

[54] **VOLTAGE-CONTROLLED FILTER**
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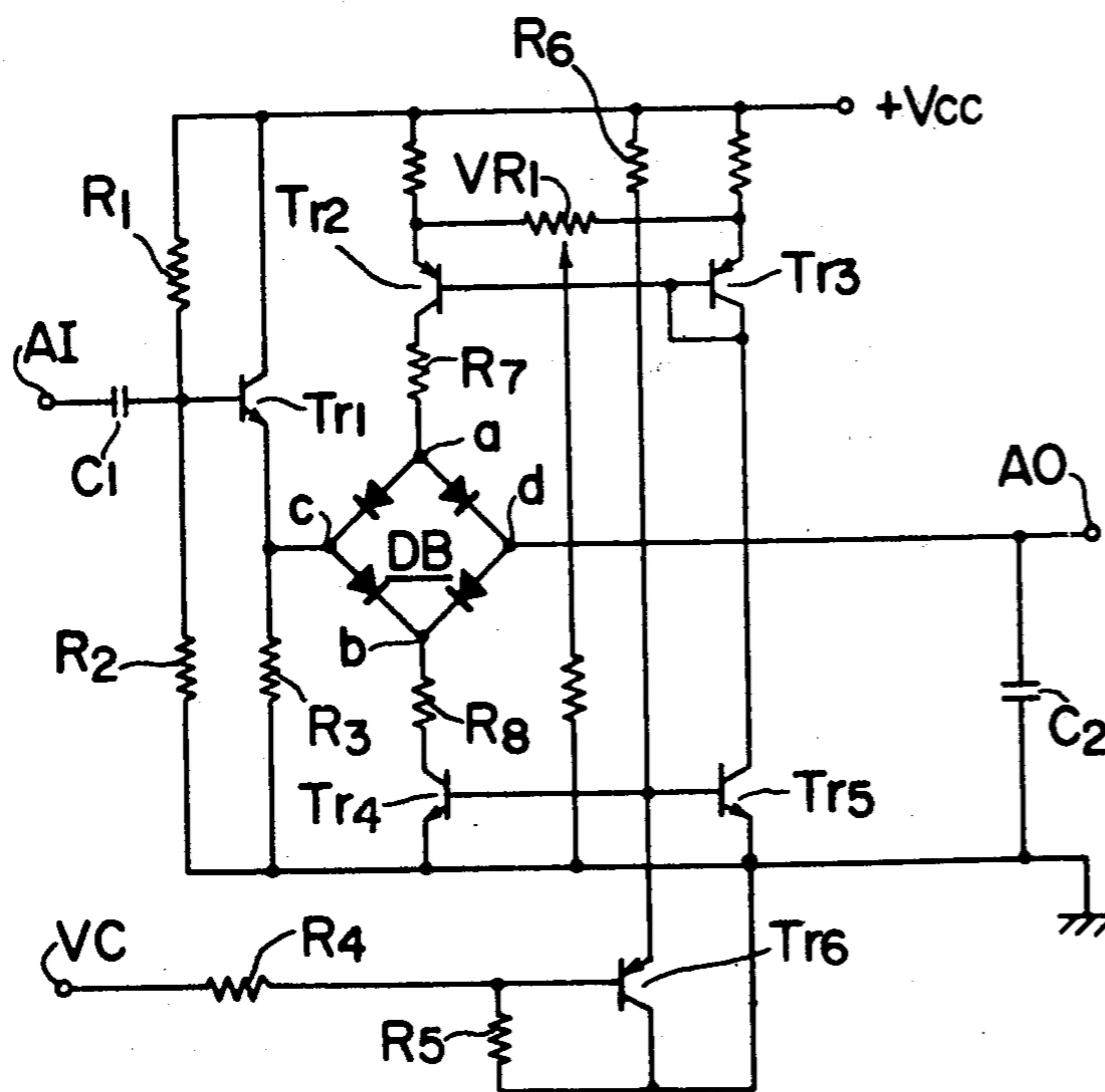
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[57] **ABSTRACT**

In a bridge circuit consisting of diodes connected in each circuit branch in a forward direction from one of a pair of opposing terminals to another with a current flowing through these diodes, impedance between a second opposing pair of terminals varies in correspondence to the magnitude of the constant current. The invention utilizes this phenomenon and provides a voltage-controlled filter employing this bridge circuit as an impedance element for determining its frequency region and thereby being capable of controlling its frequency region by voltage controlling. A primary passive low-pass filter is described as a preferred example of the invention. The invention further provides a voltage-controlled filter having the bridge circuit provided in a negative feedback loop of an amplifier in an active filter circuit and thereby being capable of controlling selectivity Q by controlling the gain of the amplifier by voltage controlling. As a preferred example of this type of filter, a secondary active low-pass filter is described.

