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Wright

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(45) **Date of Patent: Sep. 4, 2012**

(54) **SPEAKER ASSEMBLIES, METHODS OF INSTALLING SPEAKER ASSEMBLIES AND METHODS OF MAKING SPEAKER ASSEMBLIES**

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Related U.S. Application Data

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(51) **Int. Cl.**
A47B 96/00 (2006.01)

(52) **U.S. Cl.** **248/221.11**; 248/222.51; 248/222.52; 248/27.3; 181/150; 362/365; 381/386; 381/87

(58) **Field of Classification Search** 248/221.11, 248/222.51, 222.52, 292.12, 183.4, 422, 248/222.13, 27.3; 181/199, 150; 381/386, 381/395, 87, 97; 362/365, 370
See application file for complete search history.

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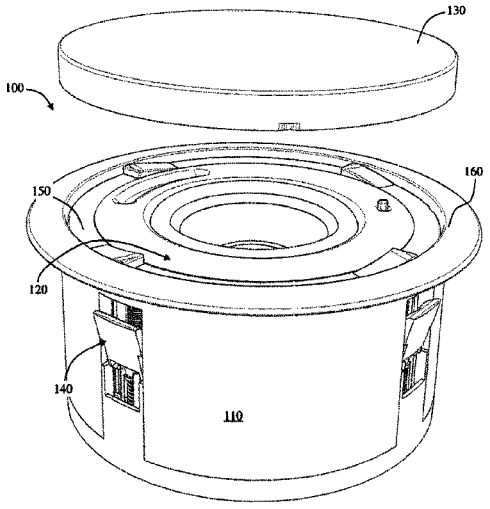
(57) **ABSTRACT**

Speaker assemblies are disclosed that are configured for simple installation and removal. Speaker assemblies include a gear ring, a plurality of screws adapted to rotate when the gear ring is rotated, and a latching mechanism adapted to extend one or more latches outward when the screws are rotated. Methods of installing speaker assemblies include inserting a frame through a mounting hole in a mounting panel. A gear ring coupled to a plurality of screws is rotated, and a plurality of latches extend outward to engage a back-side surface of the mounting panel. Methods of making speaker assemblies include coupling a plurality of screws with a gear ring to enable rotation of the plurality of screws upon rotation of the gear ring. A latching mechanism is coupled to each of the plurality of screws.

13 Claims, 12 Drawing Sheets



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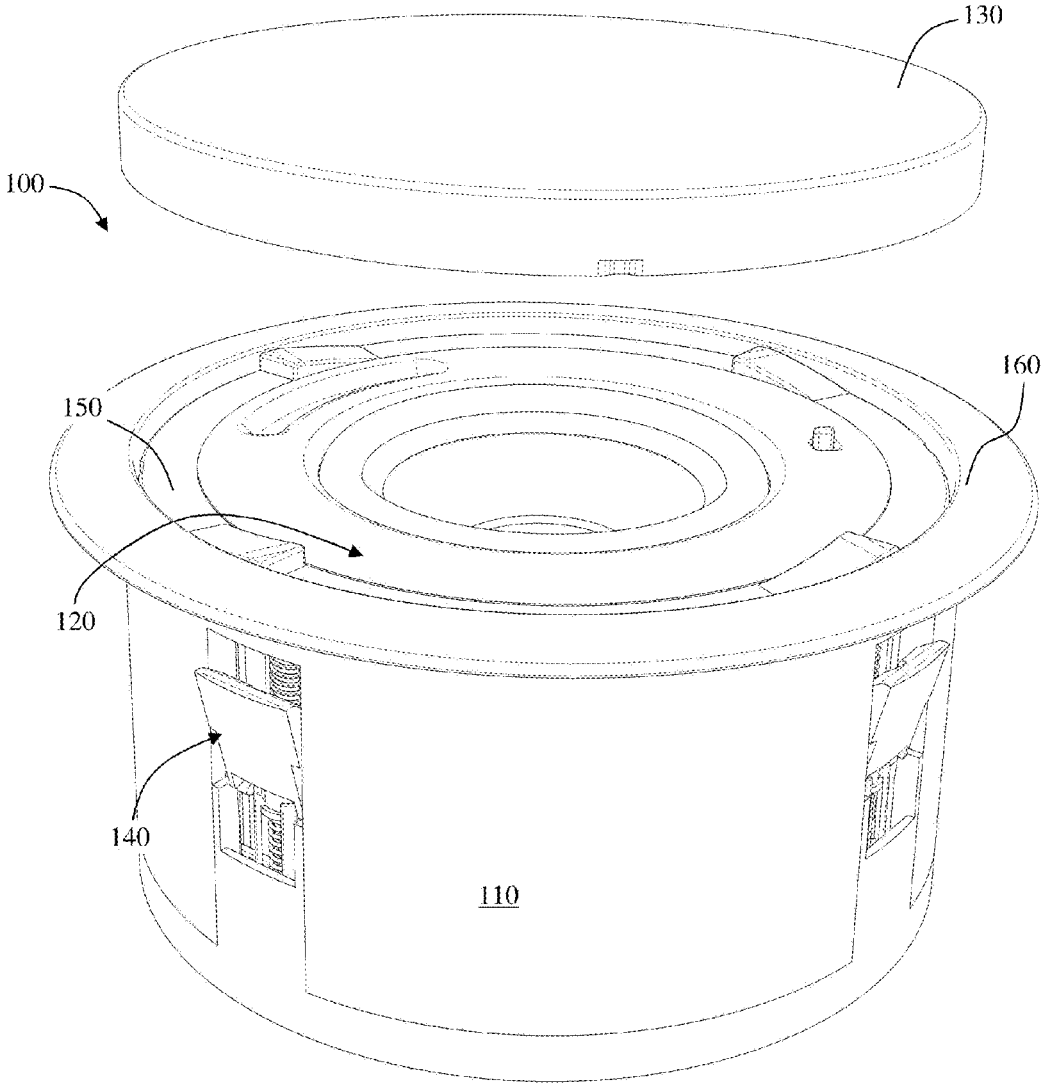

