Members of the Maty Family in a Theatre Box

Charles Hayter



REF: 3189

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Description

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Charles Hayter (1761-1835)
Members of the Maty Family in a Theatre Box

With inscription on a label verso: Painted by Charles Hayter - /at Uxbridge and with a list of the sitters (in a later hand)
Pastel
38.7 by 52.3 cm, 15 ¼ by 20 ½ in.

Exhibited:
Nicholson Gallery, 1943

The present pastel depicts members of the Maty family in a theatre box, probably at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden in the mid 1790s. From left to right are: Mrs Mary Maty, Mrs Roger Jortin, née Louisa Maty (1746-1809), Miss Justamond, Mrs Marthe 'Patty' Maty (1758-1837), sister of Miss Justamond, Mrs James Tattersall, while she was still Mrs Richard Tayler, née Jane Louisa Justamond (1774-1848), Mrs J. O. Justamond, née Ann Gillette Maty (b.1748), Mrs De Ners and standing to the right Richard Tayler (1740-1815). The age of the sitters in the portrait suggests that it dates from the 1790s. Mary Maty was the second wife of Matthieu or Matthew Maty (1718-1776), a Dutch physician who came to England and became secretary of the Royal Society and second principal librarian of the British Museum. She is depicted holding a miniature of her husband.

It may show a box at the Theatre Royal, Covent Garden on the site of the current Royal Opera House. The Theatre Royal was destroyed by fire on 20th September 1808 and a new theatre was opened in 1809. This in turn burnt down in 1856 and the current theatre opened in 1858 becoming known as the Royal Opera House in 1892.

This is an unusually large and elaborate work by Hayter who is best known for his miniatures. Charles Hayter the son of an architect, entered the R.A. schools at the end of January 1786, aged 24. He also had a private teaching practice and taught perspective to Princess Charlotte (1796-1813). In 1813, he published his Introduction to Perspective and in 1828, A New Practical Treatise on the Three Primitive Colours. There is an endearing description of Hayter in Henry Crabb Robinson's diary, which records 'he is a character. He is self-educated, but is a sensible man, and blends humour with all he says. And his affection for his children, one of whom is already a promising young artist, gives a kind of dignity to his character' (Thomas Sadler, ed., Diary, reminiscences and correspondence of Henry Crabb Robinson, London, 1869, vol. II, p. 205). All three of Hayter's children became artists, George, later Sir George (1792-1871), Anne (1795-1854) and John (1800-1895).

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