3 Claims, 5 Drawing Figures



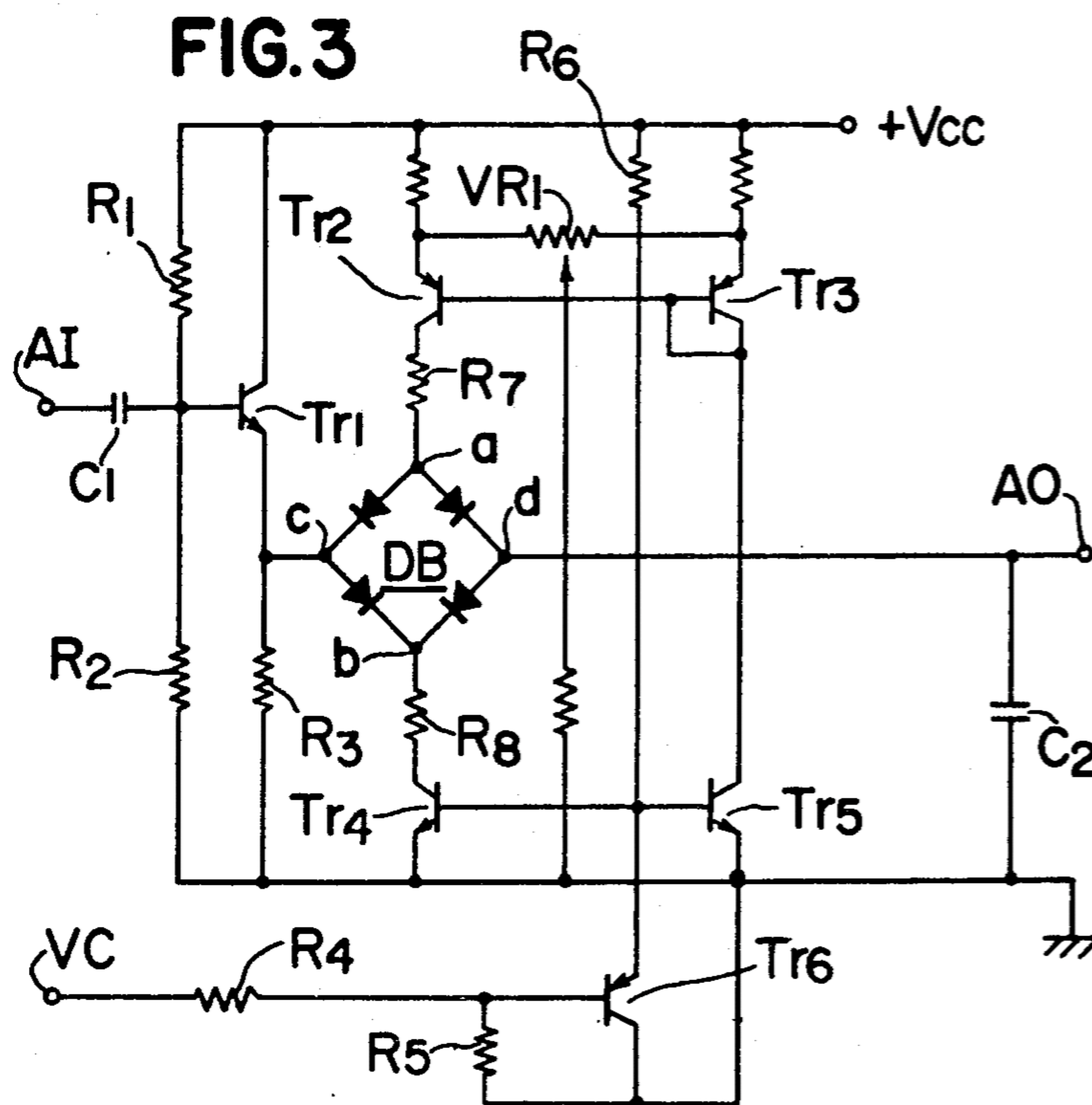