FIG. 1

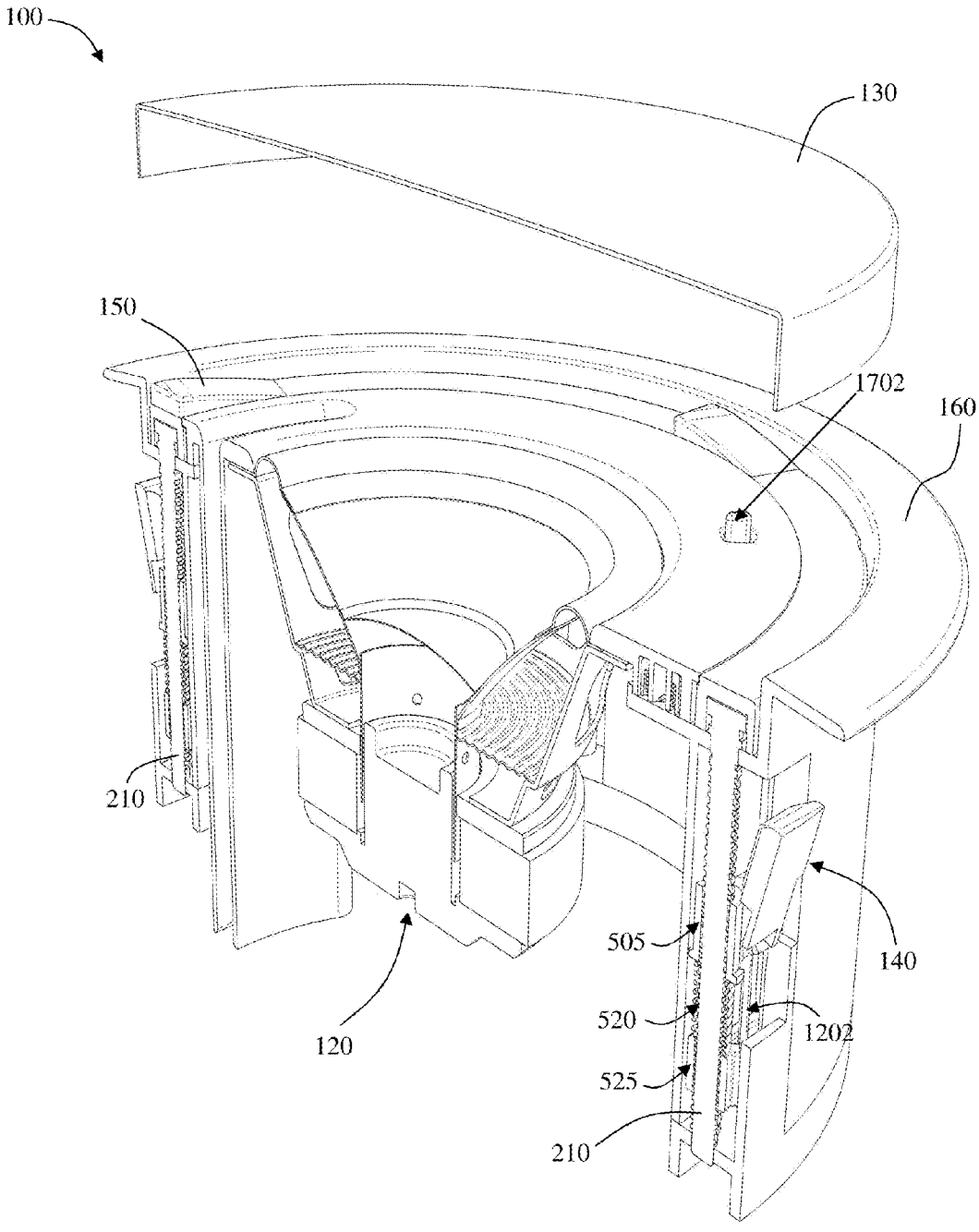

FIG. 2

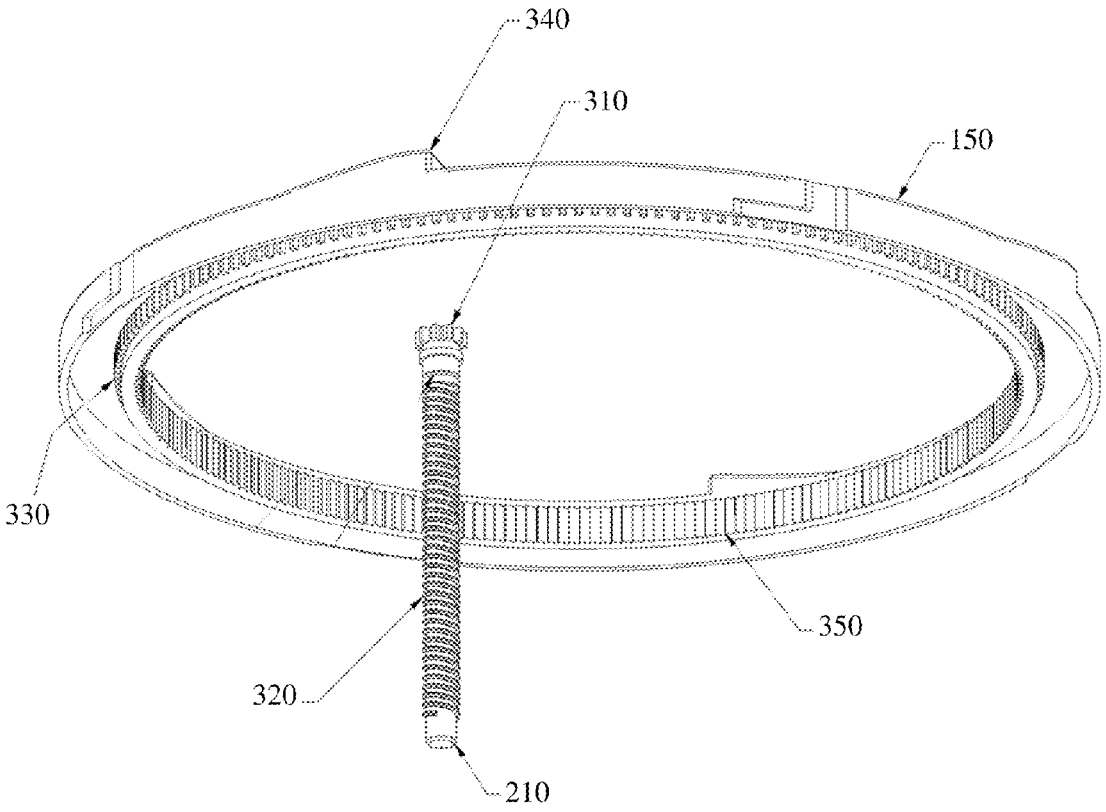

FIG. 3

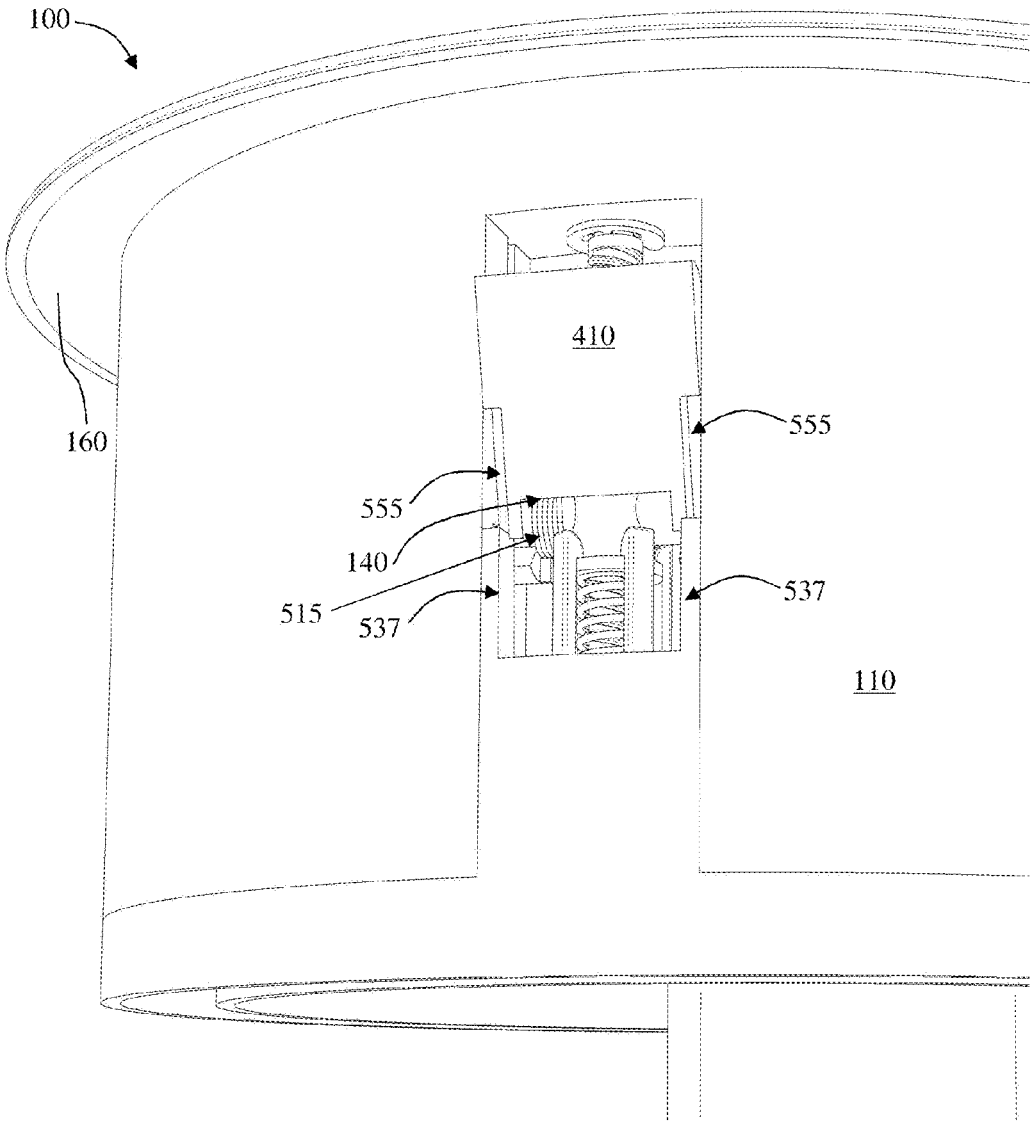

FIG. 4

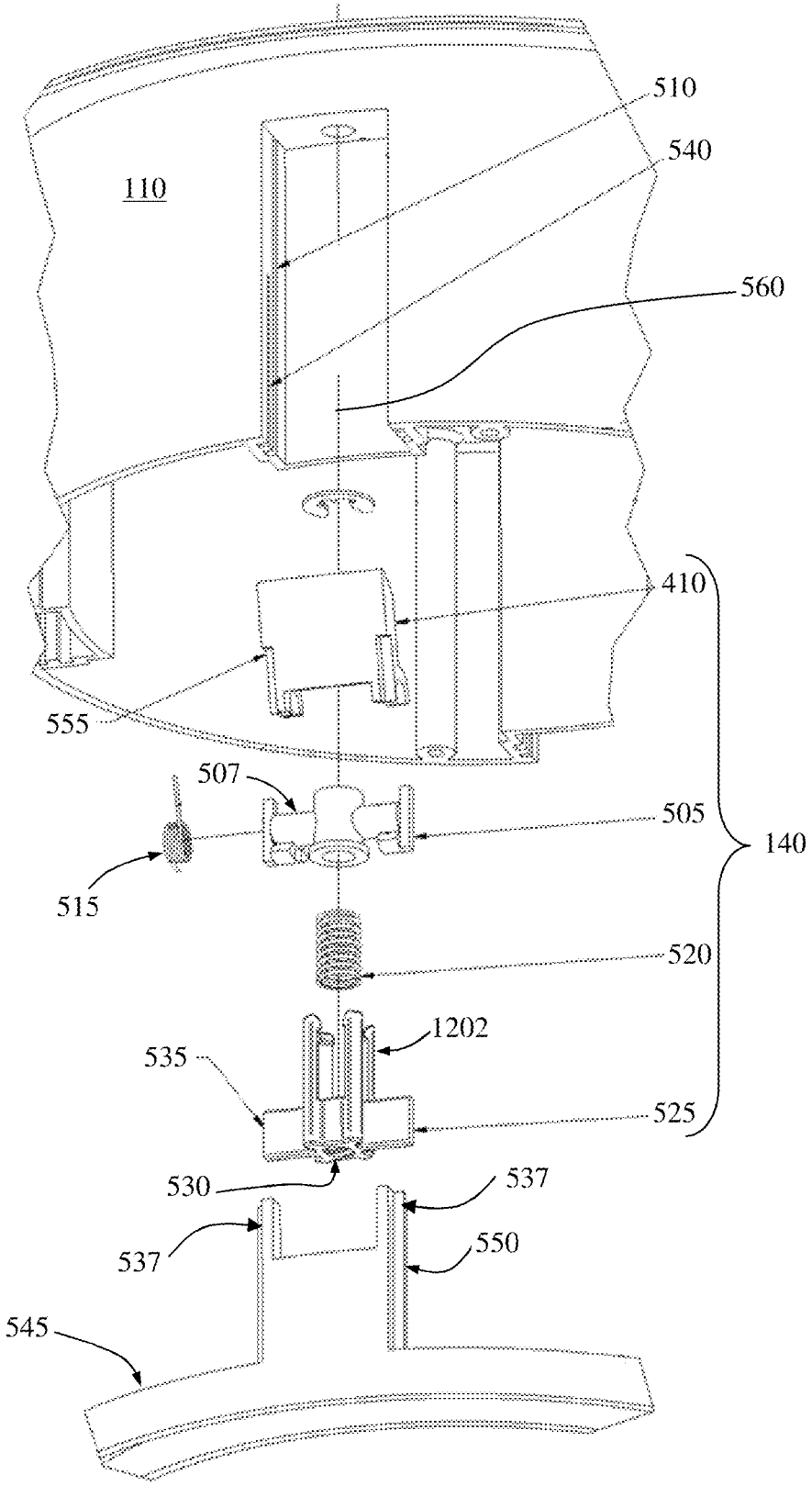
