Vintage Columbia Graphophone Type B "eagle" Phonograph. United States, Circa 1898



1 200 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Bon état

Description

View in 360°:
https://ardhamin.sirv.com/2026/09/GR-E-610/GR-E-610.spin
Watch the video on YouTube:
https://youtu.be/PdkpNoZ4c-w
Magnificent antique American Columbia Graphophone Type B "Eagle" phonograph, manufactured circa 1898 by the American Graphophone Company, with production facilities in Bridgeport, Connecticut, and commercial offices in New York. It is one of the most representative models among early American commercial phonographs, particularly appreciated for its compact design and its importance in the beginnings of home sound reproduction. This example stands out for its excellent condition, the fact that all its

Dealer

IberAntiques
Antiques and Collectibles
Tel : +34 976 45 39 31
Mobile : +34 617 46 85 03

Calle Juan Cabrero, 18 Local AA
Zaragoza 50007

components are original, and its perfect working order, delivering very good sound quality despite being more than 125 years old.

The phonograph retains its original period mechanism, fully exposed and mounted on a sturdy rectangular wooden base. Its original spring-wound motor is wound using the distinctive side-mounted butterfly-style winding crank and retains the construction characteristic of early Columbia Graphophones. It is also fitted with its original Columbia reproducer, bearing the manufacturer's inscriptions and corresponding patent references. This component, essential for playing wax cylinders, is in good working condition. The sound is amplified entirely acoustically through its conical metal horn, which is also original to the period.

One of its greatest attractions is its magnificent original domed wooden cover, fitted with a carrying handle made of wood and metal. One side features the large original "The Graphophone" decorative decal, with elegant ornamental lettering in gold and black. The original decal is exceptionally well preserved. In addition to protecting the delicate mechanism when the machine is not in use, this cover adds considerable decorative appeal and perfectly captures the distinctive appearance of early American phonographs.

The phonograph retains several original identification plates and inscriptions that allow its manufacturer, model, and original commercial identification to be precisely established. Particularly noteworthy is the metal plate mounted on the wooden base, bearing the

designation "The Graphophone", the identification "Type B", the name of the American Graphophone Company of New York, and serial number 134359. It also retains another plate from the Columbia Phonograph Company, identifying it as the exclusive distributor of the American Graphophone Company, with references to various American cities. Additional inscriptions appear on the mechanism, on the end of the cylinder mandrel, and on the reproducer itself, accompanied by several patent dates from the final years of the 19th century. These dates refer to patents associated with the technology and should not be confused with the exact manufacturing date of the machine.

The phonograph operates by means of a mechanical spring-wound motor. Once the motor has been wound, it rotates the wax cylinder while the reproducer moves along the cylinder, following the recorded groove. The vibrations received by the diaphragm are transmitted to the metal horn, which amplifies the sound entirely through acoustic means. The entire mechanism works correctly and allows historic wax cylinder recordings to be enjoyed with excellent sound quality for a machine dating from the late 19th century. Its operation also offers the fascinating opportunity to watch the various components of this early sound reproduction technology at work.

The condition of this example is particularly appealing, both for the appearance of the wood and for the excellent presentation of its mechanism and original components. The wood has a beautiful warm tone and retains its period finish, with only minor natural signs of age. The metal components display an attractive aged patina that adds character without detracting from the overall appearance. The decorative decal,

identification plates, horn, reproducer, and original mechanism are all preserved in very satisfactory condition. Together, these features make this phonograph a particularly attractive example of the first commercially available machines designed for playing sound recordings in the home.

This Columbia Graphophone Type B "Eagle" combines several qualities highly valued by collectors: original components, excellent condition, an attractive presentation, and perfect working order. Its mechanical construction, wooden cover with its magnificent original decal, and historical importance in the beginnings of the phonograph industry make it a very special piece for enthusiasts of early sound reproduction equipment, as well as collectors of historic scientific instruments and pioneering music reproduction technologies.

Measurements: Wooden base: 30 x 18.3 cm (11.81 x 7.20 in). Horn: 36.5 cm long, with a bell diameter of 18 cm (14.37 x 7.09 in).

History of the Columbia Phonograph Company and the Graphophone Type B "Eagle":

The Columbia Phonograph Company was founded in Washington, D.C., in 1889 by Edward D. Easton, during the early years of the commercial expansion of sound reproduction. Its name came from the District of Columbia, where the company began operating as a distributor of phonographs and wax cylinders. Over time, Columbia became one of the most important

companies in the American phonograph industry and one of the leading brands in the history of recorded music.

The company maintained a close relationship with the American Graphophone Company, founded in 1887 and dedicated to manufacturing machines based on the technical advances developed by Alexander Graham Bell, Chichester Bell, and Charles Sumner Tainter. Their research helped refine early phonographs through the use of wax cylinders as a medium for sound recording and reproduction.

The Columbia Graphophone Type B, popularly known as the "Eagle", was introduced in September 1897. Its nickname referred to the U.S. ten-dollar gold coin known as an "eagle", an amount that matched the original selling price of the simplest version. Examples equipped with a wooden base and protective cover, such as the one offered here, were sold for twelve dollars.

The "Eagle" was notable for its compact size, mechanical spring-wound motor, and relatively affordable price. These characteristics helped make it popular and contributed to the wider adoption of cylinder phonographs in American homes, where such machines had previously been expensive and relatively uncommon. Production continued into the early years of the 20th century, with several variations and minor technical modifications.

Today, the Columbia Graphophone Type B "Eagle" is regarded as one of the most

representative models from the beginnings of the phonograph industry, a reminder of a time when mechanical sound reproduction was beginning to transform entertainment and everyday life.

The recording featured in our video: "Come Along, Little Girl, Come Along" - Kahns & Hahn, circa 1905.

In the video accompanying our description, you can hear an original two-minute Columbia wax cylinder played on this very phonograph. It contains the popular American song "Come Along, Little Girl, Come Along" ("Ven conmigo, pequeña, ven conmigo"), catalog number 32777. The song, with music by James B. Mullen and lyrics by Alfred Bryan, was published in 1905 and reflects the lighthearted and humorous repertoire that enjoyed great popularity during the early years of the phonograph industry.

The University of Illinois historical archive identifies this recording as a performance by the vocal duo Kahns & Hahn. The cylinder dates from a period when American phonograph companies marketed popular songs through acoustic recordings on wax cylinders, played on mechanical machines without the need for electricity. Although the song is documented as having been published in 1905, the exact date of this particular recording session has not been established with certainty.

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