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Saba 400/10T

BY THOMAS J. WIEGAND -- Web edition

Tom Wiegand's interest in German radios goes back to his childhood when most of his friends had German consoles in their homes. We're fortunate to have his promise to supply us with more articles on the subject in the future. (Editor)

Schwarzwalder Apparate Bau Anstalt (Saba), or Black Forest Equipment Building Concern, was founded in Villingen, Germany, in 1839 as, yes, a maker of cuckoo clocks and music boxes. Radio production began in 1923. By the 1950s, a small line of high-quality table radios, consoles, tape recorders and television sets was produced. Saba celebrated its Jubilee Year (marking 125 years in business) in 1960.

Shown in Figure 1 is the 1960 Model 400/10T table radio with remote control unit RS 125. Electric motors connected to the volume and tuning control knobs enables the listener to tune stations with the four buttons at the front of the set below the row of control buttons. The remote control permits the listener also to control volume, select the AM or FM band, choose a "music" or "speech" impression, and turn the radio on or off -- all from a distance of 25 feet.

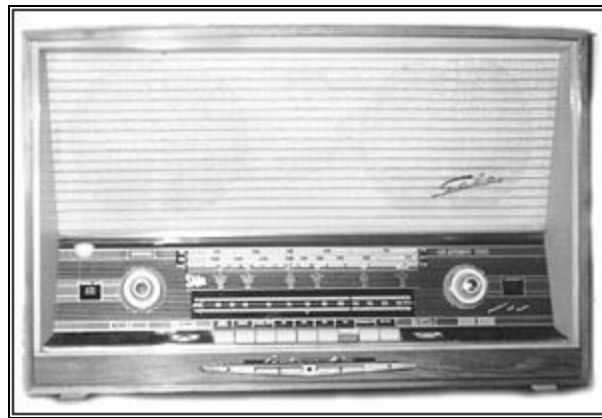


Figure 1. The Saba Model 400/10T table radio.

Depressing the "Automatic Off" button allows the listener to tune stations manually. The reception of roughly tuned stations can be improved by depressing the button again and automatic tuning takes over -- sort of a primitive AFC, but effective on both the AM and FM bands.

The 400 is also provided with an adjustable ferrite antenna to improve AM reception. It also has illuminated control buttons. When pressed, the "Phono/Tape, AM, LW, SW, and FM" buttons light up to show which of the radio's functions has been selected.

Five speakers -- two 24 cm diameter round and one 11.5 X 17 cm oval speaker in front, and one 20 cm diameter round speaker in each side -- provide excellent sound, and extension speakers can be connected. The usual connections typical of German radios of the era can be found on the back of the set; namely, jacks for connecting a phonograph, tape recorder, antennas, and ground.

Its size is as impressive as its features and sound quality: 28" x 18¹/₄" x 12¹/₂". Visiting friends and relatives remark that it's the best-sounding radio they've heard. In my opinion, it is truly a monument to a lost art -- and an example of craftsmanship that, in this "throwaway" day and age, could never again be duplicated.

Reference:

Operation Instructions and Service Instructions for Saba 400 Automatic, 1961-62.

(Thomas J. Wiegand, 1083 Mosefan St., Franklin Square, NY 11010.)

Thomas J. Wiegand fell in love with Blaupunkt table radios as a youth in New York, and started his collection around age 15 with a Blaupunkt console and a Grundig portable. He is currently working on a non-technical book about the German electronics industry. He also has been collecting beer advertising items for the past 27 years.

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