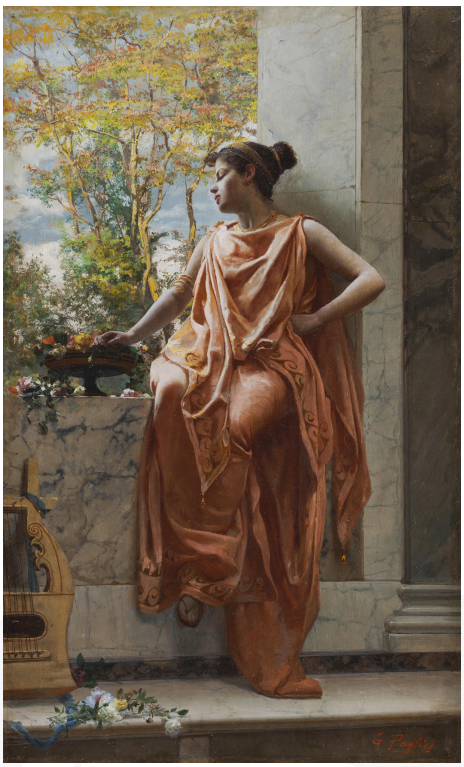
Gioacchino PAGLIEI (1852-1896) - Musician on her balcony



Oil on canvas signed lower right

Dimensions : H. 62 cm x W. 38 cm (with frame: H. 80 cm x W. 56 cm)

Gioacchino PAGLIEI is one of the finest exponents of Italian academic art. Pejoratively referred to as "pompier art" in the 19th and early 20th centuries, this type of painting represents the final stage of Western pictorial classicism, which began with the Italian Renaissance in the 15th century. The aim is always to achieve a resemblance with reality as perceived by the human eye, while associating it with an ideal of beauty.

In Italy, PAGLIEI was one of the few academic painters to follow the Neo-Pompéian path of the Pre-Raphaelite movement, which appeared in England as early as 1848. Among the Pre-Raphaelites, Lawrence Alma-Tadema (1836-1912) visited Pompeii in 1863, a period of renewed interest in Italy's ancient history, with excavations in particular just taking off. Fascinated by Pompeii, Alma-Tadema produced a work of exceptional technical achievement, in which "the exquisite beauty of the subjects is deliciously erotic".

Following in Alma Tadéma's footsteps, Pagliéi borrowed her technique from the Pre-Raphaelites, but introduced more movement and gentleness into her figures.

Our painting is a rare, typically Pompeian subject, featuring a lyre-player in a toga in an antique setting. Indeed, most of this great artist's works are scenes of Roman life, with a profusion of characters dressed in 18th-century or early 19th-century costumes. Here, Pagliei shows his incredible skill in reproducing the fabrics, the young girl's complexion, the marbled, sunken decor, the lyre and the flowers thrown in, but also the luxuriant nature. The window overlooks idealized vegetation, giving this composition a surprising openness for a purely academic painting.

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The work, on its original canvas, is in excellent condition. It is presented in a fine antique frame in wood and gilded stucco.

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