510
540
110
560
410
555
507
505
140
515
520
1202
535
525
530
537
537
550
545

FIG. 5

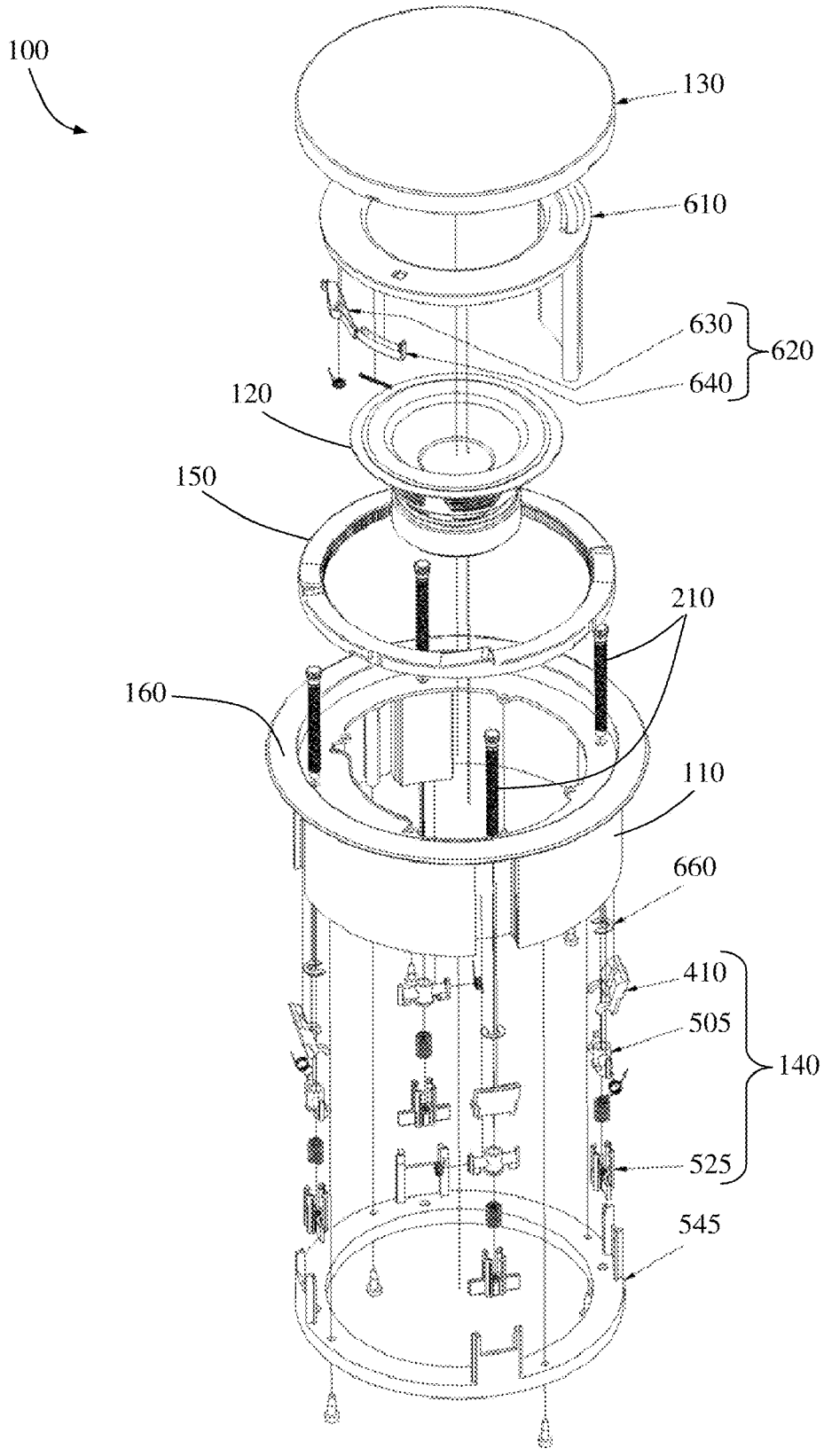
100
130
610
630
620
640
120
150
210
160
110
660
410
505
140
525
545

