PROANTIC
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Clock Portico Watchmaker : Contreau 1850

1 500 EUR

Period : 19th century

Condition : Restauré par notre atelier

Material : Marble

Width : 31 cm

Height : 51 cm

Depth : 10 cm

Description

ORDERING AND ADDITIONAL INFORMATION FROM OUR WEBSITEThis elegant, highly decorative, and high-quality portico clock
perfectly exemplifies the refined French Neoclassical taste of the
Louis-Philippe era (first half of the 19th century). Its notably airy
and balanced architectural design features two symmetrical porticoes
supporting a substantial suspended cylindrical movement--an
arrangement that lends the piece remarkable visual lightness while
highlighting the rich mercury-gilt bronze ornamentation. The clock
rests on a large, generously proportioned

Dealer

Clock Prestige
Clockmaker specialised in 18th & 19th Century antique clocks and objects.
Mobile : 06-86-90-03-27

Lyon 69003

rectangular white marble base
with softened corners.

The lower section of the base is accented by a
delicate gilt-bronze
beaded frieze running along its entire perimeter.
The front face is
enlivened by a remarkable bas-relief panel
depicting a procession of
putti amidst clouds and scrolling foliage; some
carry garlands, while
others play the lyre or engage in allegorical
games evoking the arts,
love, and pleasure. The quality of the modeling,
the fine detailing of
the faces, and the fluid drapery demonstrate
exceptional chasing. Large
radiating rosettes and fluted geometric motifs at
either end provide a
harmonious rhythm to the composition.

Atop the base sit two circular pedestals clad in
black marble, creating
a striking and elegant contrast with the white
marble of the main body.
Each pedestal is adorned with large, finely chased
gilt-bronze mounts
featuring foliate motifs. These pedestals support
the two lateral
porticoes, the architecture of which warrants
special attention. Each
portico consists of four slender, delicately turned,
free-standing
gilt-bronze columns. Their lower sections feature
deep fluting, while
the upper shafts are divided into successive bands
reminiscent of
antique columns. Tall white marble panels,
framed by gilt beaded
chains, are set between these columns. At the
center of each panel
unfolds a remarkable gilt-bronze sculptural motif
depicting a musical
trophy. It features an antique lyre surmounted by

clusters of grapes,
vine leaves, blossoms, and tied ribbons. These
ornaments celebrate the
arts and pleasures--themes highly favored during
the Empire and
Restoration periods. At the top of the panels sits
an elegant ribbon
bow ending in floral swags; the chasing reveals
remarkable precision,
extending even to the veins of the leaves and the
petals of the
flowers. The columns are joined by a horizontal
gilt-bronze crossbar
featuring a twisted design; this element connects
the two porticoes and
contributes to the visual effect of the movement
appearing suspended.

Above, the structure is topped by turned finials
shaped like lidded
vases and small balusters, drawing on the
vocabulary of classical
architecture. Their profiles are perfectly balanced,
and their gilding
highlights the intricate moldings. Suspended at
the center of the
composition is a spectacular cylindrical
movement housing a very large
white enamel dial--a key feature of the clock. Its
substantial
size enhances the monumental quality of the
piece. The dial is framed
by an ornate gilt-bronze bezel featuring a finely
engraved and beaded
frieze. The hours are marked in black Roman
numerals, while the
openwork, finely cut hands echo the neoclassical
decorative style. The
clockmaker's signature, "Contreau à Paris,"
appears at the
bottom of the dial. This maker is listed in Tardy's
*Dictionnaire
des Horlogers* under the year 1850--a detail of
interest for the

documentation and attribution of the work.

Beneath the dial swings a remarkable lenticular pendulum depicting a radiant sun. At its center appears an idealized female face surrounded by a halo of radiating rays. This sunburst motif lends movement and radiance to the composition while creating a highly decorative focal point in the open space between the two porticoes. The upper section is crowned by an imposing hemispherical white marble antique-style bowl, resting on a turned pedestal base. This vessel is flanked by two gilt-bronze handles shaped like stylized plant stems that terminate in swan heads; their fluid lines and naturalistic modeling attest to the excellence of the craftsmanship. The lid is topped with a finely chased cluster of fruit, berries, flowers, and foliage--traditional symbols of abundance and prosperity.

The piece is distinguished by the purity of its architecture, the elegance of its proportions, the richness of its allegorical ornamentation, the exceptional quality of its chasing, and the brilliance of its mercury gilding. The harmonious combination of white marble, black marble, and gilt bronze lends this portico clock a particularly.