

THE LIMNER COMPANY



EUROPEAN SCHOOL

Portrait of a young Violinist, wearing a red 'skeleton suit' with lace trim

Circa: Circa 1800

Watercolour on vellum

Circular, 2 1/5 in. (55mm.)

In rose-gold frame

This delicate portrait, depicting a young boy playing a violin, comes from the years around 1800, indicated by the clothes that the boy is wearing. Children's fashion has not always, historically, been designed separately to that of adults, but as enlightenment writing and philosophy became more prevalent, ideas about how children should be treated differently followed, ideas that encapsulated the clothes they should wear, too. Specifically, this young boy can be seen to be wearing a 'skeleton suit', intended to be a loosely fitting garment that could be worn between a boy's younger years and adulthood. These were worn commonly, and extant garments of this type can be found in the V & A[1], as well as the Museum Rotterdam[2].

Painted during the period of Mozart and his emergence as a Child Prodigy, this miniature may have also been a record of this young boy's skill on the Violin. Though the boy remains unidentified, it may have been the case that he was known for his ability to play music, whether that was known only by his family or others.

[1] Accession number: T.165&A-1915

[2] Accession number: Museum Rotterdam 68585-1-2