

Wrench as Baron

Samuel De Wilde

Sold



Description

Samuel de Wilde (1748 check - 1832)

Portrait of Benjamin Wrench as Baron Willinghurst in 'Age To-morrow'

Signed lower left: SDe Wilde. delin./October 1810 and inscribed on reverse of original washline mount:

Wrench/Baron Willinghurst/of Age Tomorrow

Watercolour over pencil

36.5 by 22.8 cm., 14 1/4 by 9 in.

Born in Holland, de Wilde was bought to London as a child. He was apprenticed to a Soho woodcarver and entered the Royal Academy Schools in 1769. His career as a painter of actors began in 1791 when John Bell employed him to illustrate his publication 'British Theatre.' He exhibited theatrical portraits at the Royal Academy from 1792 until 1821. Actors and actresses came to sit for him in his studio in Drury Lane and his portraits, generally in watercolour, appeared in many publications. In 1810 and 1811 he is recorded as charging £2 12s. 6d. for a watercolour drawing.

Benjamin Wrench (1778-1843) came from a wealthy background but turned down a commission in the army to become an actor. He became a successful comic actor, starting in York and Edinburgh before joining the Bath theatre. From 1809 until 1815 he worked at the Drury Lane Theatre - these two portraits, dated 1810 and 1811, come from this period. After spells in Birmingham, Bristol and Dublin, he returned to London in 1826 working at Covent Garden, the Lyceum and the Adelphi. Two other portraits of him are in the Garrick Club, another by de Wilde as Sir Freeman in 'Free and Easy', the other by Sharpe, and a portrait of him as Belmour after Wageman was published as an engraving in 1818.