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The bright red Speaker

It is not hard to imagine the unique red car being part of the social life in the 1950s. In Austria, countless events took place, be it motor sports events or traditional festivals. Social cohesion was great, works outings and private meetings among work colleagues were daily fare and everyone enjoyed the time after the terrible privations of World War II. In Graz, a dealer of radio, television and consumer electronics – ‘Radio Reiss’ based at Mariahilfstraße 13 – attracted a lot of attention. At festivals, parades or other events, a bright red car drove along and spread not only background music through its large loudspeaker on the roof but also some information or announcements. Surely the presence of the unique vehicle has been anchored in the minds and probably many people had the vehicle with the white company lettering on the roof in mind if it came to a new purchase of an electrical device. If so, he most probably did – quite unconsciously – his purchase at ‘Radio Reiss’!

The basic vehicle was a Type XX manufactured by Steyr in 1929. So far, the connoisseurs of the scene agree. However, those who were responsible for the construction of the bodywork with its two glass display inserts on both sides were lost over the decades. It seems that ‘Radio Reiss’ bought the car and only fitted it with the various additions like the powerful loudspeaker and the lettering on the roof. One possible genre for which the converted Steyr XX once fulfilled its duty may have been the funeral industry.

AutoCult GmbH

Äußere Further Straße 3
90530 Wendelstein
Germany

Tel. +49 / 9129 / 296 4280
Fax +49 / 9129 / 296 4281
info@autocult.de

www.autocult-models.de