Louis AUBERT (Paris 1720 - Paris c.1800)

A Young Boy Standing

Black chalk, with touches of pastel and white heightening, on brown paper.

Signed and dated Louis Aubert f. 1745 at the lower left.

275 x 186 mm. (10 7/8 x 7 3/8 in.) [sight]

Louis Aubert is best known today for his drawings, which are usually genre scenes or portraits executed in pastels or coloured chalks. Many of his drawings are signed and often dated, others have born attributions to Jean-Baptiste-Simeon Chardin, while the influence of Etienne Jeaurat is also evident in his draughtsmanship. As Neil Jeffares has noted, however, Aubert's drawings are 'unlike the work of any other French pastellist of this period, and are closer to pastels of the Dutch school in theme.'

Some forty drawings by Louis Aubert are known today, several of which bear dates between 1742 and 1749, and examples are in the collections of the Rijksmuseum in Amsterdam, the Musée Condé in Chantilly, the Louvre in Paris and the Albertina in Vienna, as well as in the Horvitz Collection in Cambridge, MA.

Artist description:

Active mainly between c.1740 and c.1755, the painter and draughtsman Louis Aubert remains a

shadowy figure in 18th century French art. The son of the first violinist at the Paris Opéra, he was himself a professional musician and composer as well as an artist, although nothing is known of his training. Like his father, Aubert was active at court, and by 1742 is named in documents as an 'officier de la Chambre du Roy'. That Aubert was well regarded in court circles is shown by the fact that in 1745 he was commissioned to paint three decorative works for the Château of Fontainebleau, as well as four overdoors for the apartments of the Dauphin at Versailles. He also produced landscapes for the châteaux of Compiègne, where his paintings decorated the rooms of Madame de Pompadour, and Choisy-le-Roi. All of these works are now lost, however.

At the same time as he was working as an artist, Aubert seems to have continued his musical career, both at the orchestra of the Opéra and at court, where he was a member of the string ensemble known as the Vingt-quatre violons du roi. He also published a number of violin sonatas. Aubert's artistic activity seems to have ended by 1755, when he was installed as first violin at the Opéra, from which position he retired in 1771. Three years later he was awarded a yearly pension of 1,365 livres from the Maison du roi. Although he was still receiving this pension in 1790, the precise date of his death remains unknown.