

MFJ-941C VERSA TUNER II

This is an older MFJ tuner I bought used a number of years ago and the following is a brief review and comparison with two other tuners.



At this time the latest version is the MFJ-941E. The "E" model is probably wider as the Antenna Selector switch is on the front. The "C" model has it on the back. I like the size of this tuner but it is inconvenient to have the Antenna Selector switch on the back although you really don't need to see it if you are changing switch positions, just count the switch positions. I couldn't find the dimensions of the "E" model. The photo above is showing the "C" model sitting on top of my IC-7300 and is about an inch narrower than the 7300.



Three SO-239 connectors are available for three antennas using coaxial cable. Connectors labeled COAX 2 and COAX 1 can be connected directly to the transmitter via the switch shown above or switched to use the tuner circuitry. The BYPASS COAX connector cannot be routed through the tuner circuitry. You can use this for a dummy load or I use it for my tri-band beam that doesn't need the tuner. There are also outputs for a balanced line or a single wire antenna.

I am reasonably impressed with this tuner. I have two other manual tuners, a Drake MN-4C and a Johnson Match Box. Both the Drake and the MFJ are rated at 300 Watts but the Drake tuner is much larger and uses bigger parts than the MFJ. The Johnson Match Box instruction manual rates it as 275 Watts to the final amplifier, an odd way of rating a tuner. At the time many amateurs probably did not have an accurate way of measuring output power and/or manufactures of commercial transmitters did not provide this information. It uses bigger parts than the Drake. The MFJ tuner is able to tune almost anything and seems to have a larger tuning range than the other two. The Johnson Match Box may have been designed mainly as an open wire tuner and it doesn't appear to be able to tune anything much below 50 Ohms. Because of the size of the parts used in the MFJ tuner I would be a little concerned running 300 Watts into it. I have run up to about 180 Watts on 20 meters SSB into the MFJ tuner without a problem. A negative is the meter size. It would be nice if it was a little bigger, a trade off because of the size of the case. It would be also nice if the meter was back lit. I believe the later "E" model is back lit.

The tuner was intermittent when I got it and the problem was the poor quality of the SO-239 connectors used. As can be seen the Transmitter connector has been changed. My Drake tuner uses similar connectors and I had to change two of them. The connector internal sleeve loses tension. I also had to repair the connection to the case on the Bypass Coax SO-239 connector. The case paint was causing a poor ground connection. On the MFJ tuner I had to tighten the nuts on both the Transmitter and Antenna variable capacitors holding them to the case. MFJ uses an insulation material to isolate the capacitor from the case. I don't move these controls much so I don't know if they will loosen up again.

I use this tuner when operating FT-8/FT-4 on a non-resonate antenna where the IC-7300 auto tuner won't tune.

Overall I like the tuner. If you are looking for a used manual tuner for a typical 100 Watt class radio this may be right for you. Just consider you may have to repair it at some time.

February 6, 2020

Home Page www.ve6kq.com