FIG. 6

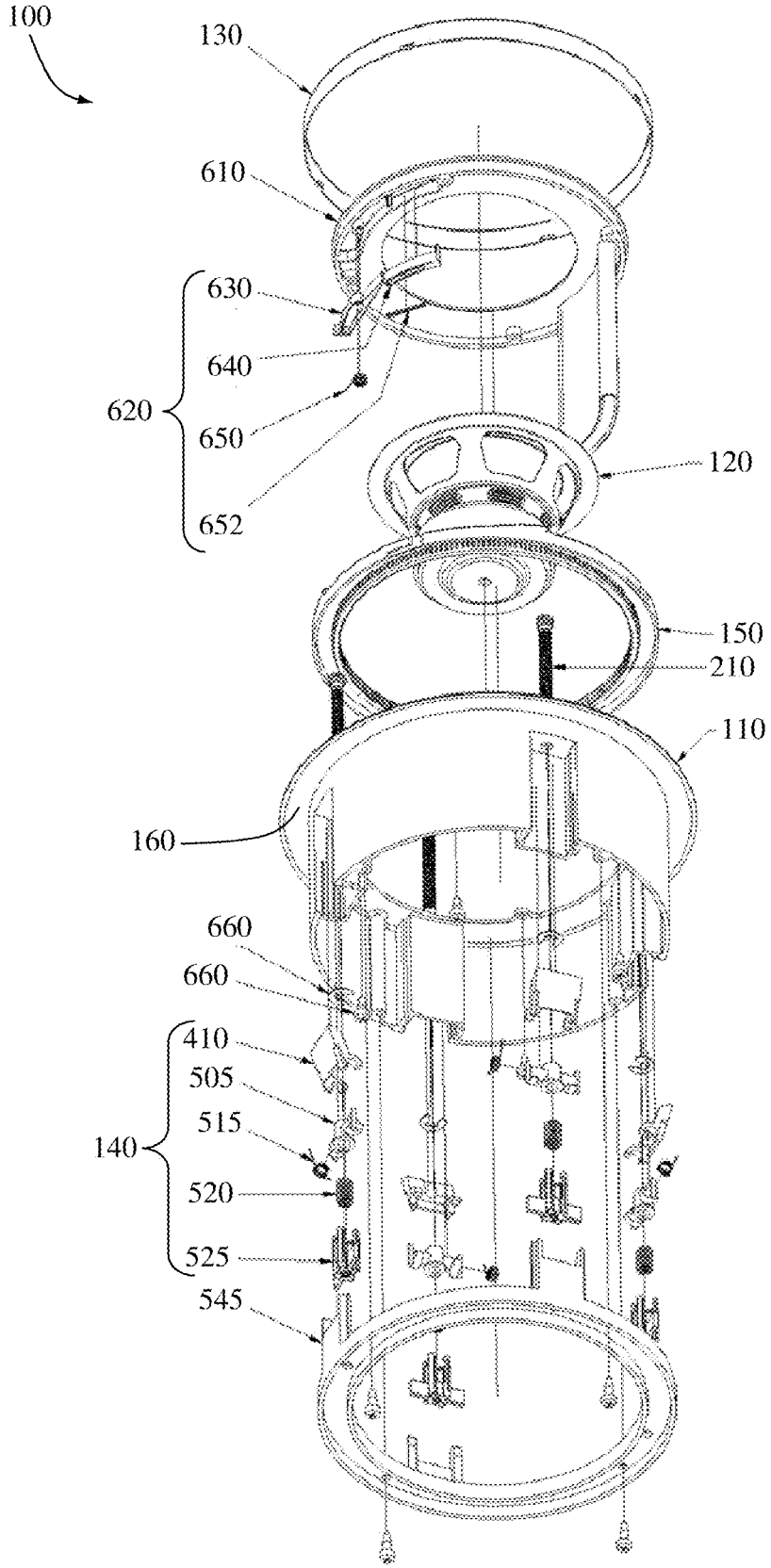
100
130
610
630
640
620
650
652
120
150
210
110
160
660
660
410
505
515
140
520
525
545

