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Star Trek TOS Original Series Tricorder Prop (1966)

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EMAIL COMMUNICATION NOTE (ADDED 5/30): Hi folks. My thanks to the ebay members who have communicated with me so far providing complimentary feedback on this prop! As well, there has been the message skeptical of this items authenticity. While I did not personally see this prop used on the Desilu Studios soundstage in 1966 and track its movements continuously since then; I would stress that it has been judged authentic by highly respected dealers/experts and my own obsessive investigations and comparisons of its design details against episode screenshots, etc. To all: Please do not bid on this item if you have doubts about it!

Also, my apologies to a recent correspondent for being so verbose that I exceeded the message length allowable in the ebay My Messages window!!! I tried to send a second message but could not respond "twice" in the ebay system - I didn't intentionally stop in mid-sentence as it appears!

ITEM LOCATION NOTE (ADDED 5/29): Unfortunately, I've had a security issue overnight with trespassing; probably just a coincidence with the posting of this auction, but, just to be overly cautious, this item and others of value have been relocated away from my residence for safekeeping purposes. And some other security measures have been taken.

TO INTRODUCE MYSELF: Hi folks. I'm an automotive manufacturing engineer from Michigan and have been a life-long fan & collector of Star Trek memorabilia; acquiring some of my earliest TOS collectibles as a teenager in the early '70s from the Gene Roddenberry owned Lincoln Enterprises company (original film clip frames from the cutting room floor, patches, etc.). Over the years, I've been fortunate to obtain a number of authentic hand props/costumes from the different television and movie incarnations of Star Trek; and the sources for these items have ranged from well known auction houses (such as Butterfields & Butterfields and Profiles In History) to established memorabilia dealers to fellow private collectors and on several occasions cast / production crew members of the Star Trek shows directly. I've always attempted to deal with highly reputable firms & individuals; and have extensively researched the items in my collection by comparing them against closeup photos of similar props seen on-screen in episodes/films (the conversion of TOS episodes to DVD format greatly enhanced one's ability to study Original Series on-screen props); as well as comparing them against pictures in acknowledged reference publications such as "The Art of Star Trek" and other reputable reference material (auction listings where the seller has a confirmed association with the series, etc.).

TO INTRODUCE THE TRICORDER!!! ...: Having provided that background information; I'd now like to present you with the opportunity to acquire one of the centerpieces of my collection - an exceptional screen-used Tricorder hand prop from the first season of Star Trek (1966). I obtained it in 1997 from Larry Meredith, the proprietor of Sterncastle Collectibles in Irvine, California and have treasured it for over nine years. Sterncastle Collectibles is a UACC Registered Dealer (a Lifetime Member) specializing in vintage Hollywood, Sci-Fi, Horror & Fantasy autographs and memorabilia. Perhaps you recall that Larry regularly authored a column reporting auction house entertainment memorabilia activity for the monthly Autograph Collector magazine. The Tricorder is accompanied by its original Certificate of Authenticity from Sterncastle Collectibles as well as a typed letter from Larry Meredith that provides a detailed description of the prop along with an embedded photograph.

AUTHENTICATED BY WELL RESPECTED UACC DEALER STERNCASTLE COLLECTIBLES AND NOTED STAR TREK AUTHORITY GREG JEIN

Additionally, the letter from Sterncastle Collectibles confirms that this tricorder was examined by Greg Jein; perhaps the most highly regarded authority on Star Trek memorabilia and well known Star Trek model-maker, prop artist & collector; who confirmed the authenticity of the piece. (Larry Meredith indicated to me on the phone at the time that he attended a Los Angeles area memorabilia convention/film industry trade show at which Mr. Jein was present as an exhibitor/guest and that the tricorder was viewed at that time.)

For completeness; the following is an excerpt of the main text of the Sterncastle letter: "This piece is an authentic first-season (1966) Tricorder. The Tricorder is a two-drawer version with two 1.375" drawer pulls and a 47" double-stitched strap finished on both sides. The case is vacu-formed with two screws on the back and one screw on each side where the strap is joined to the case. The top compartment contains a face plate housing a 1.75" x 1.5" convex plastic "screen", a 0.5" square silver-colored grill, three blue "jewels", and three simulated knobs. The first drawer houses eight simulated disks and a 1.25" circular "moray". The metal bar separating the top compartment from the two drawers exhibits small amounts of aged glue where it joins each side. The second (bottom) drawer does not open. The Tricorder described above was personally examined by noted Star Trek authority Greg Jein on 1-5-97. Mr. Jein stated that the Tricorder is authentic and is from the show's first season, as evidenced by the construction details and the straight drawer pulls which were only used on first-season Tricorders - After the first season, the drawer pulls were made with a 90-degree angle."