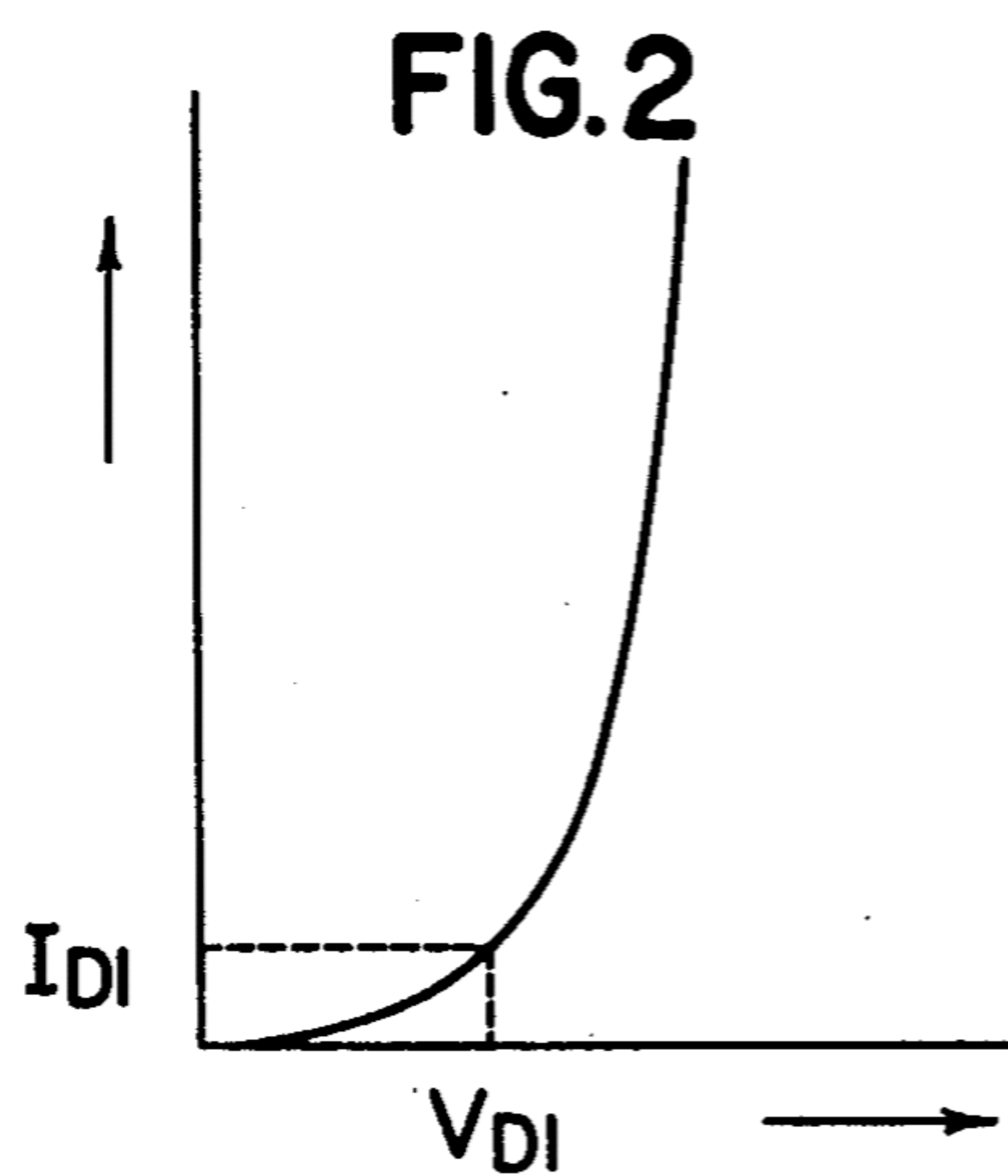
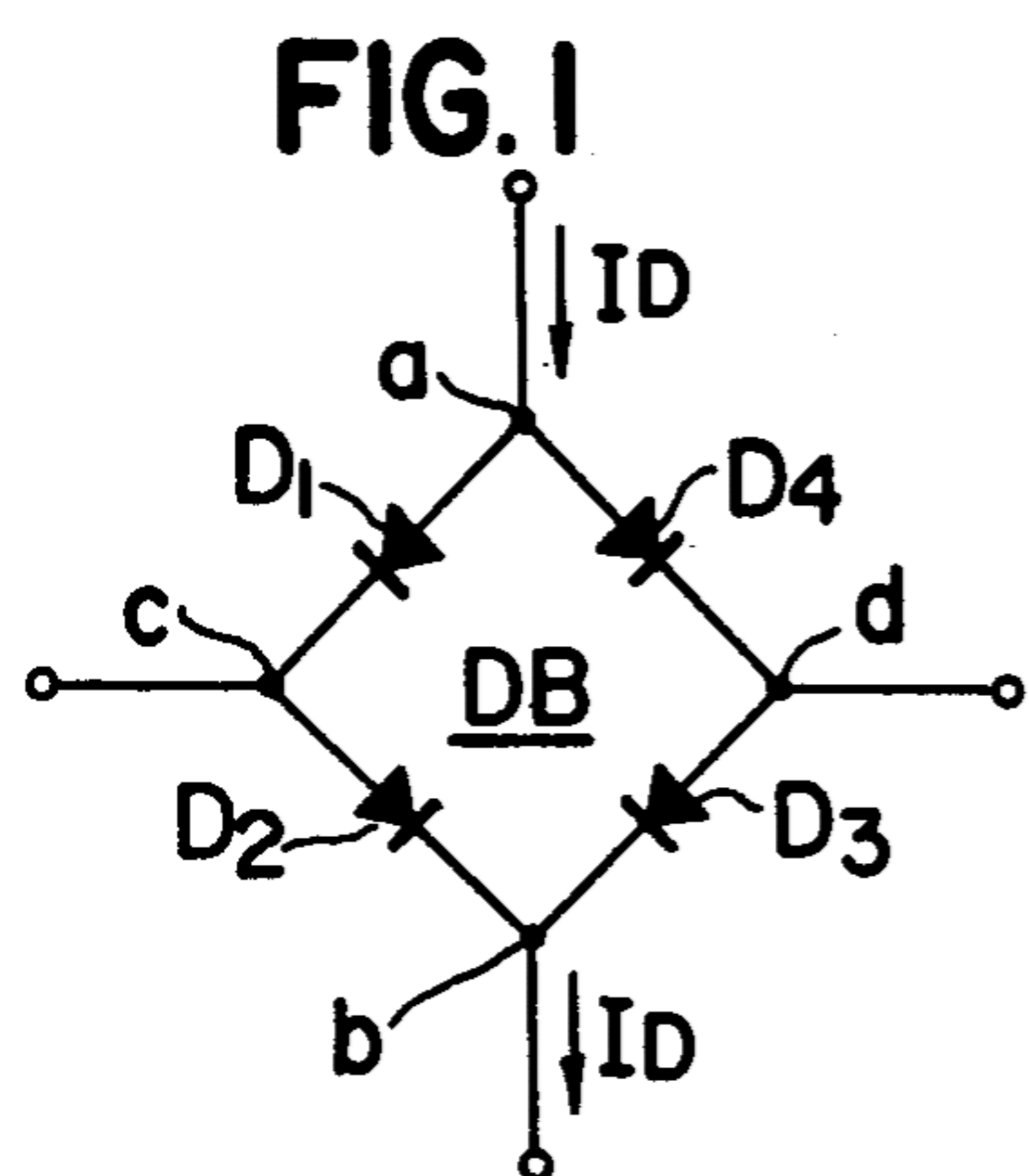