FIG. 7

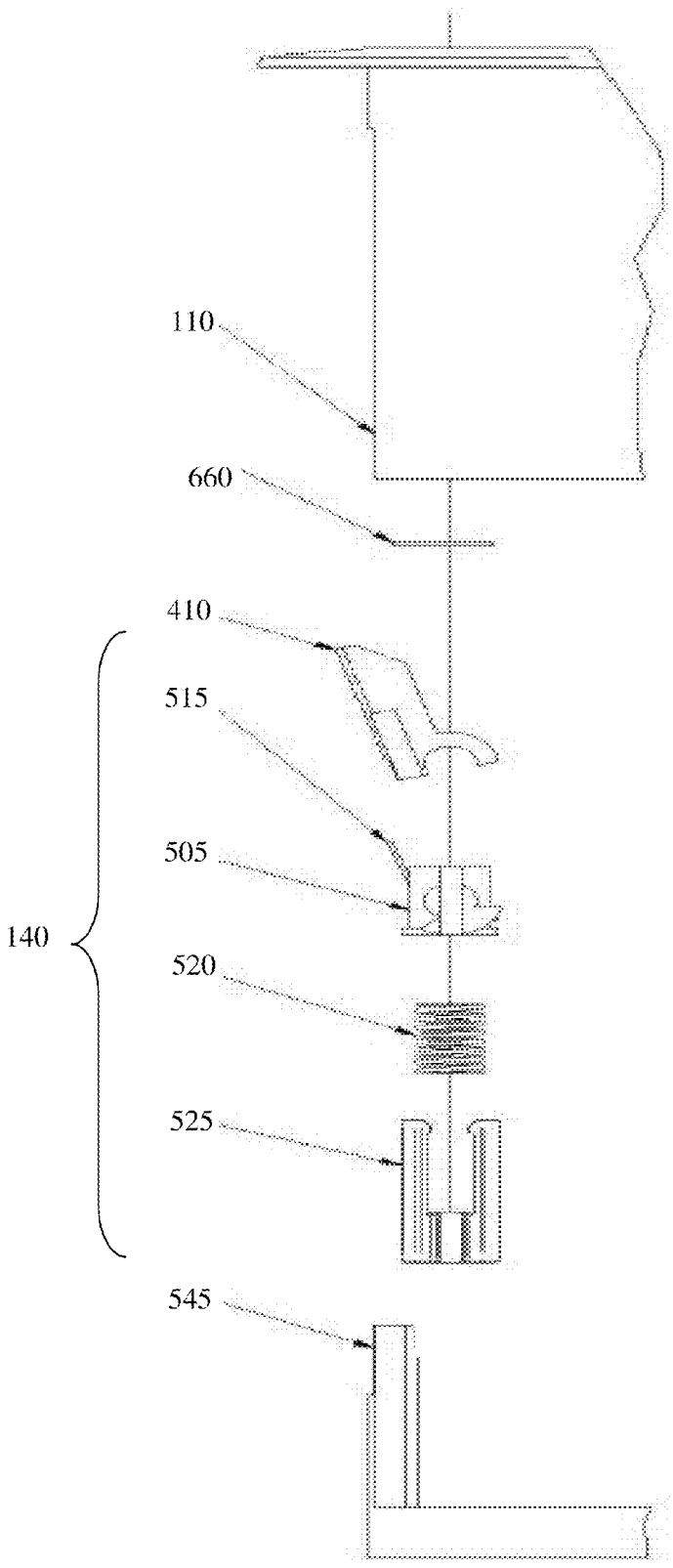

FIG. 8

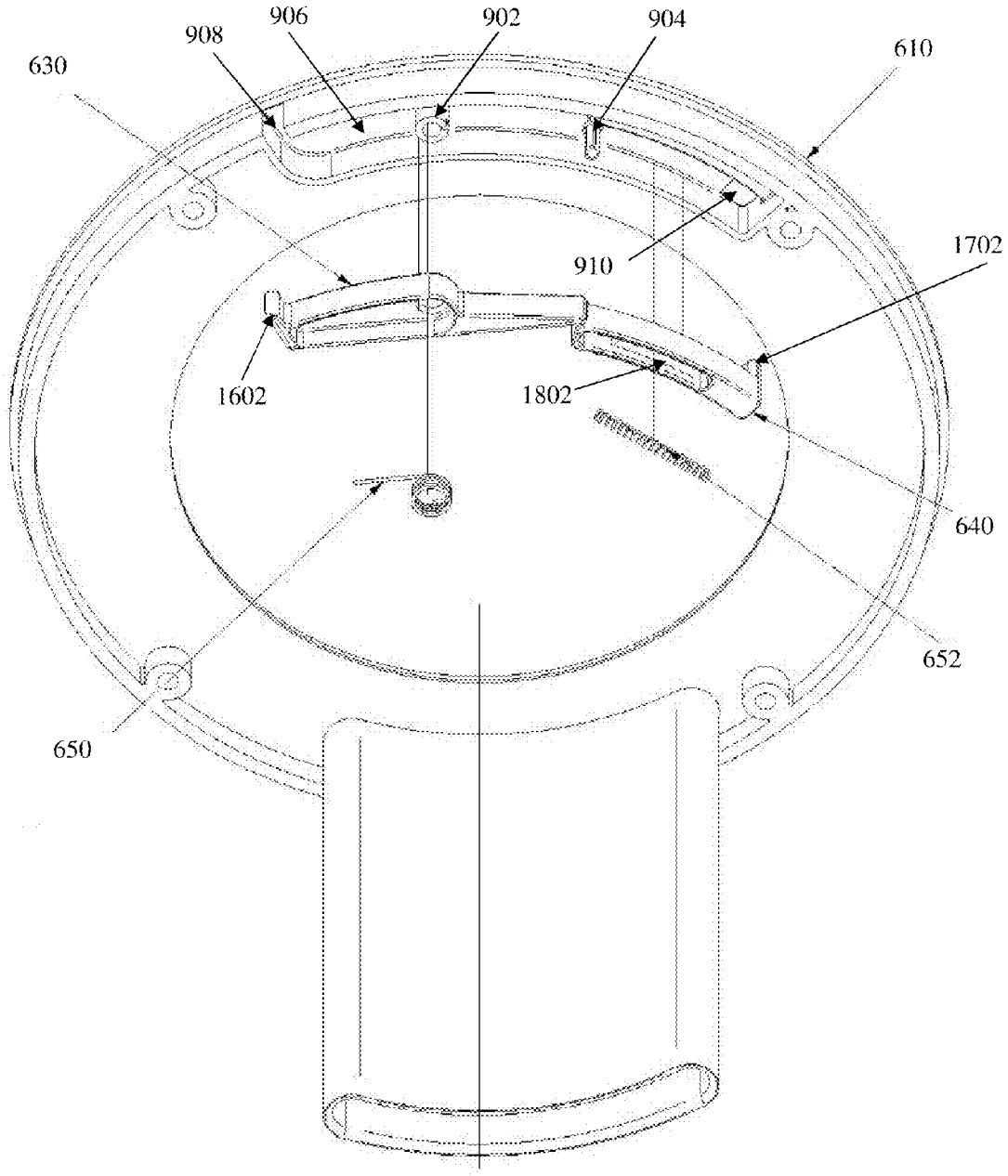

FIG. 9

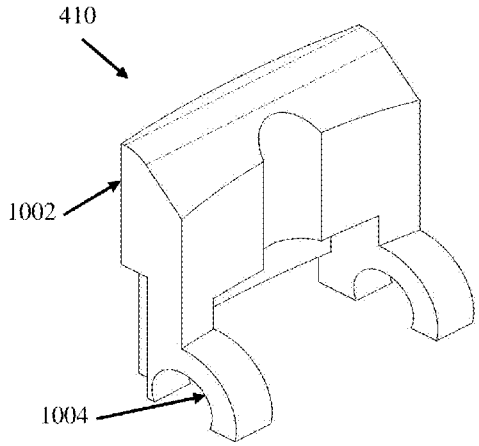

FIG. 10

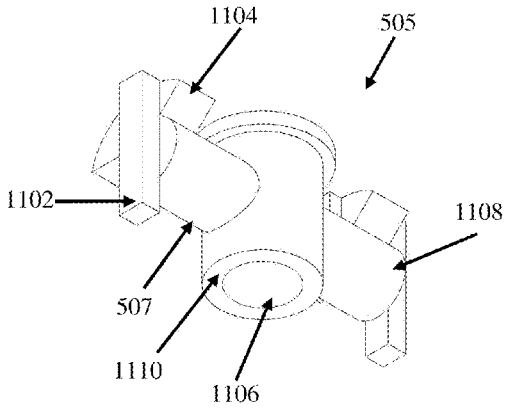

FIG. 11

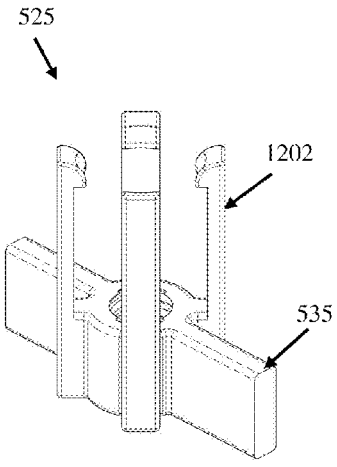

FIG. 12

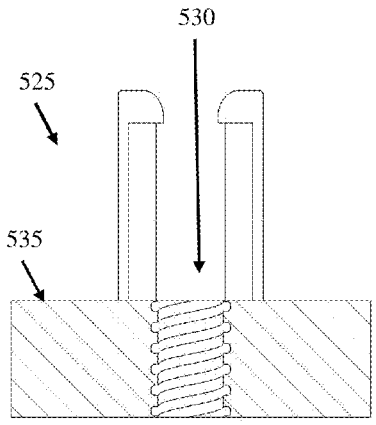

FIG. 13

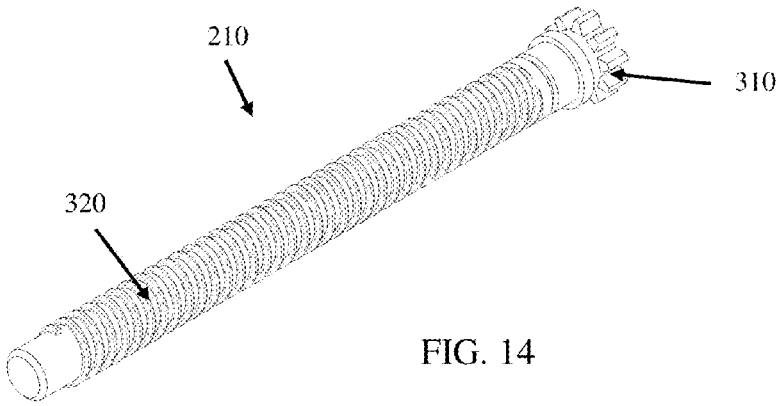

FIG. 14

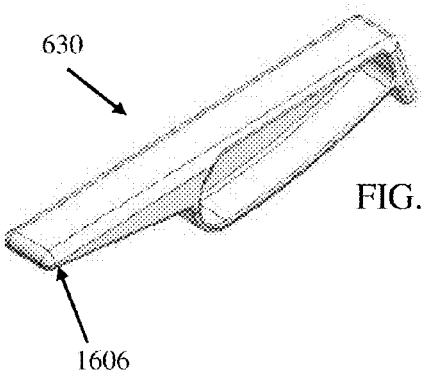

FIG. 15

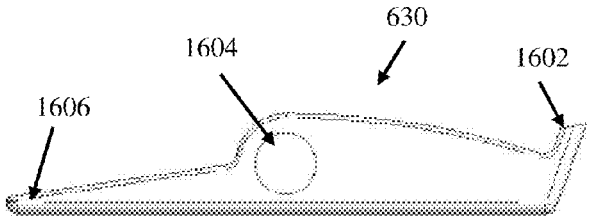

FIG. 16

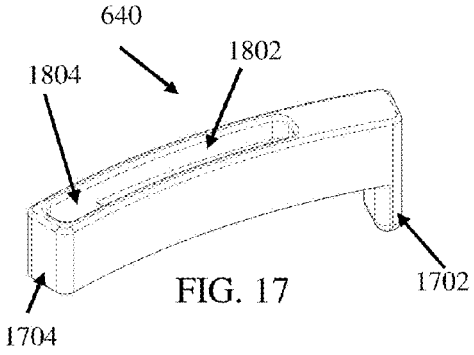

FIG. 17

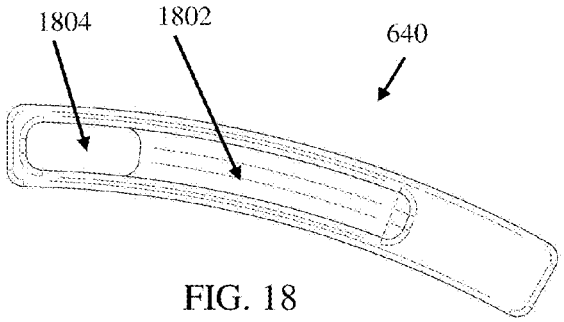

FIG. 18

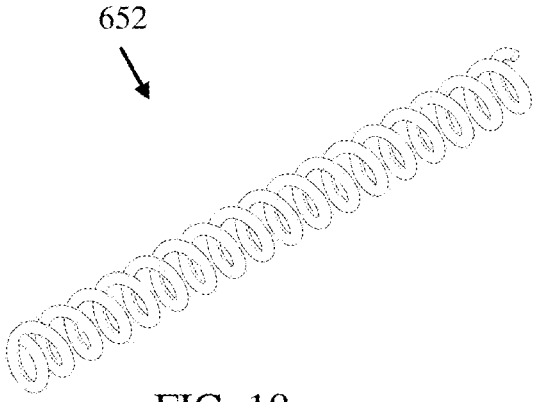

FIG. 19

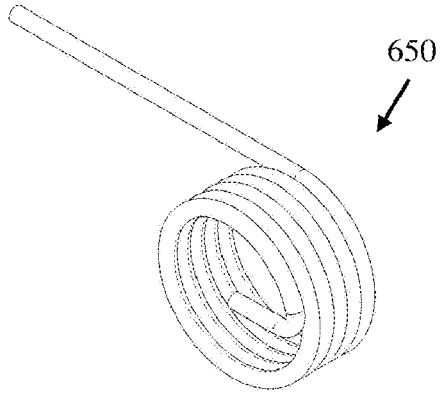

FIG. 20

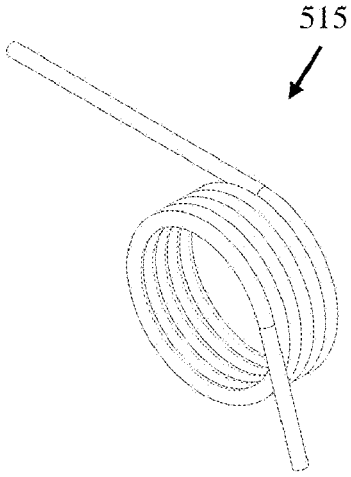

FIG. 21

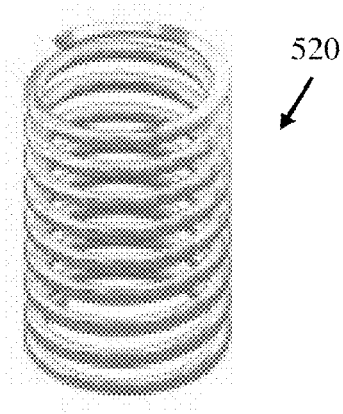

FIG. 22

SPEAKER ASSEMBLIES, METHODS OF INSTALLING SPEAKER ASSEMBLIES AND METHODS OF MAKING SPEAKER ASSEMBLIES

CLAIM OF PRIORITY UNDER 35 U.S.C. §119

The present Application for Patent claims priority to Provisional Application No. 61/166,927 entitled "Tool-Less, Multi-Point Capture, Non-Indexing Instant Latch System for Audio Devices" filed Apr. 6, 2009, the entire disclosure of which is hereby expressly incorporated by reference herein.

