10 the alarm control circuit (30) is arranged
sequentially to select the next alarm signal in said
specified sequence at each successive set time
detection by the first switch;
characterised in that the alarm timepiece further
15 includes a reset switch (S3) for detecting a designated
time for controlling the alarm control circuit (30) to
then select the first alarm signal in said sequence to
be the next alarm signal to be sounded upon the next
set time detection by said first switch.
20 2. An alarm timepiece as claimed in claim 1
wherein the different alarm signals are different
melodies.
3. An alarm timepiece as claimed in claims 1 or
2 wherein the reset switch (S3) is operated by means of
25 a reset lever (5) arranged to be pivoted by means (4b,
4c) carried by a wheel (4) which makes one revolution
per twelve hours.
4. An alarm timepiece as claimed in any
preceding claim wherein the first switch detects
30 correct hour signals as the set times, by means of an
operating member (6a) provided on a rotating body (6)
making one revolution per hour.
5. An alarm timepiece as claimed in claim 3 or 4
wherein the wheel (4) making one revolution per hour
35 has more than one means (4b, 4c) provided therein for
causing pivoting of the reset lever more frequently



than every twelve hours.

6. An alarm timepiece as claimed in one of
claims 4, 5 when appended to claim 4, wherein the first
switch comprises two members (8,9) one of which is a
5 resilient member (8) which is able to contact with the
operating member (6a) and be deflected thereby, and
thereafter resiliently contacting the other to thereby
detect the set time.