FIG. 4

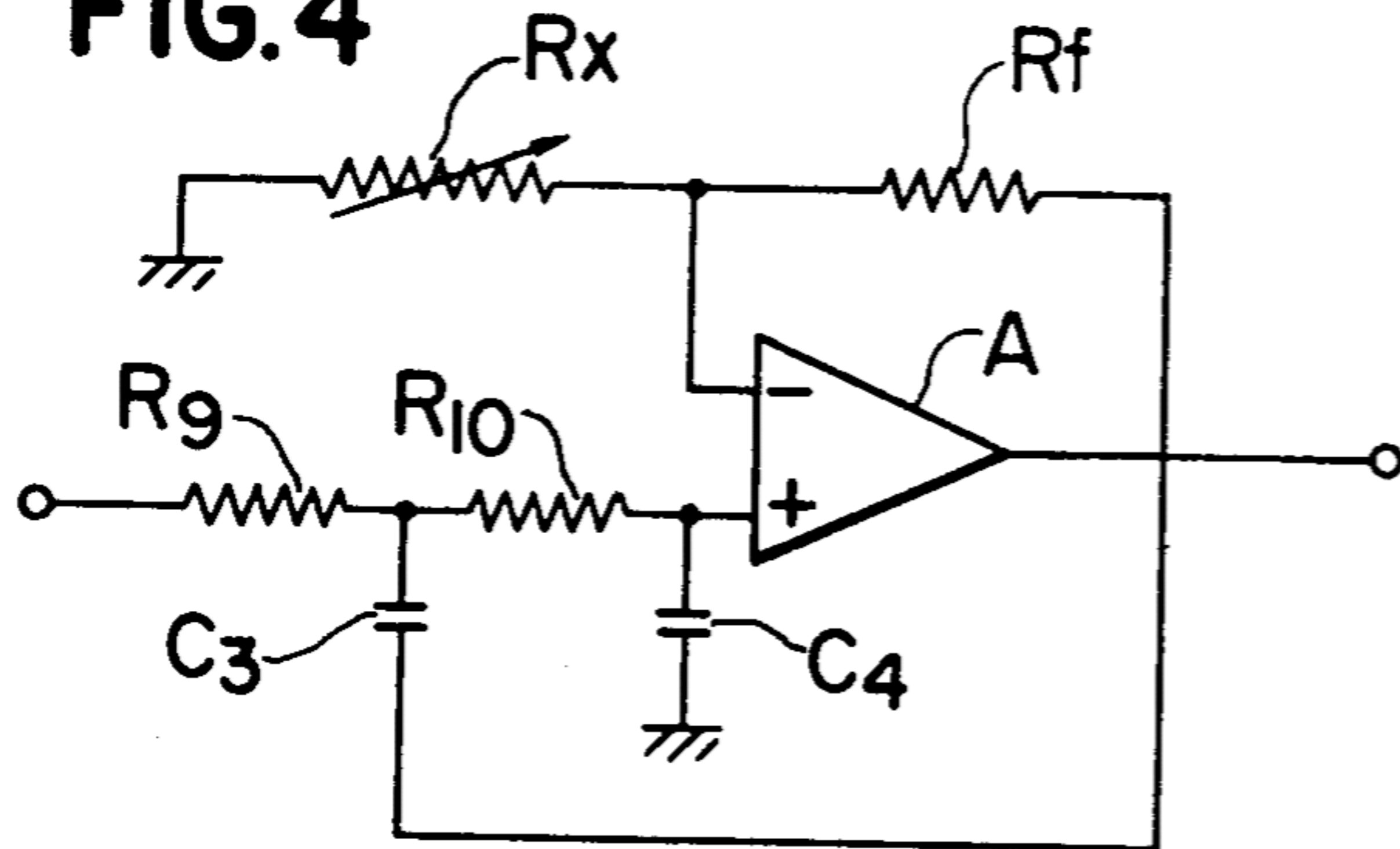
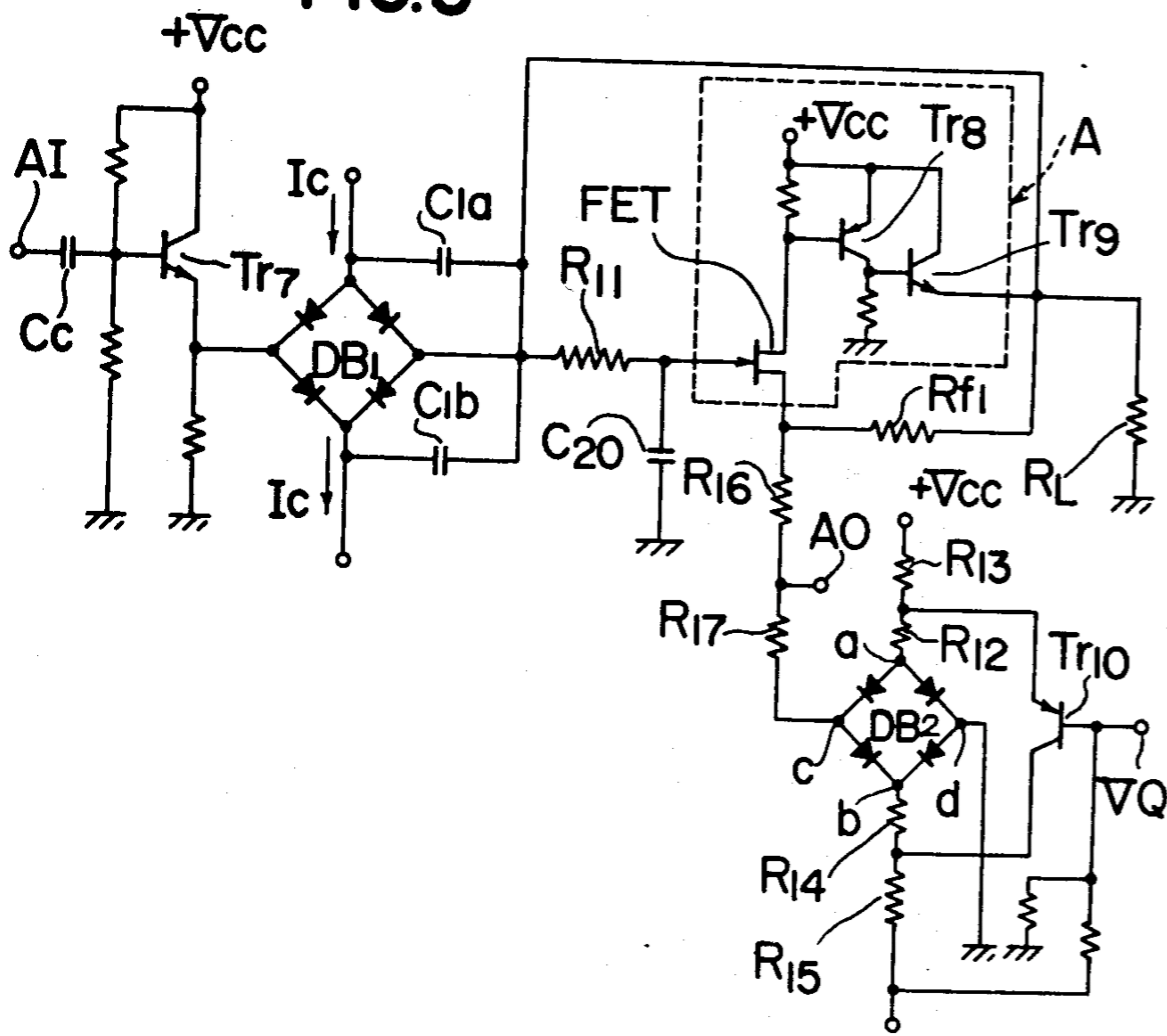