FIELD

Various embodiments of the invention pertain to speaker mountings and assemblies that allow relatively simplified installation.

BACKGROUND

In order to save space, and/or for aesthetic reasons, it is often desirable to mount speakers within wall or ceiling cavities or recesses. However, such recessed speakers are often difficult to install and conventionally require one or more tools to install. Thus, it is desirable that recessed speakers be simple to install without the need of tools.

SUMMARY

Various embodiments of the present disclosure are directed to speaker assemblies configured to be easily installed within a mounting panel cavity. Such speaker assemblies may comprise a gear ring, a plurality of screws adapted to rotate when the gear ring is rotated, and a latching mechanism. The latching mechanism may be adapted to extend one or more latches outward as the screws are rotated.

Additional embodiments of the present disclosure include methods of installing speaker assemblies. One or more embodiments of such methods may comprise inserting a frame through a mounting hole in a mounting panel. A gear ring coupled to a plurality of screws may be rotated. The plurality of screws are adapted to rotate when the gear ring is rotated. A plurality of latches may extend outward to engage a back-side surface of the mounting panel when the plurality of screws rotate.

Further embodiments of the present disclosure are directed to methods of making a speaker assembly. At least some embodiments of such methods include coupling a plurality of screws with a gear ring to enable rotation of the plurality of screws when the gear ring rotates. A latching mechanism may be coupled to each of the plurality of screws. Each latching mechanism may be configured to displace along a rotational axis of the respective screw when the plurality of screws are rotated.

BRIEF DESCRIPTION OF THE DRAWINGS

FIG. **1** illustrates an isometric view of a speaker assembly according to at least one embodiment of the present disclosure.

FIG. **2** illustrates a cross-sectioned isometric view of the speaker assembly of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **3** is an isometric view of a gear ring and a screw according to at least one embodiment of the disclosure.

FIG. **4** illustrates an enlarged elevation view of the latching mechanism of the speaker assembly of FIG. **1**.

FIG. **5** illustrates an exploded view of the various latch assembly components according to at least one embodiment.

FIGS. **6** and **7** illustrate exploded views of a speaker assembly according to one example.

FIG. **8** illustrates a side view of various components of the latching mechanism **140** according to at least one embodiment of the present disclosure.

FIG. **9** illustrates the baffle and the ratchet mechanism according to one embodiment.

FIG. **10** illustrates a view of the latch according to one example.

FIG. **11** illustrates a view of the latch slide according to one example.

FIGS. **12-13** illustrate two views of the latch nut according to one example.

FIG. **14** illustrates a view of the screw according to one example.

FIGS. **15-16** illustrate views of the ratchet latch according to one example.

FIGS. **17-18** illustrate views of the release lever according to one example.

FIG. **19** illustrates a view of the release lever bias spring according to one example.

FIG. **20** illustrates a view of the ratchet latch bias spring according to one example.

FIG. **21** illustrates a view of the latch pivot spring according to one example.

FIG. **22** illustrates a view of the compression spring according to one example.

DETAILED DESCRIPTION

The illustrations presented herein are, in some instances, not actual views of any particular speaker housing, system, or assembly, but are merely idealized representations which are employed to describe the present disclosure. Additionally, elements common between figures may retain the same numerical designation.

Various embodiments of the present disclosure comprise speaker assemblies adapted to be easily installed into a recess. FIG. **1** illustrates an isometric view of a speaker assembly **100** according to at least one embodiment of the present disclosure. The speaker assembly **100** includes a frame **110**, an audio transducer **120** (e.g., a speaker) disposed inside and coupled to the frame **110**, a grille **130** disposed over the audio transducer **120**, at least one latching mechanism **140**, and a gear ring **150**.

The frame **110** is configured to be installed within a cavity so that a rim **160** rests against an exterior surface of the cavity while the remaining portions of the frame **110** extend into the cavity. The rim **160** comprises a conventional flange disposed at one end of the frame **110**. The frame **110** is substantially free from screws or dogs employed to actuate the clamping/retaining mechanism (latching mechanism **140**).

FIG. **2** illustrates a cross-sectioned isometric view of the speaker assembly **100** of FIG. **1**. As shown in FIG. **2**, the speaker assembly **100** further includes a plurality of screws **210** (see also FIG. **14**) matingly coupled to the gear ring **150** and to a portion of the latching mechanism **140**. Each of the screws **210** is adapted to rotate when the gear ring **150** is rotated. More particularly, with reference to FIG. **3**, each screw **210** includes a screw gear portion **310** at a first end and threads **320** (e.g., double threads) along a length of screw **210**. The screw gear portion **310** is adapted to mate to or engage with a ring gear portion **330** of the gear ring **150**. Accordingly, as the gear ring **150** is rotated about its central axis, the teeth of the ring gear portion **330** engage the teeth of the screw gear

portion **310** causing each screw **210** to rotate with the rotation of the gear ring **150**. Accordingly, the rotation of one or more screws **210** can be simultaneously controlled by the rotation of a single gear ring **150**.

Referring still to FIG. **3**, the gear ring **150** may further include one or more actuation features **340** (e.g., ramps or manual rotation points) for enabling a user to manually rotate the gear ring **150**. As shown, the actuation features **340** comprise an extension forming a surface upon which a user may push with one or more fingers to rotate the gear ring **150**.

Referring to FIGS. **2** and **4**, the latching mechanism **140** may include a plurality of components according to various embodiments. FIG. **4**, in particular, illustrates an enlarged elevation view of the latching mechanism **140** of the speaker assembly **100** of FIG. **1**. The latching mechanism **140** includes a latch **410** (see also FIG. **10**) configured to pivot inward (in a retracted position) for installing and removing the speaker assembly **100**, and to pivot outward (to an extended position) for securing the speaker assembly **100** in place in a recess.

FIG. **5** shows an exploded view of various components of a latching mechanism **140** according to at least one embodiment of the present disclosure. The latching mechanism **140** (see also FIG. **8**) includes a latch **410** hingedly coupled to a latch slide **505**. The latch slide **505** (see also FIG. **11**) is configured to slidably receive a screw **210** therethrough (See FIG. **2**). The latch slide **505** engages a pair of latch slide slots **510** disposed into the frame **110** to inhibit rotation of the latch slide **505** when the screw **210** is rotated. In some embodiments, the latch **410** is configured to snap onto the latch slide **505** via a pair of semi-circular, mating latch axles **507** that allow the latch **410** a fixed amount of rotational movement around the latch axle **507**. The rotational movement of the latch may be constrained by a pair latch axle stops.

In order to ensure that the latch **410** pivots outward from the frame **110** when the latch **410** is deployed, a latch pivot bias spring **515** may be employed and disposed to exert a force against the latch **410** sufficient to cause the latch **410** to pivot outward. The latch pivot bias spring **515** may comprise any conventional spring that biases the latch **410** outward (i.e., in the extend position). In typical operation, the bias spring **515** keeps the latch **410** extended outward. Turning of the screw **210** serves to move the latching mechanism **140** up or down. As the latching mechanism **140** moves down (away from the rim **160**), latch retraction slides **555** at the sides of the latch **410** are acted upon by retraction guides **537** on either side the extension **550**. That is, as the latch **410** moves down, the latch retraction slides **555** come into contact with the retraction guides **537**, causing the latch **410** to rotate inward (i.e., retract). In the opposite direction, as the latch **410** moves up, the latch retraction slides **555** disengage from the retraction guides **537**, causing the latch **410** to rotate outward (i.e., extend out) due to the biasing from the latch pivot bias spring **515**.

A compression spring **520** may also be employed within securing arms **1202** (FIG. **12**) of a latch nut **525**, where the compression spring **520** pushes on the latch slide **505** while the securing arms **1202** limit how far the latch slide **505** is able to move from the latch nut **525**. The compression spring **520** pushes on the latch slide **505** and exerts a force to bias the latch slide **505** upward (as oriented in FIG. **5**) along the screw **210** (not shown) disposed through the latch slide **505**.

