

An important George III Nine Basket "Harebell" Epergne made in London in 1796 by John Robins.

Sold



Description

This exceptional piece has an oval frame and stands on four pillar supports, with paw feet, decorated with detailed caryatid figures, dressed in flowing drapery, with a harebell band below. The legs rise to a horizontal frieze pierced with vertical pails interspersed with oval floral medallions. The incuse neck rises to an openwork section decorated with floral garlands and trifurcated leaf capped motifs. The top of this magnificent piece displays a beautiful large basket pierced and engraved with bands of "Harebells" which stand on four cast acanthus leaf supports. The upper basket has two reeded loop handles, decorated with leaf capped mouldings. The central section of the epergne displays four leaf capped scroll arms, which fit into the frame, rising to a scalloped platform on which a further oval basket, pierced and engraved with harebells, can be placed. This piece is most unusual, as it allows for a further four baskets to be suspended by silver chains at the bottom, should there be a larger party. The attention to detail with this piece is exceptional as the base of the centre of the frame displays a circular boss decorated with portrait bust of Medusa. The Epergne is in quite excellent condition and is marked in no less than fourteen different places. John Robins was a very fine silversmith who was known for his quality of design and production.

Amongst his most famous patrons was William Beckford, for whom he made silver mounts for some of his porcelain collection. John Robins was apprentice to David Whyte and his first mark was entered at Goldsmith's Hall on 20th October, 1774. He occupied workshops at 13, Clerkenwell Green when this wonderful piece was made. The Epergne Centrepiece was introduced into English silver in the mid-eighteenth century. These pieces were used in the centre of the dining table for holding fruit and petit fours and for decoration when they were not in use. As you will appreciate they would make a definite statement on the table with exotic fruits cascading from the baskets. Height: 22 inches, 55 cm. Length: 23 inches, 57.5 cm. Width: 20 inches, 50 cm. Weight: 141 oz.