FIG. 5



VOLTAGE-CONTROLLED FILTER

This invention relates to a voltage-controlled filter capable of variably controlling its filtering characteristics in response to change in voltage.

In an electronic musical instrument, a desired tone color can be provided to a musical tone signal of a certain pitch by changing relationship between harmonic contents contained in the musical tone signal. It is accordingly possible to change the tone color of a musical tone signal by using a voltage-controlled type filter in which the cut-off frequency of the filter is changed in response to the change in the control voltage. An even subtler control of the tone color can be achieved by changing not only the cut-off frequency but also selectivity Q of the filter.

It is therefore an object of the present invention to provide a voltage-controlled filter capable of variably controlling its cut-off frequency (or its center frequency) by utilizing a balanced diode bridge to change apparent resistance to an AC small signal of the diode bridge in response to the change in control voltage.

It is another object of the invention to provide a voltage-controlled filter capable of variably controlling selectivity Q in response to the control voltage by changing apparent resistance of a balanced diode bridge in response to the control voltage and thereby changing the amount of feedback of an amplifier provided in the active filter to change the gain of the amplifier.

The invention will now be described with reference to preferred embodiments of the invention illustrated in the accompanying drawings in which:

FIG. 1 is a schematic circuit diagram showing an equivalent impedance circuit used in the voltage-controlled filter according to the invention;

FIG. 2 is a diagram showing a characteristic of each diode used in the equivalent impedance circuit shown in FIG. 1;

FIG. 3 is a circuit diagram showing one preferred embodiment of the voltage-controlled filter according to the invention;

FIG. 4 is a circuit diagram showing an example of a secondary active low-pass filter adapted to change the selectivity of the filter; and

FIG. 5 is a circuit diagram showing another preferred embodiment of the voltage-controlled filter according to the invention.

FIG. 1 is a schematic circuit diagram showing equivalent impedance circuit used in the voltage-controlled filter according to the invention. A diode bridge DB is composed of four diodes $D_1 - D_4$ of the same characteristics. A current (current from a very high impedance source) I_D flows through these diodes $D_1 - D_4$ in a forward direction from a terminal a to a terminal b. The value of the current I_D is determined in accordance with an input control voltage applied for variably controlling a characteristic of the filter. A forward current of $I_D/2$ flows through the diodes $D_1 - D_4$ and forward voltage corresponding to the forward current $I_D/2$ is produced. Accordingly, the bridge DB is completely balanced at terminals C and d .

According to the present invention, apparent resistance of the diode bridge DB is changed by utilizing non-linearity of the forward characteristics of the diodes $D_1 - D_4$ as shown in FIG. 2. In the figure, forward voltage VD_1 corresponds to forward current I_{D1} . A reciprocal of the inclination at this point represents the apparent resistance. Accordingly, an AC signal is pro-

duced at the terminal d in accordance with the apparent resistance by applying an AC signal at the terminal c . Thus, an equivalent impedance circuit is formed between the terminals c and d . Since this equivalent impedance varies in inverse proportion to the current I_D , a CR filter circuit can be composed by combining this equivalent impedance circuit with a suitable capacitance element.

FIG. 3 shows one embodiment of the voltage-controlled filter according to the invention. The present embodiment is constituted in the form of a low-pass filter circuit capable of varying the cut-off frequency in response to the control voltage. An incoming musical tone signal applied to an input terminal AI is fed to a terminal c of the diode bridge DB through a coupling condenser C_1 and an emitter-follower transistor Tr_1 . The emitter-follower transistor Tr_1 is provided to serve as a buffer amplifier for maintaining a DC impedance balance at the terminal c . Values of resistance of resistors R_1 , R_2 and R_3 are selected at values which are suitable for maintaining DC balancing (e.g. $R_1 = R_2 = R_3$). This low-pass filter is constructed of the equivalent impedance circuit consisting of the diode bridge DB and a capacitance element consisting of condenser C_2 connected between the terminal d and ground. Accordingly, harmonic contents in a high frequency region as beyond a cut-off frequency

$$f_c = \frac{1}{2\pi CR'}$$

where R represents the equivalent impedance and C the capacitance, have been removed from the musical tone signal output from an output terminal AO.

Control voltage for variably controlling the cut-off frequency is applied to a control voltage input terminal VC. A variable current controlled by this control voltage flows through the diode bridge DB. In the present embodiment, the value of the current is determined in proportion to exponential function of the control voltage. It is convenient in a voltage circuit (not shown) provided for generating the control voltage to indicate the cut-off frequency by a logarithmic indication and produce the control voltage logarithmically relative to the cut-off frequency, because this arrangement affords a wider range of variation in the cut-off frequency. Accordingly, a cut-off frequency as indicated on an indicator is actually produced even though the control voltage is logarithmically produced.