A latch nut **525** (see also FIGS. **12** and **13**) is configured to be coupled to the latch slide **505** and to receive at least a portion of the compression spring **520** within the securing arms **1202**. The latch nut **525** includes an aperture **530** configured to receive a screw **210**. The aperture **530** may include threads configured to receive the threads **320** of the screw **210**. Accordingly, as the screw **210** is rotated, the threaded connection between the screw **210** and the latch nut **525** causes the latch nut **525** to move up or down (as oriented in FIG. **5**) along a rotational axis **560** of the screw **210**. Because the latch nut **525** is coupled with the latch slide **505** and the latch **410**, rotation of the screw **210** causes the entire latching mechanism to move upward and downward. Note that the use of the terms up and down, or upward and downward refers to the direction as oriented in the accompanying drawing figures. In order to inhibit rotation of the latch nut **525** upon rotation of the screw **210**, the latch nut **525** may include counter-rotation flanges **535** that are configured to engage latch nut slide slots **540** formed in the frame **110**.

A latch retaining ring **545** may also be employed, which is configured to aid in retracting the latches **410**. As illustrated in FIG. **5**, the latch retaining ring **545** includes an extension **550** associated with each latching mechanism **140**. Furthermore, the latch **410** may include one or more latch retraction slides **555**. The latch retraction slides **555** are configured to engage a portion of the extensions **550** of the latch retaining ring **545**, causing the latch **545** to pivot inward to a retracted position when the latching mechanism is displaced downward.

Although the latching mechanism **140** is illustrated in FIG. **5** with particular components, a person of ordinary skill in the art will recognize that at least some of the components may be modified, combined or discarded according to various embodiments of a latching mechanism **140** of the present disclosure. Thus, the latching mechanism **140** may include additional, fewer or different components in various embodiments.

In at least some embodiments of a speaker assembly **100** of the present disclosure, an anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** may be employed as illustrated in FIGS. **6** and **7**. The anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** may be configured to engage an anti-rotation ring gear **350** (shown in FIG. **3**) of the gear ring **150** to inhibit rotation of the gear ring **150**.

Some embodiments of the present disclosure include methods for installing a speaker assembly. Referring to FIGS. **1-5**, the various components described above combine such that, as the frame **110** is inserted through a mounting hole in a mounting panel (e.g., a wall, ceiling, sheet, etc.), the latches **410** are configured to move out of the way of the hole until such time that they clear the back-side surface of the panel. According to at least one embodiment of such a method for installing the speaker assembly **100**, the frame **110** may be inserted through the mounting hole in the panel. The gear ring **150** may be rotated to cause the plurality of screws to rotate. The latches **410** are extended outward to engage the back-side surface of the panel. The latches **410** may be extended outward by rotating the screws **210** in a direction to cause the latching mechanisms **140** to displace upward, causing the latches **410** to extend outward from the frame **110**.

In some embodiments, for example in embodiments employing a latch pivot spring, the latches **410** may be adjusted to their extended position prior to inserting the frame **110** through the mounting hole. In such embodiments, the latches **410** are pivoted inward against the latch pivot bias spring **515** by the panel when passing through the mounting hole, and then the latches **410** are forced by the latch pivot bias spring **515** to pivot outward to an extended position when the latches **410** clear the back-side surface of the panel. Such installation may be particularly beneficial for speaker assemblies **100** installed overhead, since the assembly is at least passively secured from falling as soon as the latches **410** clear the back-side surface of the panel. Additional adjustments to

more fully secure the speaker assembly **100** may then be made by the installer as described herein below.

In other embodiments, the latches **410** may be retracted prior to placing the frame through the mounting hole. The latches **410** may be retracted by rotating the gear ring **150** to cause the screws **210** to rotate in a direction to displace the latching mechanisms **140** downward (e.g., by the retracting guides **537** acting on the latch retraction slides **555**). As the latching mechanisms **140** are displaced downward, the latches **410** may pivot inward to a retracted position. The frame **110** may then be positioned through the mounting hole and the latches **410** extended outward by rotating the gear ring **150** (in an opposite direction) to cause the screws **210** to rotate in an opposing direction to displace the latching mechanisms **140** upward (i.e., toward the rim **160**). As the latching mechanisms **140** are displaced upward, the latches **410** may pivot outward to an extended position (e.g., the latch retraction slides **555** disengage from the retracting guides **537** and the bias spring **515** acting on the latch **410**).

After the latches **410** are pivoted outward to the extended position to retain the frame **110** within the mounting hole, the gear ring **150** and screws **210** may be further rotated to further move the latching mechanisms **140** toward the back-side surface of the panel to increase latch pressure against the back-side surface of the panel and to compensate for any variations in panel thickness. Furthermore, the compression springs **520** of each latching mechanism **140** enable the latching mechanisms **140** to accommodate for tolerance variations between latching mechanisms **140** by allowing the latches **410** to compress the compression spring **520** until all latches **410** are in sufficient contact with a sufficient pressure against the back-side surface of the panel.

Because the latches **410** are pivoted between the retracted and extended positions and displaced upward or downward by the simple rotation of the gear ring **150**, embodiments of a speaker assembly **100** of the present disclosure may be installed with the use of only the installer's hands to rotate the gear ring and without the need of any additional installation tools.

In embodiments employing an anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** (shown in FIGS. **6**, **7**, **9**, **15-20**), the gear ring **150** may be locked in place with the latches **410** positioned in contact with and at a sufficient pressure against the back-side surface of the panel. Accordingly, the contact of the latches **410** will not be released by unintended rotation of the gear ring **150** after the speaker assembly **100** is installed.

In order to remove an installed speaker assembly **100**, the anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** may be disengaged from the gear ring **150**, and the gear ring **150** may be rotated to release latch pressure against the panel and retract the latches **410** by displacing the latches **410** downward. Upon continued rotation of the gear ring **150**, the latch retraction slide **555** of each latch **410** eventually encounters the latch retaining ring **545**. As the gear ring **150** rotation is continued, the latch **410** is forced into a vertical position, thereby allowing the assembly to be dismounted or removed from the mounting hole in the panel. The speaker assembly **100** may be removed and reinstalled numerous times.

Additional embodiments of the present disclosure include methods of making a speaker assembly **100**. Referring to FIGS. **6** and **7**, at least one embodiment of such methods may include coupling a plurality of screws **210** with a gear ring **150** to enable rotation of the plurality of screws **210** in response to rotation of the gear ring **150**. A latching mechanism **140** is coupled to each of the plurality of screws **210** in a manner adapted to displace each latching mechanism **140** along a rotational axis of the respective screw **210** when the plurality of screws **210** are rotated.

Coupling the plurality of screws **210** with the gear ring **150** may include mating the screw gear portion **310** (shown in FIG. **3**) of each screw **210** to the ring gear portion **330** (shown in FIG. **3**) of the gear ring **150**. By mating the screw gear portion **310** to the ring gear portion **330**, the screws **210** may be rotated by rotating the gear ring **150**.

Coupling a latching mechanism **140** to each of the plurality of screws **210** may include forming the latching mechanism **140** including a latch **410** rotatably coupled to a latch slide **505**, a latch pivot spring disposed between the latch **410** and the latch slide **505**, a latch nut **525** coupled to the latch slide **505**, and a compression spring **520** disposed between the latch slide **505** and the latch nut **525**. The latch nut **525** is then coupled to a screw **210** by receiving the threads of the screw **210** with corresponding threads on the latch nut **525**.

In addition, a method of making a speaker assembly may further include coupling the plurality of screws **210** and the gear ring **150** to a frame **110**. An audio transducer **120** may be coupled to a baffle **610**, and the audio transducer **120** and baffle **610** may be disposed at least partially within the frame **110**. A grille **130** may coupled to the frame **110** and disposed over the baffle **610**, the audio transducer **120** and the gear ring **150**.

An anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** may be coupled with the baffle **610** and configured to prevent the counter-rotation of the gear ring **150** until such time that the anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** is released. The anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** may be formed to include a ratchet latch **630** and a ratchet latch release lever **640**, with a ratchet latch bias spring **650** and ratchet latch release lever bias spring **652**. The anti-rotation gear ring ratchet **620** may be configured to engage an anti-rotation ring gear **350** (shown in FIG. **3**) of the gear ring **150** to inhibit the rotation thereof.

Additionally, a plurality of conventional fasteners **660**, such as screws, clips and other fasteners may be employed to couple various components of the speaker assembly together.

FIG. **8** illustrates a side view of various components of the latching mechanism **140** according to at least one embodiment of the present disclosure. Note that the screw **210** passes through the latching mechanism **140** (e.g., through the latch slide **505**, compression spring **520**, and latch nut **520**) to engage and cause the extending and/or retraction of the latch **410** upon rotation of the screw **210**.

