

La Pendulerie



Dubuc - Rémond - Daguerre

Exceptional Neoclassical White Carrara Marble and Gilt Bronze Antique Mantel Clock “Apollo Citharoedus and the Muses”, Louis XVI period

Jean-Baptiste-Charles-Gabriel Dubuc, known as “Dubuc the Younger”

The Bronze Mounts attributed to François Rémond

Probably Made under the Supervision of Dominique Daguerre

Paris, Louis XVI period, circa 1785

Height 70 cm; width 68 cm; depth 18.5 cm

The round white enamel dial, signed “Dubuc Le Jeune à Paris”, indicates the Arabic numeral hours, fifteen-minute intervals, and date by means of three hands, two of which are made of pierced gilt bronze, and a blued steel pointer. The magnificent gilt bronze and white marble neoclassical case features finely chased gilt bronze allegorical or mythological figures. The engine-turned bezel is adorned with a bead frieze. The movement is housed in an octagonal case that is surmounted by the figure of Apollo playing the cithara (Apollo citharoedus). He is clad in light drapery and is wearing laced sandals; a quiver with feathers is slung across his chest. The god of harmony and balance, he is seated among clouds and is playing a five-stringed cithara whose sides are adorned with acanthus leaves. Flanking the dial, two female figures dressed in classical drapery are seated on an entablature with a fringed valance, ornamented with a flower, bead, and cord border; it is centered by two facing putti against a matted ground that terminate in scrolling with rosettes. The putti carry a ribbon-tied flower wreath. The female figures represent muses who with flower and leaf swags with bunches of grapes and pinecones slung over their shoulders. The first, who is playing a double flute, represents Euterpe, who brings joy and pleasure with her music. The second, playing the drum, represents Terpsichore, who spreads the joyous cadence of rhythm and dance. The plinth, bordered by a frieze of stylized foliage, is supported on

a quadrangular base with rounded corners that is adorned with egg and dart and seeded laurel torus friezes. It is ornamented with two satyr children playing instruments, masks of Mercury within medallions decorated with bead friezes, and winged children that terminate in scrolling arabesques supporting a bearded mask. The clock is raised on eight tapering feet that are chased with egg and dart friezes and diagonal fluting.

HISTORICAL

The large size of this clock, as well as the remarkable chasing and gilding of its bronze mounts and the sculptural treatment of its three mythological figures, set it apart from most other clocks made during the late Louis XVI period. It may be considered one of the masterpieces of late 18th century Parisian clockmaking. It was made by several of the finest artisans working in the field of the decorative arts at the time. Thus, while the dial is signed by the clockmaker Dubuc Le Jeune, the gilt bronze mounts, in which burnishing contrasts elegantly with matte areas, may be attributed to François Rémond (circa 1747-1812), one of the most important Parisian chaser-gilders of the last third of the 18th century.

Rémond used the same mask and putti frieze on the famous "à l'étude" clock, which was sold by Daguerre beginning in 1784. An example of this clock is on display at the Musée national du Château de Versailles (see C. Baulez, "Les bronziers Gouthière, Thomire et Rémond", in the exhibition catalogue Louis-Simon Boizot (1743-1809), sculpteur du roi et directeur de l'atelier de sculpture à la Manufacture de Sèvres, Musée Lambinet, Versailles, October 2001-February 2002, p. 287, fig. 9). The clock was almost certainly created under the supervision of the marchand-mercier Dominique Daguerre who, along with Martin-Eloi Lignereux, held a near monopoly on the commissions of luxury items and furnishings placed by influential Parisian collectors. To illustrate the extent of his activity, at the time of the Revolution, the list of debtors of Daguerre and Lignereux included Queen Marie-Antoinette, the Prince de Condé, the Count and Countess d'Artois, the queen's close friend the princesse de Lamballe, Duke Philippe d'Orléans, and Madame Elizabeth, the sister of King Louis XVI.

Only a few similar clocks are known to exist. Among them, one example that is identical to the present clock, but of lesser quality, was formerly in the collection of a Spanish aristocrat and diplomat; it was offered on the French art market in 1989. A second clock, probably slightly later, with an allegorical theme relating to music, is in the Paris Musée des Arts décoratifs (illustrated in Tardy, *La pendule française, 2ème Partie: Du Louis XVI à nos jours*, Paris, 1975, p. 362). One further example, whose dial is signed "Lépine Horloger du Roi à Paris", with two figures of muses playing musical instruments, is in the Royal Spanish Collection. Its excellent quality and rarity make it the only known example that is truly comparable to the present clock. (see J. Ramon Colon de Carvajal, *Catalogo de Relojos del Patrimonio nacional*, Madrid, 1987, p. 56, catalogue 39).

Artist description:

Dubuc jeune

Jean-Baptiste-Gabriel Dubuc (d. before 1820), was one of the most important Parisian clockmakers of the Consulate and Empire periods. His very prolific workshop was located in the rue des Gravilliers from 1800 to 1817. His works are mentioned in the probate inventories of several important figures of the early 19th century, including aristocrats such as Charles-Marie-Philippe Huchet de la Bédoyère and Mlle de Clermont-Montoison, the widow of the Marquis de la Guiche. They were included in the collections of dignitaries such as the Senator Henry Fargues and André Masséna, Prince of Essling and Duke of Rivoli.