The control voltage applied to the terminal VC is divided by resistors R_4 and R_5 ($R_4 \gg R_5$) into a small voltage in the order of mV unit and this small voltage is used as base voltage of a transistor Tr_6 . The transistor Tr_6 is provided for temperature compensation of the base-emitter of transistors $Tr_2 - Tr_5$ which provide the diode bridge DB with the constant current. The emitter of the transistor Tr_6 is connected to the bases of the transistors Tr_4 and Tr_5 . A resistor R_6 having a large value of resistance (e.g. 10 M Ω) is connected between the emitter of the transistor Tr_6 and power source $+V_{cc}$ to form a constant current circuit. Accordingly, the base voltage of the npn transistors Tr_4 and Tr_5 are controlled by the control voltage applied to the terminal VC, and a sum of a potential of the resistor R_5 to ground and the base-emitter voltage of the transistor Tr_6 becomes the base voltage of the transistors Tr_4 and Tr_5 .

In response to this base voltage, an equal collector current flows through the transistors Tr_4 and Tr_5 . Since this base voltage becomes a forward base-emitter voltage of the transistors Tr_4 and Tr_5 the collector current varies in proportion to exponential function of the base voltage due to the forward base-emitter characteristics. Accordingly, the collector current which varies in proportion to the exponential function of the control voltage flows through the transistors Tr_4 and Tr_5 .

The transistors $Tr_2 - Tr_5$ constitute a current mirror circuit, the value of the collector current flowing through the transistors Tr_3 and Tr_5 being equal to that of the collector current flowing through the transistors Tr_2 and Tr_4 . More specifically, the collectors of the transistors Tr_3 and Tr_5 being connected in common connection, so that the same collector current flows through these transistors Tr_2 and Tr_5 , whereas the pnp transistors Tr_3 and Tr_2 are equally biased with a result that the same collector current flows through line transistors Tr_3 and Tr_2 . Accordingly, the collector current flowing through the transistor Tr_2 is equal to that flowing through the transistor Tr_4 , that is, the current flowing from the collector of the transistor Tr_2 to the terminal a of the diode bridge DB through a resistor R_7 is equal to the current flowing from the terminal b to the collector of the transistor Tr_4 through a resistor R_8 . In the foregoing manner, a variable current proportionate to the exponential function of the control voltage flows from the terminal a to the terminal b in a forward direction through the respective diodes.

The values of resistance of the resistors R_7 and R_8 are made equal to each other to maintain impedance balance between the terminals c and d . While an input musical tone signal is not applied, a DC impedance balance is maintained at the terminals c and d and the other circuit portion such as the transistor Tr_1 and the resistor R_3 is separated from the terminals c and d . A variable resistor VR_1 is connected to the emitters of the transistors Tr_2 and Tr_3 to maintain balance of bias of the transistors Tr_2 and Tr_3 .

Assume that the current I_{D1} determined by the control voltage is flowing through each diode of the diode bridge DB. The forward voltage of each diode is V_{D1} as shown in FIG. 2 and the equivalent impedance produced by the diode bridge DB is a reciprocal of the inclination at the crossing point of I_{D1} and V_{D1} . If a musical tone signal is applied to the input terminal AI under this condition, the voltage at the terminal c of the diode bridge DB fluctuates in an AC manner in response to the applied musical tone signal. Since the diode bridge DB is balanced, the voltage at the terminal d also fluctuates in response to the fluctuation at the terminal c , and the musical tone signal is fed to the condenser C_2 through the equivalent impedance circuit.

As has been described in the foregoing, the cut-off frequency f_c is determined by the equivalent impedance R and the capacitance C of the condenser C_2 . The cut-off frequency therefore is proportional to reciprocal of the equivalent impedance R and varies in proportion to the current flowing through each diode of the diode bridge DB. Accordingly, the cut-off frequency is variably controlled in proportion to the exponential function of the control voltage.

The foregoing embodiment has been described with reference to a first-order passive low-pass filter circuit. The invention is not limited to this but a filter circuit of a higher order constructed of suitable equivalent imped-

ance circuit consisting of a diode bridge and a capacitance element may be effectively used.

It will also be apparent to those skilled in the art from the foregoing description that a high-pass filter circuit or a band-pass filter circuit may be constructed of a suitable equivalent impedance circuit consisting of a diode bridge and a capacitance element for variably controlling the cut-off or center frequency.

If one desires to provide musical tone signals of different pitches with the same tone color, voltage which is proportional to the pitch of the musical tone signal applied to the input terminal AI is added to the base of the transistors Tr_4 and Tr_5 to shift the filtering frequency range (the cut-off frequency) of the entire filter in accordance with the pitch of the musical tone signal.

The selectivity Q of the filter can be changed by using the diode bridge consisting the equivalent impedance circuit as shown in FIG. 1. More specifically, the equivalent impedance is changed by inserting the diode bridge as shown in FIG. 1 in negative feedback circuit of an amplifier and thereby changing the current I_D . This changes the amount of feedback and therefore gain of the amplifier. An active filter can be constructed by employing this amplifier as an active element and inserting a frequency selection circuit consisting of a resistance element and a capacitance element in positive feedback loop of the amplifier. The selectivity Q of the filter is changed in response to the change of the gain of the amplifier.

