

“Hong Kong Pop 60+” Exhibition

Audio Tour Script

Free-standing radio

1960s

This floor-standing radio and record player dates from the 1960s, and was made by a German company.

During the 1960s, a variety of vacuum tube radios were produced in Germany, Britain, the United States and Canada. European radios were especially notable for their exquisite design, classy appearance and comprehensive functions, and were regarded as luxury goods.

In 1928, RTHK began broadcasting, marking the emergence of Hong Kong’s broadcasting industry and the enhanced circulation of social information. In 1949, Rediffusion Radio was launched, opening a new chapter for radio entertainment. There was a wide range of programmes, not only in English and Cantonese, but also in Mandarin, Xiamen and Chaozhou dialects. These were very popular with Chinese people speaking various languages.

In an era when the television and Internet were not yet popular, the radio was a source of important information such as traffic information, weather forecasts and news. Listening to the radio was one of the most popular leisure and entertainment activities for the public. At that time, most herbal tea shops played Rediffusion Radio programmes to attract customers, boosting the popularity of radio broadcasting.

In 1959, Commercial Radio Hong Kong commenced operations. Then, radio dramas and airwave novels were most popular with audiences. Later, in the 1970s, disc jockey culture was a hit with young people, making it trendy to listen to the radio.

In the mid and late 1950s, Japan developed the transistor radio. Many affordable transistor radios were imported into Hong Kong, and the public scrambled to buy these radios as they were low-priced, good quality and easy to carry. The radio audience soared, and listening to the radio became a major form of public entertainment for working people in factories and homes.

People could listen to outdoor events such as football games and horse racing on the radio, anytime and anywhere, so entertainment was no longer limited to certain places, and people’s lifestyles were gradually changing. Radio programmes provided free entertainment for the general public, who were busy working. In 1967, the government ended the radio licensing system, making the radio even more popular.

In the face of Hong Kong's rapidly changing society, the radio broadcasting industry constantly evolves together with Hong Kong. With the rapid progress in science and technology, radio broadcasting has developed from mono to stereo, and digital broadcasting has been launched. Besides providing current affairs, information, education and entertainment, radio broadcasts also promote culture and create trends. These diverse radio programmes were closely related to people's lives, and have accompanied generations of people in Hong Kong as they grew up. Now, they are among our precious collective memories.