Cecil Beaton - Ballet Costume Design for Le Pavillon, 1936

Cecil Beaton

Sold



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Description

SIR CECIL BEATON, CBE
(1904-1980)

Ballet Costume Design for Le Pavillon - 1936

Signed l.r.: Beaton
Watercolour, bodycolour and ink

49 by 39 cm., 19 ¼ by 15 ½ in.
(frame size 70.5 by 60 cm., 27 ¾ by 23 ¾ in.)

Literature:
Cyril W Beaumont, Design for the Ballet, London, 1937, illus. p.110.

Cecil Walter Hardy Beaton was a fashion and portrait photographer, diarist, interior designer and stage and costume designer for the stage and screen. He was born in Hampstead and educated at Harrow and St John's College, Cambridge although he left without a degree in 1925. He worked as a photographer for fashion magazines and became an extremely popular and well-connected society portraitist who also recorded the gathering of his friends among the Bright Young Things of the 20s and 30s. After the war Beaton started designing stage sets and costumes for London and Broadway. His most lauded achievement for the stage being the costume for Lerner and Loewe's 1956 production of My Fair Lady.

In 1936 Beaton was commissioned to design the costumes for Col de Basil's Ballet Russes de Monte Carlo's performance of Le Pavillon to be performed at the Royal Opera House. The ballet was by Boris Kochno, music by Alexander Borodine and choreography by David Lichine. The costumes were made by Barbara Karinska and the main dancers were Irina Baronova, Tatiana Riabouchinska and David Lichine. Beaton designed a blue stage set with costumes in shades of blue overlaid with brilliantly coloured feathers, flowers etc. However, when Kochno saw the half finished blue costumes, he was so enchanted by them that he insisted they were used as they were, without the trimmings. The result was a blue or blue effect on the opening night of the ballet. Beaton was dismayed and, disobeying Kochno, he arranged for Barbara Karinska, the costume maker, to add the colourful overskirts and trims for the subsequent performances and for the United States tour.