And now, some words, if you will indulge me further - on Original Series props and their authentication. **And some important remarks on the condition of this incredible item...** It should be remembered that back in the '60s; television special effects were much less sophisticated than they are today. Many of the props that were created were never intended for "close-up" photography or a high level of visual scrutiny by the audience; and thus, were somewhat crudely

constructed with visible glue stains and other imperfections. Usually, only a very small number of "hero" props, sometimes with working components (like the rotating moray Trek communicator built with a stopwatch mechanism) were constructed that looked highly presentable; most of the props were not. Some TOS "stunt" pieces fabricated of rubber are incredibly messy - even ugly in appearance - but were made especially to be thrown about in action scenes far from the focus of the camera. This tricorder does have glue stains visible in 5 or 6 places, has some light to moderate scratches on the metal components (some appear to be part of the manufacturing process) and some light scratches, tiny chips or creases in some of the plastic components. Also, the small drawer which opens to reveal the eight simulated discs and moray pattern (the middle compartment drawer) seems to have been mounted not perfectly straight into the body of the tricorder so that when it hangs open it appears to be at a slight (perhaps 5 to 10 degree angle). This is all evident in the detailed photographs of the prop included below; but I want to point them out to ensure that the potential buyer knows of them -- and should expect to see them or similar imperfections in an authentic '60s Trek prop. Additionally, when attempting to establish the authenticity of an item; it is very important to remember that these props were created typically by hand, one at a time; sometimes by more than one prop artist, and thus will not always look perfectly identical to one another or always follow the exact same design/component scheme. I've learned that some TOS communicators featured the leatherlike textured skin surface molded into the black plastic or vacuform main body; while other communicators had completely smooth black plastic surfaces. Some Tricorders had stitching and finishing on both sides of the carrying strap; others had only one finished side of the strap (one side black - the other raw brown), and some had no border stitching. As mentioned earlier, only 1st season Tricorders had straight drawer pulls, while later season ones had right angle pulls. Also, the large bottom drawer on some Tricorders was hinged to open and reveal a storage compartment (where Leonard Nimoy was famous for sticking his used partially-eaten lollipops!); while other Tricorders (like this one) did not have a functional bottom drawer. Early first season phasers had white handles; but they didn't film that well, so the common black handle paint scheme was introduced. If you pop a TOS DVD in your player; you will see some of the differences in straps, etc. that I mentioned. I have also received & come across some incorrect information on Original Series props from considered experts in the field. For example, I was recently told by the "expert" at a very well known auction house that has had a number of highly publicized Star Trek auctions in recent years that "ALL" authentic TOS communicators had their brass pop up antenna grills manufactured from a sheet of metal with prepunched holes (automatically machined holes perfectly spaced) and that any communicator with manually drilled or misaligned holes in the antenna could be immediately considered a replica. This is simply wrong; as some of the communicators photographed in "The Art of Star Trek"; some closeup prop views in TOS episodes "This Side of Paradise" and "The Omega Glory"; and even a recent communicator sold at auction from that very same auction house accompanied by a production crew letter clearly established. Also; a well known prop maker has written in online articles regarding TOS Tricorders that the three rhinestone indicator lights on authentic Tricorders should all be blue in color (similar to this Tricorder; blue representing Science); yet a Tricorder that sold in Profiles famous Matt Jefferies auction in 2001 with a letter of provenance from set decorator John Dwyer had a set of yellow, red, and white indicator lights. My sincere recommendation when attempting to authenticate these items is that a great deal of importance/significance can be associated with an expert's opinion; but the word of an expert should not preclude the need for individual research and, ultimately, the opinion of the expert, if true, should be validated by research on the filmed footage of the series itself. I should stress that; as mentioned in the introduction section, I spent quite a bit of time comparing this tricorder against available reference photos & episode screen shots after I first acquired it so that my opinion on its authenticity was based on personal research in addition to the examinations of the experts.

REGARDING PRICING:

The starting bid for this auction, while significant, should be considered with regard to recent auction sales history. In particular, the December 12th, 2001 Profiles In History auction of the Tricorder mentioned above featured a pre-auction estimate of \$12,000 - \$15,000 and a closing bid amount (not including buyer premium) of \$45,000. My starting bid amount is probably low but reflects the upper end of the 2001 Profiles estimate. (See the included picture of the Profiles lot for comparison.)

REGARDING BIDDING:

Please bid only if you are serious about fulfilling the purchase obligation. The placement of a bid legally binds the bidder to purchase the lot at the bid amount. Please carefully think before you bid!

I do reserve the right to cancel any bids from low or zero feedback individuals or those with significant negative feedback in their profiles that could threaten successful completion of the auction.

PLEASE NOTE THAT THIS SALE IS FINAL; AND THAT YOU ARE PURCHASING THE TRICORDER AS-IS.

To use the words that America's most famous auction houses ALWAYS put in their auction catalogs to limit liability and define the AS-IS sale: THIS PROPERTY IS SOLD "AS IS" and the seller makes no representation or warranty, express or implied, as to the title, merchantability, fitness or condition of the property or as to the correctness of description, genuineness, attribution, provenance or period of the property or as to whether the purchaser acquires any copyrights or other intellectual property rights in lots sold.

If you have any questions or concerns, please feel free to email me BEFORE you bid. This item can not be returned for a refund after it has been purchased. Payment is expected within 10 days of completion of the auction. I accept PayPal, Money Orders/Cashiers Checks or Personal Checks (subject to a 7 day hold).

REGARDING SHIPPING:

You must provide a proper street address for shipping purposes (No P.O. Box) since the Tricorder will be sent by expedited courier (most likely Fedex Overnight or Second Business Day) with a tracking number. If you are paying with PayPal, (and using a credit card) then the shipping address must match your address on record with your credit card company & PayPal.

THIS IS A RARE OPPORTUNITY TO ACQUIRE AN INCREDIBLE, AUTHENTIC PIECE OF STAR TREK HISTORY DATING TO THE FIRST SEASON OF THE ORIGINAL SERIES THAT KICKED OFF THE LEGENDARY STAR TREK PHENOMENON! WHAT A FITTING WAY TO CELEBRATE THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF STAR TREK!

THANKS FOR VISITING THIS AUCTION LISTING, AND ...

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