



Alexandre Legrand (1822-1901) Pianist Portrait



4 800 EUR

Signature : Alexandre Legrand

Period : 19th century

Condition : Parfait état

Material : Oil painting

Length : 45 cm hors cadre

Width : 38 cm hors cadre

Description

Alexandre Legrand (Paris 1822 - Paris 1901) Portrait of a Pianist Oil on canvas H. 45 cm; W. 38 cm Monogrammed and dated A.L. 1855 This portrait, painted in 1855, depicts a pianist seated at his instrument, his right hand resting delicately on the keyboard as if he were about to play. The scene takes place in an elegant interior, the meticulously rendered decor reflecting the refined taste of the 19th-century bourgeoisie. The piano, made of dark, richly carved wood, is adorned with two-pronged, gilded candle arms, a detail typical of instruments of the period, allowing the musician to play even by candlelight. An open score rests on the music stand, suggesting the study or performance of a musical work, though its content cannot be precisely identified. The pianist, dressed in a black frock coat, embodies

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the sobriety and dignity characteristic of male portraits of the period. His face, illuminated by a soft, even light, reveals a focused and slightly melancholic expression. His neatly styled, mid-length hair is clearly reminiscent of Robert Schumann. A signet ring on the index finger of his left hand suggests his belonging to an established social circle and perhaps his family status. In the background, wallpaper with a floral pattern and a bust placed on the piano add a cultural dimension to the composition: they testify to the importance given to the arts in the sitter's world. The entire scene exudes an intimate, almost silent atmosphere, where the music seems suspended, awaiting the first chord. The bust, which appears to be that of Beethoven, is positioned higher than our pianist, thus evoking his inferiority in relation to the genius. The work illustrates the growing 19th-century interest in portraits that highlighted artistic practices and musical instruments. Through its precise details and attention to the sitter's posture, it demonstrates a measured realism, seeking to capture not only a physical likeness but also an introspective temperament. This painting thus offers valuable insight into the place of the piano and musical culture in the society of its time. Alexandre Legrand here paints the portrait of this pianist, which can be compared to a larger portrait of a woman (93 x 73 cm), where the sitter is also depicted at her keyboard, leaning on the pressed keys, a rolled-up score in her other hand. The stylistic similarity is evident, since Legrand did not only create portraits, but veritable interior scenes, where the surroundings receive the same meticulous attention as the central subject. This student of Léon Coignet exhibited at the Salon from 1844 to 1899, between religious subjects, still lifes and portraits.