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Viennese Dance Cards

Bring Your Thing: Agnes Road show
20 July 2024

SPEAKERS

Julie Riches, SJ

KEYWORDS

European, object, Vienna, Austria, dance card, historical

TRANSCRIPT

[Music]

SJ: So these objects in this box -- the box is nothing special. They are -- they were -- I checked with my mother, and they were collected by my grandfather's mother. And he was a baron, and -- which is neither here nor there, I suppose. And they are little opera cards, dance cards.

Julie Riches: Lovely!

SJ: So my grandfather was Austrian, and so these would be from Austria, from probably the Viennese opera house. And I don't know that much about them. Apparently, they're not -- if a woman was at a ball, she would have a booklet that men would put their names in and write their names so they could dance.

JR: Dance cards. Yeah. There's like little booklets and the little cards, and you still see some of them today, where you see all the gentleman's names. Look how lovely. So beautiful. This is a lovely example.

SJ: So this one says, "1894, Carneval Fest des Schubertbund. Sophie and Sale." And then this is a little book that says, "1883."

JR: Ah, beautiful. This one's 1881. Here is just one sort of example. I mean, the photograph is not the best, 1797 to 1897. It's catalogued as a Ball of Vienna dance card. I mean, different, but again, they're all unique. They're all going to be sort of one of a kind. You see the crest there. So I think -- again, the photographs are not as clear as I would like them to be. There's some cards that were included with it as well -- -- in the interior. So it would have been more of a large booklet with the larger dance cards as opposed to the smaller ones, but we'll keep looking and see what we can come up with. January 26, 1894. Oh, it's like a washing basin.

SJ: Oh, my goodness, and it turns.

JR: It does. If you would crank that, you could see the bottom portion spin around like an agitator.

SJ: The intricacy.

JR: The artistry, for sure.

[Music]