National Capital Radio & Television Museum

Artifact of the Week:

Jacobs Brothers Piano Radio





Among the most unusual radios in the museum's collection is this 1929 Jacobs Brothers Model A5016 radio/phonograph in a cabinet resembling a small grand piano. It stands about 30 inches off the floor and is about 3½ feet front to back.

Opening the facing lid (second picture) reveals an eight-tube radio chassis. The curved section behind it houses a 78-rpm phonograph. The speaker is mounted on the bottom of the cabinet, facing downward.

Jacobs Brothers was a small New York firm that initially sold pianos retail, but around 1905 began manufacturing pianos and piano cabinets. (Internet postings indicate that the company made upright rather than grand pianos.) This model was probably a one-time novelty item, perhaps for the Christmas selling season. We know of no others in existence; hence, it is likely that only a handful were ever made. We are certain that Jacobs Brothers did not design the electronics. The company probably obtained a small number of chassis from a cooperative radio manufacturer to install in these special cabinets

We do not know the original selling price, but this out-of-the ordinary radio undoubtedly would have been expensive.

If you are aware of another Jacobs Brothers piano radio, please let us know!

We appreciate your support of the museum so that historical artifacts like this one, and the stories that go with them, can be preserved for future generations. THANKS!