The change of the selectivity Q will be described with reference to a second order active low-pass filter shown in FIG. 4. An equivalent impedance R_x composed of a diode bridge is inserted in a negative feedback circuit of an amplifier A. Gain G_c of this amplifier A is

$$G_c = 1 + \frac{R_f}{R_x}$$

A frequency selection circuit consisting of resistors R_9 , R_{10} and condensers C_3 , C_4 is inserted in a positive feedback circuit of the amplifier A. The selectivity Q is obtained by the following equation:

$$Q = \frac{\sqrt{C_3 \cdot C_4} \cdot \sqrt{R_9 \cdot R_{10}}}{(1 - Cc) C_3 \cdot R_9 + C_3 (R_9 + R_{10})} \quad (1)$$

Since the selectivity Q changes in response to the change of the gain G_c , the selectivity Q is variably controlled in response to the control voltage.

FIG. 5 is a circuit diagram showing a second-order active low-pass filter capable of changing the selectivity Q in response to a first control voltage and also changing the cut-off frequency in response to a second control voltage. An incoming musical tone signal applied to an input terminal AI is fed to an emitter-follower transistor Tr_7 through a coupling condenser C_c . The output of the transistor Tr_7 is supplied to a condenser C_{20} through an equivalent impedance circuit consisting of diode bridge DB_1 . A variable current I_c flows through this diode bridge DB_1 for controlling the cut-off frequency of the filter. The current $I_c/2$ flows in a forward direction through each diode of the diode bridge DB_1 in response to a control voltage for variably controlling the cut-off frequency and an equivalent impedance circuit is formed by a pair of terminals on the sides of the transistor Tr_7 and the condenser C_{20} . For changing the

current I_c in response to the control voltage, a circuit as shown in FIG. 3 may be employed. Accordingly, detailed illustration of such circuit is omitted in FIG. 5,

As the current I_c increases, an apparent resistance, i.e., an equivalent impedance, decreases and the cut-off frequency increases. The output of the diode bridge DB_1 is applied to the gate of a field-effect transistor FET through a resistor R_{11} and the grounded condenser C_{20} . An amplifier is constructed of this field-effect transistor FET and transistor Tr_8 and Tr_9 , connected to the drain of the field-effect transistor FET. This amplifier constitutes the active element in the active filter (the amplifier A in FIG. 4).

The output of this amplifier is fed back to its input from the emitter of the transistor Tr_9 through condensers C_{1a} and C_{1b} . Comparing this frequency selection circuit portion with the circuit shown in FIG. 4, the output impedance of the emitter-follower transistor Tr_7 corresponds to the resistor F_9 , the condensers C_{1a} and C_{1b} to the condenser C_3 , the equivalent impedance of the diode bridge DB_1 to the resistor R_{10} and the condenser C_{20} to the condenser C_4 respectively.

If, accordingly, a signal of a much higher frequency than the cut-off frequency which is controlled by the equivalent impedance produced by the diode bridge DB_1 is applied to the input terminal AI, the frequency selection circuit operates as a secondary passive low-pass filter consisting of the output impedance of the transistor Tr_7 , the equivalent impedance of the diode bridge DB_1 , condenser C_{1a} (C_{1b}) and the condenser C_{20} . If, on the other hand, a signal of a frequency which is in the vicinity of the cut-off frequency is applied, these impedance and capacitance elements operate as an active band-pass filter having the selectivity Q . This selectivity Q is controlled in response to the change in the gain of the amplifier consisting of the field-effect transistor FET and the transistors Tr_8 and Tr_9 , as has previously been described.

The field-effect transistor FET and the transistors Tr_8 and Tr_9 constitute a positive-phase amplifier and a load resistance R_L is connected to the emitter-follower output of this amplifier. A feedback circuit is composed of a resistor R_f connected between the emitter of the transistor Tr_9 and the source of the field-effect transistor FET and a group of resistors (including resistors R_{16} , R_{17} and a diode bridge DB_2) connected between the source of the field-effect transistor FET and ground. A total value of resistance of this group of resistors is designated by a reference characters R_{x1} . Amount of negative feedback β is determined by the equation

$$\beta = \frac{R_{x1}}{R_{x1} + R_f}$$

Accordingly, the gain G_c of the amplifier becomes

$$G_c = 1 + \frac{R_f}{R_{x1}} \quad (2)$$

It will be noted from this equation that the gain of the amplifier can be changed by changing the resistance R_{x1} .

According to the present invention, the gain is changed by changing the apparent resistance of the diode bridge DB_2 . The control voltage for variably controlling the selectivity Q is applied to a control voltage input terminal VQ. The variable current con-

trolled by this control voltage flows through the diode bridge DB_2 .

The control voltage applied to the input terminal VQ is applied to the base of a transistor Tr_{10} and current corresponding to the control voltage flows through the emitter and the collector of the transistor Tr_{10} . A positive power voltage $+V_{cc}$ is applied to a terminal a of the diode bridge DB_2 through resistors R_{13} and R_{12} and a negative power voltage $-V_{EE}$ is applied to a terminal b through resistors R_{14} and R_{15} . Accordingly, the constant current flows between the terminals a and b in a forward direction through each diode. The emitter and collector of the transistor Tr_{10} are connected in parallel to the diode bridge DB_2 and the current flowing through the diode bridge DB_2 is controlled by controlling the current flowing between the emitter and collector of the transistor Tr_{10} . The values of resistance of the resistors R_{13} and R_{12} are equal to each other and the values of resistance of the resistors R_{14} and R_{15} are equal to each other, whereby impedance at a pair of terminals c and d of the diode bridge DB_2 is balanced. The transistor Tr_{10} operates in the active region.

If the control voltage is caused to decrease to bring the transistor Tr_{10} into a state which is very near the cut-off state, the current flowing through the diode bridge DB_2 increases and the apparent resistance between the terminals c and d, i.e., the equivalent impedance decreases. If, on the contrary, the control voltage is caused to increase, the collector current of the transistor Tr_{10} increases and the current flowing through the bridge DB_2 decreases resulting in increase in the equivalent impedance.

