



Engraving and aquatint with contemporary hand-colour; together with a lithographed print, and a wood-engraved and letterpress broadside advertisement.

“THE IMMENSE PORTRAIT OF MYSELF,...EXHIBITED IN VARIEGATED LAMPS”

[C.H. Simpson, Master of Ceremonies, Vauxhall Gardens].

Author

SIMPSON, Christopher Herbert; John William GEAR; and Robert CRUIKSHANK

Publication date

August – September, 1833.

Publisher

Publication place

London,

Physical description

Engraving and aquatint with contemporary hand-colour; together with a lithographed print, and a wood-engraved and letterpress broadside advertisement.

Dimensions

(lithograph) 280 by 190mm. (11 by 7.5 inches);(engraving) 240 by 170mm (9.5 by 6.75 inches); (wood engraving) 570 by 150mm (22.5 by 6 inches).

Notes

Although available for public use since 1661, Vauxhall Gardens entered its stride during the eighteenth century as the most significant of the Pleasure Gardens of London. From May to

September, from early evening to the small hours of the morning, paying visitors were entertained with lively music, gay company, refreshments and secluded corners. After sunset artificial illuminations delighted and amazed.

From 1797 to 1835, when he died, the lord of misrule was C. H. Simpson, who made a caricature of his art, and was honoured by many of the greatest comic artists and commentators of his day. This collection includes an advertisement for the season's finale: a "Grand Coronation Gala", in honour of William IV, who had been king for four years, at this point. Regardless, the highlight of the evening was "the immense Portrait of myself, in tis proper Costume, so much admired at my Benefit, will be, for the last time, exhibited in Variegated Lamps; and also, that my own Figure, in Fire Works, will appear very beautiful, and bow as representing Life". The advertisement is adorned with a wood-engraving of the iconic portrait of Simpson tipping his hat by J.W. Gear.

Also included is an example of Gear's original lithograph portrait 'C.H. Simpson Esq.re, Thirty-six Years Master of the Ceremonies at the Royal Gardens Vauxhall' (published by W. Day, 1831, contemporary hand-colour, 282 x 188mm); and an example of Robert Cruikshank's etching with aquatint, 'Drawn in the Gardens, on the night of August the 19th. 1833' (published by W. Kidd, 20 August 1833) of Simpson greeting a naval officer, who looks suspiciously like the Duke of Wellington (who was in London at the time), in front of Simpson's own "Colossal Likeness in Variegated Lamps".

Bibliography

Provenance

Price: £1500

Inventory reference: 18129