THE LIMNER COMPANY



Attributed to DANIEL GARDELLE (1679 - 1753)

Portrait of a Young Boy, wearing a purple coat with grey cuffs, and a frilled white collar, holding a wooden flute or 'musette', sheet music on the ledge in front of him

32 cm (12 $^{5}/_{8}$ inches)

Enamel on metal probably gold

Later pierced metal mount

The Swiss Gardelle family, along with the Petitots, Mussards and Huauts were central to portrait enamel painting in the 17th and 18th century. Daniel and Robert Gardelle were the grandsons of Jean Petitot and, whilst the latter is better known for having painted large-scale oil portraits, Daniel was the teacher of Jean-Etienne Liotard, another Swiss enameller who also painted in watercolour and pastel to International acclaim. Signed enamels by Daniel or Robert Gardelle are extremely rare and would appear to be flatter, with fewer white highlights than the present work. The particularly small size of the portrait would align with enamels made for watch cases of the period.

The boy in the portrait would appear to have compositional connections with earlier portraits by Joan van Noordt (1624–c.1676), whose two oil portraits of boys with falcons are in the Wallace Collection and date to circa 1665. The present enamel, showing a boy with a wooden flute or musette (although the latter seems to usually be attached to a bag for playing), also connects to the same subject shown in earlier Dutch oil paintings, such as in Judith Leyster's The Young Flute Player of 1635 (Nationalmuseum, Stockholm).

Today we would call the instrument in the boy's hands a 'recorder', but in the 17th century this would have been called a 'flute'. Constructed from a single piece of undecorated wood with a predominantly cylindrical bore, the instrument had a relatively narrow range of an octave and a sixth, with a rich timbre, perfect for blending in an ensemble. Later into the 17th century, Jean-Baptiste Lully (1632–1687), Henry Purcell (1659–1695), and Georg Frideric Handel (1685–1759) included the recorder in several vocal and stage works to symbolize lamentation, death, and the supernatural, as well as the pastoral. Music

was central to Dutch life in the Baroque period, played both in the home (particularly by wealthy young as part of their leisure time) or, more noisily, for the lower classes, where "merry companies," would eat, drink, and dance - a subject found in a significant number of Dutch genre paintings.