Accordingly, the resistance R_{x1} varies with the equivalent impedance of the diode bridge DB_2 with a resulting variation in the amount of negative feedback of the amplifier. From the above described equation (2), the amplifier gain G_c increases as the current flowing through the diode bridge DB_2 increases (i.e., as the equivalent impedance decreases), and the gain G_c decreases as the current decreases (i.e., as the equivalent impedance increases). In the foregoing description, "plus 1" in the equation (2) is neglected because $1 - G_c$ in the equation (1) leaves F_f/R_{x1} and gain G_c affecting the selectivity Q substantially becomes R_f/R_{x1} . As will be apparent from the foregoing description and the equation (1) the selectivity Q can be variably controlled in response to the amplifier gain.

In sum, the constant current flowing through the diode bridge DB_2 varies in response to the control voltage, and the gain of the amplifier varies in response to the variation of the current with a result that the selectivity Q is variably controlled by the control voltage. The output of the filter may also be taken out of a terminal AO provided in the feedback circuit. Furthermore, a resistor (not shown) may be inserted between the terminals a and b of the diode bridge DB_2 for dividing the current and thereby reducing the value of the constant current flowing through each diode so as to allow the most desirable portion of the forward characteristic curve of the diode to be utilized.

In the embodiment shown in FIG. 5, the cut-off frequency is changed by the diode bridge DB_1 and the selectivity Q is variably controlled, by the diode bridge DB_2 . The invention, however, is not limited to this but it is possible to change the selectivity Q only, maintaining the cut-off frequency at a constant value. In this latter case, the diode bridge DB_1 may be constructed of

normal resistance elements. It will be apparent to those skilled in the art that not only in a low-pass filter but also in a high-pass filter or a band-pass filter, the equivalent impedance circuit consisting of a diode bridge may be inserted in the feedback circuit of the amplifier for

variably controlling the amount of feedback and thereby variably controlling the selectivity Q through variation in the amplifier gain responsive to the variation in the control voltage.

In the embodiment shown in FIG. 5, a resistor R_{11} is connected to the gate input of the field-effect transistor FET. This resistor R_{11} which is of a relatively small value of resistance in the order of approximately 10Ω to 90Ω is provided for stabilization of the filter circuit. As has been described above, the cut-off frequency is changed in the embodiment shown in FIG. 5. If the cut-off frequency is selected at a relatively high point, the equivalent impedance of the diode bridge DB_1 (corresponding to the resistor R_4 in FIG. 4) becomes very low and approaches the value of the output impedance of the transistor Tr_7 (corresponding to the resistor R_9 in FIG. 4). It should be noted that in a normal case (i.e., when the cut-off frequency is not so high) the output impedance of the transistor Tr_7 is negligibly small as compared with the equivalent impedance of the diode bridge DB_1 . Accordingly, the variation in the ratio of resistance of the resistor R_9 to resistance of the resistor R_{10} in the equation (1) is almost negligibly small. If, however, the cut-off frequency is relatively high, the output impedance of the transistor Tr_7 is unnegligible since in this case the ratio of resistance of the resistor R_9 to resistance of the resistor R_{10} is appreciably different from the normal case. This increases the selectivity Q to such an extent that the filter circuit will become unstable and, in an extreme case, it will start oscillation.

To eliminate the above described disadvantage, the resistor R_{11} of small resistance is connected in series to the equivalent impedance circuit consisting of the diode bridge DB_1 . If the cut-off frequency is low, the resistor R_{11} can be neglected due to the large equivalent impedance and the selectivity Q is hardly affected by the resistor R_{11} . As the cut-off frequency increases, the resistor R_{11} exercises its influence over the output impedance of the transistor Tr_7 , causing the gain of the amplifier including the transistor FET, Tr_8 and Tr_9 to decrease equivalently. This causes the selectivity Q to decrease so that occurrence of oscillation in the filter circuit is effectively prevented even in the case of a high cut-off frequency.

What is claimed is:

1. A voltage controlled filter comprising:

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- a variable current circuit for supplying current of a value which is determined in proportion to the exponential function of a control voltage;
 - an equivalent impedance circuit including diodes connected in the form of a bridge in a forward direction from one terminal of a first pair of opposing terminals to another terminal and providing an equivalent impedance determined by the value of said current flowing through said diode at a second pair of opposing terminals, a signal to be filtered being applied to one terminal of said second pair of opposing terminals; and
 - a capacitor element connected to another terminal of said second pair of opposing terminals whereby the filtering frequency region is variably controlled in response to the magnitude of said control voltage.
2. A voltage controlled filter comprising:
- an amplifier;
 - an equivalent impedance circuit provided in a negative feedback loop of said amplifier including diodes connected in the form of a bridge in a forward direction from one of a first opposing pair of terminals to another and providing an equivalent impedance corresponding to the value of a current flowing through said diodes at a second pair of opposing terminals;
 - a variable current circuit for supplying said equivalent impedance circuit with a current of a value which is determined in proportion to the exponential function of the value of a control voltage; and
 - a frequency selecting circuit provided in a positive feedback circuit of said amplifier;
- the gain of said amplifier being changed in response to said control voltage whereby selectivity Q is variably controlled.
3. A voltage controlled filter as defined in claim 2 wherein said frequency selection circuit comprises:
- a variable current circuit for supplying current of a value which is determined in proportion to the exponential function of a second control voltage;
 - an equivalent impedance circuit including diodes connected in each circuit branch in a forward direction from one terminal of a first pair of opposing terminals to another terminal providing an equivalent impedance corresponding to the value of said current flowing through said diodes at a second pair of opposing terminals, a signal to be filtered being applied to one terminal of said second pair of opposing terminals; and
 - a capacitance element connected to another terminal of said second pair of opposing terminals; and
- wherein a filtering frequency region is variably controlled in response to variation in said second control voltage.
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