FIG. **9** illustrates the baffle **610** and the ratchet mechanism according to one embodiment. The ratchet mechanism includes the ratchet latch **630**, the ratchet latch release lever **640**, the ratchet latch bias spring **650**, and the release lever bias spring **652**. The ratchet mechanism may be housed within a cavity **906** along one side of the baffle **610**. The ratchet latch **630** pivots about a first pin **902**. The ratchet latch bias spring **650** also passes through the first pin **902** and biases the ratchet latch **630** so that an engagement latch portion **1602** extends through a vertical groove **908** on the side of the baffle **610** and engages the anti-rotation ring gear **350** (shown in FIG. **3**) of the gear ring **150** to inhibit rotation of the gear ring **150**. This way, once the gear ring **150** has been rotated to extend the one or more latches **410** outward, the gear ring **150** can be inhibited from rotating back by the engagement latch portion **1602** acting on the anti-rotation ring gear **350**. Note that the anti-rotation ring gear **350** and engagement latch portion **1602** may be configured to allow the gear ring **150** to be rotated in one direction (e.g., a first direction that extends the one or more latches **410** outward) but prevents the rotation of the gear ring **150** in the opposite (reverse) direction.

The release lever **640** is also housed within the cavity **906** and a push lever **1702** (FIG. **17**) passes through an opening **910** in the baffle **610**. A release lever bias spring **652** is housed within a cavity **1802** (FIG. **18**) of the release lever **604**. A first end of the spring **652** pushes against a pin **904** while a second end of the spring **652** pushes against an opposite inner wall of the cavity **1802** so as to bias the release lever **640** away from the ratchet latch **630**. Note that the pin **904** passes through a pass-through opening **1804** (FIG. **18**) in the cavity **1802**. When installed, the push lever **1702** passes to the outer face of the speaker assembly **100**. Thus, the push lever **1702** may be pushed to slide along the opening **910** so that an actuating end **1704** (FIG. **17**) of the release lever **640** pushes against an actuating arm **1606** (FIG. **16**) of the ratchet latch **630** and causes the engagement latch portion **1602** to be retracted and disengage the anti-rotation ring gear **350**. This retraction of the engagement latch portion **1602** allows the gear ring **150** to be rotated (in a reverse direction) to cause the one or more latches **410** to retract inward. Upon release of the push lever **1702** causes the lever release bias spring **652** to push the release lever **640** back and the ratchet latch bias spring **650** causes the ratchet latch **630** to again engage the anti-rotation ring gear **350**.

FIG. **10** illustrates a view of the latch **410** according to one example. The latch **410** may include a securing portion **1002** and pivoting clamps **1004** which engage the mating latch axles **507** on the latch slide **505**. Thus, the pivoting clamps **1004** rotate or pivot about the latch axles **507** as the latch **410** extends outwards or retracts inwards.

FIG. **11** illustrates a view of the latch slide **505** according to one example. The latch slide may include a central body **1110** defining a passage **1106** for the screw **210**, side arms **1108** defining latch axles **507** and rotation stoppers **1104**. The rotation stoppers **1104** may stop the rotation of the latch **410** by engaging the pivoting clamps. The ends of the side arms **1108** may also include slides **1102** that serve to slide within the latch slide slots **510** (FIG. **5**).

FIGS. **12-13** illustrate two views of the latch nut **525** according to one example. The latch nut **525** may include securing arm **1202** that are arranged axially around the aperture **630** in the direction of the screw **210**. The securing arms **1102** serve to hold the compression spring **520** therein. The aperture **530** may be internally threaded to receive the threads **320** of the screw **210**, allowing the latch nut **525** to move up or down depending on the rotation of the screw **210**. The upward or downward movement of the latch nut **525** causes the outward extension or inward retraction, respectively, of the latch **410**. The counter rotation flanges **535** serve to slide within the latch nut slide slots **540**.

FIG. **14** illustrates a view of the screw **210** according to one example.

FIGS. **15-16** illustrate views of the ratchet latch **630** according to one example. The latch **630** may include the actuating arm **1606**, the engagement latch portion **1602**, and an opening **1604** through which the first pin **902** passes to allow pivoting of the ratchet latch **630**.

FIGS. **17-18** illustrate views of the release lever **640** according to one example.

FIG. **19** illustrates a view of the release lever bias spring **652** according to one example.

FIG. **20** illustrates a view of the ratchet latch bias spring **650** according to one example.

FIG. **21** illustrates a view of the latch pivot bias spring **515** according to one example.

FIG. **22** illustrates a view of the compression spring **520** according to one example.

The various embodiments of the present disclosure result in speaker assemblies that are capable of: being installed without any need for indexing; being installed into or through a pre-cut hole with a single linear motion; being passively captured by a panel after the latches have cleared the backside thereof to prevent accidental dismounting when installed overhead; being seated against the panel with a simple human hand; actuating all latches simultaneously; accommodating a wide variation in panel thickness; accommodating variations in panel thickness from latch to latch; compensating for its own tolerance variations making it less costly to manufacture; being scaled to accommodate large ranges of loads; being locked to prevent loss of latch pressure against the panel; and providing for simple, no-tool dismounting, as well as other benefits. Such speaker assemblies may be utilized in almost any device that requires mounting into some kind of a flat panel, sheet, or cavity.

While certain exemplary embodiments have been described and shown in the accompanying drawings, it is to be understood that such embodiments are merely illustrative of and not restrictive on the broad disclosure, and that this disclosure not be limited to the specific constructions and arrangements shown and described, since various other additions and modification to, and deletions from, the described embodiments will be apparent to one of ordinary skill in the art. Thus, the scope of the disclosure is only limited by the literal language, and legal equivalents, of the claims which follow.

What is claimed is:

1. A speaker assembly, comprising:

a gear ring;

a plurality of screws adapted to rotate when the gear ring is rotated; and

a latching mechanism adapted to extend one or more latches outward as the gear ring is rotated a latch slide configured to slidably receive a screw of the plurality of screws; a latch hingedly coupled to the latch slide, the latch configured to extend outward or to retract inward; a latch nut coupled to the latch slide, the latch nut including an aperture having threads configured to receive therein threads of the screw; and a compression spring disposed between the latch nut and the latch slide.

2. The speaker assembly of claim **1**, wherein the gear ring is adapted to be manually rotated.

3. The speaker assembly of claim **1**, wherein each screw of the plurality of screws includes a screw gear portion matingly coupled to a ring gear portion of the gear ring.

4. The speaker assembly of claim **1**, wherein the latching mechanism is displaced along the rotational axis of a screw as the gear ring is rotated.

5. The speaker assembly of claim **1**, wherein the latching mechanism includes:

a latch slide configured to slidably receive a screw of the plurality of screws;

a latch hingedly coupled to the latch slide, the latch configured to extend outward or to retract inward;

a latch nut coupled to the latch slide, the latch nut including an aperture having threads configured to receive therein threads of the screw; and

a compression spring disposed between the latch nut and the latch slide.

6. The speaker assembly of claim **1**, further comprising an anti-rotation gear ring ratchet adapted to inhibit rotation of the gear ring when engaged and further adapted to be manually disengaged.

7. The speaker assembly of claim **1**, further comprising:

a frame; and

an audio transducer housed within the frame.

8. A fastening mechanism for a speaker assembly, comprising:

means for coupling a plurality of screws with a gear ring to enable rotation of the plurality of screws when the gear ring is manually rotated; and

means for coupling a latching mechanism to each of the plurality of screws, each latching mechanism configured to displace along a rotational axis of the respective screw when the plurality of screws are rotated a latch rotatably coupled to a latch slide; a latch pivot spring disposed between the latch and the latch slide; a latch nut coupled to the latch slide; and a compression spring disposed between the latch slide and the latch nut.

9. The fastening mechanism of claim **8**, wherein coupling the plurality of screws with the gear ring to enable rotation of the plurality of screws when the gear ring rotates comprises mating a screw gear portion of each of the plurality of screws to a ring gear portion of the gear ring.

10. The fastening mechanism of claim **8**, wherein coupling the latching mechanism to each of the plurality of screws includes coupling a latch nut comprising a threaded aperture to threads of a screw of the plurality of screws.

11. The fastening mechanism of claim **8**, wherein the latching mechanism comprises:

a latch rotatably coupled to a latch slide;

a latch pivot spring disposed between the latch and the latch slide;

a latch nut coupled to the latch slide; and

a compression spring disposed between the latch slide and the latch nut.

12. The fastening mechanism of claim **8**, further comprising:

means for coupling the plurality of screws and the gear ring to a frame; and

means for disposing an audio transducer within a portion of the frame.

13. The fastening mechanism of claim **8**, further comprising:

means for disposing an anti-rotation gear ring ratchet to engage an anti-rotation ring gear of the gear ring.

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