

ADRIAN ALAN

Fine Art & Antiques



Maison Lepaute

A Gilt-Bronze Empire Clock In The Form Of a Classical Urn

Circa: Circa 1825

33 x 0 cm (13 x 0 inches)

Gilt-Bronze

France

1825

The dial signed 'Lepaute a Paris'.

A Gilt-Bronze Empire Clock In The Form Of a Classical Urn, by Maison Lepaute.

The clock has an ornate cast bezel with a 3-inch porcelain dial with Roman numerals and Breguet style hands. The twin train eight-day movement with outside countwheel striking on a bell and silk thread suspension.

This elegant Empire style clock has a gilt-bronze case in the form of a classical urn with swan neck handles and a winged cherub to the neck. The circular pedestal base is raised on a footed stepped square plinth.

Artist description:

The Lepaute family were the premier French clockmakers of their day. Their significance lies in their contribution to the clock making industry which had hitherto come under the trade of locksmiths. The family held the brevet Horlogers du Roi.

Jean-André Lepaute (1720–1789) arrived in Paris at an early age and in 1740 founded the family business. A skilled artist and mechanic, he quickly gained an excellent reputation. He was received as maître by the clockmakers guild in 1759, was granted royal lodgings from the king in The Luxembourg Palace, and was entrusted with the construction of the majority of the great public clocks of Paris. He executed, amongst others, those in The Luxembourg Palace, the Jardin des Plantes, the Château de Bellevue and the Château des Ternes. His clock at Paris's école Militaire still works today. Three editions of his *Traité d'Horlogerie* were published in Paris in 1755, 1760 and 1767. A small volume, *Description de Plusieurs Ouvrages d'Horlogerie* appeared in 1764. Jean-André's wife, Nicole-Reine Etable de la Brière (1723-1788), was a highly esteemed mathematician and astronomer. Her passion for science lent itself to Lepaute's work and she played an active role in the scientific and mathematical

aspects of the clock making.

Jean-André's younger brother Jean-Baptiste Lepaute (1727-1802) joined him in Paris in 1747 and immediately started working for the family business. He was received as maître in 1776 and was known for the clocks he constructed for the Paris Hôtel de Ville (1780), destroyed in a fire of 1871, and for the Hôtel des Invalides (1784). Jean-Baptiste took over the workshop when Jean-André retired in 1775.

After Jean-Baptiste's death in 1802, the firm was taken over by his nephew Pierre-Basil Lepaute (1750-1843) where he was duly joined by his own nephew Jean-Joseph (1768-1846) and son Pierre-Michel (1785-1849). By 1816, Pierre-Michel Lepaute was in charge of the business. His masterpieces include the astronomical clock in Paris's Bureau des Longitudes and those in the city's Bourse (stock exchange), the Hôtel des Postes, the Louvre Palace, the Tuileries Palace and the Château de Compiègne. Pierre-Michel invented the horological principle of 'remontoir d'égalité', a force mechanism which is still used by clockmakers today. From 1862 until 1867 the company was run by Pierre-Michel's two sons Léon Henry-Lepaute and Paul Henry-Lepaute.