National Capital Radio & Television Museum

Artifact Showcase:

Majestic Model 132



This tall seven–tube 1930 Majestic console radio is called a "highboy" style. Its double doors can be closed when the radio is not in use. With inlaid wood trim, this elegant console could grace any upscale living room.

Majestic brand radios were made by the Chicago-based Grigsby-Grunow Co. The firm made and sold horn speakers in the mid-1920s, then branched out into battery eliminator power supplies for contemporary battery-operated radios. In 1929 Majestic started making and selling vacuum tubes.

In 1928, with the industry booming, Majestic launched radio manufacturing. Its new models had attractive cabinets and were engineered to perform well, with powerful dynamic speakers. (But Majestic radios are known by radio collectors to be unduly heavy. One collector said, "If you decide to collect Majestics, you had better take up bench pressing!")

Because they sounded so good and were priced reasonably, Majestic radios began flying off the showroom floors. Sales for the year June 1929 through May 1930 were $61 million, making Majestic the number one U.S. radio producer for a brief period. With every reason to be optimistic, Majestic had invested in enlarged factories. But then the Depression hit, and demand for radios plummeted. Given its high fixed costs, the company's balance sheet soon went deeply into the red, and like many other radio manufacturers, Majestic had to file for bankruptcy in the early '30s.

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!