

Karaoke Machines

A revolution in entertainment began in the 1970s when the first karaoke machines came on to the market in Japan. They were expensive but the price came down and the modern version we all know today, the brainchild of a Filipino inventor, took the 1980s by storm. The phenomenon spread throughout the world and it's here to stay.

Not everyone is a fan but most people enjoy a fun night out in a Karaoke Bar. Secret devotees prefer to use karaoke machines from the privacy of their homes! It takes a certain amount of bravado to get up and sing in front of a roomful of people. Great singers have been discovered and the not so great have, at least, built up some self-confidence.

The early Karaoke Bars, sometimes known as KTV Boxes used basic equipment using cassette tapes. These were updated through time with CDs, laserdiscs, VCDs and DVDs. The karaoke machines became more sophisticated and so did the venues. Small, cordoned off areas in clubs gave way to karaoke lounges, devoted to the dedicated fan. Some bars have dance floors and disco lights.

Competitions are popular with venues offering prizes for the best singer. Some of these go through various heats, ending in a final and a lucrative cash prize or even the chance to record in a professional studio.

Technology has provided this form of entertainment with innovations to keep everyone interested. Karaoke machines are designed to make it easy for people and most machines enable the singer to select the key that suits their voice. Many machines have sound effects such as putting echo onto the vocal.

Machines have been adapted to use MIDI computer software and the MIDI system is also used for placing karaoke on to cell phones. VCDs are increasingly popular with some specialist versions available, such as Cantonese Opera, a favorite with Hong Kong customers.

Video karaoke games are popular too, as developed for PlayStation 2. The Microsoft Xbox system, launched in 2004, offers downloaded songs for karaoke machines to store. Enthusiasts can even get a karaoke fix in the car. A Chinese car manufacturer offers a machine as standard in their models. This will surely spread to other suppliers around the world.

These machines have provided fun and the chance to socialize in every kind of society, bringing together the young and old. Technology will bring in new ways of enjoying karaoke but getting together with family and friends, remembering

old songs is its greatest gift.