Antique Klingsor Gramophone With Stained-glass Doors. Germany, Circa 1915.



2 500 EUR

Period : 20th century

Condition : Bon état

Description

Watch the video on YouTube:
https://youtu.be/NarJzAe-Qio
Exceptional antique German Klingsor gramophone, manufactured circa 1915 and equipped with one of the most unusual acoustic amplification systems developed during the early days of recorded sound: a harp-like assembly of metal strings positioned in front of the sound outlet. This distinctive resonance mechanism, characteristic of Klingsor gramophones, sets these machines apart from conventional gramophones and makes them particularly appealing for their ingenious construction and decorative beauty. This example retains its original motor in perfect working order, along with the complete set of strings belonging to its delicate resonance harp.

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The gramophone features an elegant upright oak cabinet, beautifully crafted and decorated with moldings, turned wooden elements, and surfaces that reveal the attractive natural grain of the wood. The upper section is crowned by a molded cornice and an ornamental wooden crest with decorative cutouts, while the base rests on four small turned feet. Its construction recalls the domestic music cabinets of the early 20th century and gives it a particularly attractive appearance.

The upper section features two wooden front doors fitted with panels of multicolored decorative glass arranged in an elegant geometric design. The glass combines shades of yellow, green, white, and violet, together with translucent sections of varying textures. The oak frames and metal fittings retain the charm associated with finely made antique furniture. When opened, the doors reveal the remarkable acoustic assembly that is the most distinctive feature of these gramophones.

At the center of the upper section is the Klingsor resonance system, consisting of an elegant gold-finished metal frame shaped like a lyre or harp. This structure supports a series of fine metal strings stretched vertically and at different angles, with their corresponding tuning pins along the lower section. This example retains every string, an especially important detail in such a delicate and unusual acoustic mechanism. The name "KLINGSOR" appears at the lower center of the frame, incorporated into the decorative metalwork itself.

Behind the strings is the circular opening of the internal acoustic conduit, through which sound from the soundbox (reproducer) is projected. The strings were designed to vibrate through sympathetic resonance with certain musical frequencies and, according to the principle promoted by the manufacturer, to enrich the gramophone's sound. Although it is difficult to determine to what extent this system actually improved sound reproduction, it remains one of the most original examples of acoustic experimentation from the early 20th century.

The lower section houses the turntable and playback mechanisms, protected by a sloping, hinged front lid. Opening it reveals the metal turntable covered in green felt, complete with its central spindle, metal tonearm, and soundbox. The wooden motorboard also incorporates a speed regulator, a brake mechanism, and two small circular metal receptacles for storing needles. The winding crank is located on the right side of the cabinet.

The gramophone retains its original Klingsor acoustic soundbox, with a circular label decorated in gold and dark tones bearing the inscription "KLINGSOR D.R. Patent". The nickel-plated metal tonearm connects to the internal acoustic amplification system through a curved conduit. A metal nameplate is also preserved along the front edge of the turntable compartment, bearing the name "Klingsor" and the inscription "PATENTED - IN-U AUSLAND-PATENTE", referring to the brand's patent protection in Germany and other countries.

The gramophone retains its original spring-wound motor, which is in perfect working order. The machine plays period records correctly, as demonstrated in the video accompanying our description. Its overall condition is good, with the signs of use and age expected of a piece manufactured more than a century ago. The wood retains its attractive warm color and the beautiful natural grain of the oak, while the moldings and other surfaces show minor marks and wear. The multicolored decorative glass panels preserve their attractive contrasts, and the gold-finished metal frame of the harp retains its impressive ornamental appeal.

This Klingsor brings together several features particularly appreciated by collectors: an exceptionally unusual resonance system, an elegant oak cabinet with decorative glass panels, a complete resonance harp with all its strings, and its original motor in perfect working order. Its distinctive design and historical importance in the development of mechanical sound reproduction make it a particularly desirable addition to a specialized collection of antique gramophones.

Measurements: Overall height: 97 cm (38.19 in). Width: 40 cm (15.75 in). Depth: 38 cm (15 in).

History of Klingsor Gramophones and Their Resonance System:

Klingsor gramophones first appeared in Germany around 1907, during a period of intense experimentation with mechanical sound reproduction. Their manufacture is associated

with the German firm Klingsorwerke, linked to Krebs & Klenk and established in Hanau-Kesselstadt, near Frankfurt. The development of their unusual acoustic system is associated with Heinrich Klenk and a series of patents registered during the early years of the 20th century.

The defining feature of these machines was a set of metal strings stretched in front of the acoustic outlet and arranged on an ornamental frame resembling a harp or lyre. According to the principle advocated by their manufacturers, the strings were intended to vibrate sympathetically with certain musical notes, producing additional resonance that would improve sound quality. This approach combined acoustic experimentation with an extraordinary visual presentation, although the actual acoustic benefits of the system remain difficult to demonstrate.

Klingsor gramophones were marketed in a variety of configurations, ranging from domestic models to larger machines and coin-operated versions intended for public use. Many featured elaborate wooden cabinets, decorative doors, and prominently displayed resonance harps. Production continued for several years, and different variations were also manufactured in Great Britain during the 1920s.

The distinctive design of these gramophones has been documented in specialized publications such as "The Talking Machine: An Illustrated Compendium 1877-1929" by Timothy C. Fabrizio and George F. Paul, in which the authors describe the resonating string system and highlight the visual appeal of these machines.

Today, Klingsor gramophones hold a special place in the history of early phonographs and gramophones, representing one of the most original approaches to mechanical sound reproduction before the introduction of electrical recording and playback technologies.

The Recording Featured in Our Video: "Here Comes Santa Claus" - Gene Autry. Recorded in 1947.

In the video accompanying our description, we hear the famous American Christmas song "Here Comes Santa Claus", performed by Gene Autry and recorded in Hollywood on August 28, 1947. The original record used in the video was issued on the Columbia label, with catalog number 20377 and matrix number HCO 2587, corresponding to the first recording of this composition. The song first appeared in 1947 and was later released under the Columbia 20377 catalog number, associated with a 1948 edition.

Gene Autry (1907-1998), popularly known as "The Singing Cowboy", was one of America's most popular entertainers during the 1930s, 1940s, and 1950s. A singer, actor, and radio star, he achieved enormous fame through his Western films and country music recordings. He also became a major figure in American Christmas music, particularly through his performances of "Here Comes Santa Claus" and "Rudolph, the Red-Nosed Reindeer".

The song originated in 1947, inspired by Gene Autry's own experience during the traditional

Hollywood Christmas parade. Its success helped establish it as one of the most recognizable Christmas classics in the United States. The recording retains the cheerful, festive character typical of musical productions of that era and offers an interesting glimpse into Gene Autry's popularity during the years following World War II.

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